

# ROMANS

MOMENTOUS NEWS

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ROMANS: Momentous News  
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**David Cook**

**50 UNDATED DEVOTIONS  
THROUGH THE BOOK OF ROMANS**



# INTRODUCTION

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**W**ritten by Paul in AD57 the book of Romans outlines what Christians believe, and explains the great doctrine of being made right with God – that is, ‘justification by faith.’

There is no greater theme, topic or question than ‘How can a person be made right with God?’ This is what makes the book of Romans such a pleasure to read, study and teach. My prayer is that as you use this book to look into the Bible, it will help give you a greater grasp of God’s wonderful work in bringing us, the ‘unjust, unrighteous ones’, to God, the ‘just and righteous one’, through His Son, Jesus.

**David Cook**



**I**n these verses, Paul introduces himself, his message and his readers.

The letter begins starkly: 'Paul, servant.' A servant was without rights in the ancient world; a servant's marriage and family were not recognised; a servant's death went uninvestigated. To be a servant was a terrible thing.

However, Paul uses the title as a badge of honour, for he is Jesus Christ's slave. To be the slave of Jesus Christ was liberating.

Note that Paul's description of himself in verses 1 and 5 is a description of how he has been shaped and affirmed by the gospel.

In verses 2-4, Paul describes his message. The gospel is all about Jesus. In verse 3, Jesus' humanity is real, not imagined. In verse 4, Jesus' deity is confirmed by His bodily resurrection. The gospel is all about 'Jesus Christ our Lord'.

In verses 6-7, Paul describes his readers. Again, he describes them according to the gospel's work in them. In verse 6, they are 'called'. In verse 7, they are 'loved by God', and 'saints'.

In verse 7, Paul changes the traditional greeting 'joy and prosperity' to the more gospel-focused 'grace and peace'.

In these introductory verses note:

1. Paul describes the Scriptures (v 2), the Spirit (v 4) and God's people (v 7) as 'holy'.
2. Here, as in the rest of the New Testament, 'saints' is always in the plural. The word is derived from the word 'holy' and means 'set apart, separate'.
3. Paul forms his self-image, and the way he sees others, from the gospel. Here, according to JI Packer in *Knowing God*, is our identity: 'I am a child of God, God is my Father, heaven is my home, every day is one day nearer, my Saviour is my brother, every Christian is my brother, too.' It is an identity shaped by the gospel.

## REFLECTION

*How carefully do you form your self-image around the gospel's affirmation of you? Are you determined to see and treat others as God sees them? What difference will this make to your relationships?*

**P**aul planted significant churches within the Roman Empire – at Thessalonica, Corinth and Ephesus – but he did not plant the church at the centre, Rome.

He had not met the church at Rome. Yet we see his real interest in the progress of these ‘brothers’. Paul gives thanks for them (v 8). He prays for them as if they were his responsibility (vv 9-10). He is a man of generous spirit. He is not given to parochial interests. If God is at work, Paul prays for and supports the work. What a model he is in ministry in contrast to other examples of professional jealousy and territorial insecurity. Paul’s attitude provides a necessary corrective.

How often are our sharp criticisms of other ministries simply a thin veneer for envy?

Whether God does His work through Paul or not, Paul rejoices that God’s work is being done. He gives thanks. He prays in particular that a ‘way may be opened’ (v 10) so that he might come to them.

Paul wants the work to continue growing and he wants to impart some spiritual emphasis (v 11) – probably the gospel – so they will be strengthened.

Paul, however, is not coming as a superior. Verse 12 makes it clear that he

expects there will be mutual blessing in the visit – note the emphasis ‘you and I’, ‘mutual’ and ‘each other’ (v 12).

There is no aura of detached self-sufficiency about Paul. Some were alleging that he had not visited them because he was not interested. He corrects that in verse 13. His desire is for a harvest in Rome among the Gentiles because he is the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). It is apparent that, as well as being a great theologian, Paul was a passionate missionary and evangelist.

## REFLECTION

*Reflect on Paul’s generosity of spirit and his enthusiastic support of gospel work. Are you challenged by his attitude and his activities towards a people he had never met?*

*John Wesley said that parochialism has always been the enemy of the gospel. In what ways does parochialism creep into your thinking?*