

Study in Romans

Doctrine > Introduction > Greetings

Romans 1:1-15

Setting the Stage (1:1-7)

As if Paul were about to write the script for a play, he begins Romans with a cast of characters, a list of props and a synopsis of events for the benefit of his audience.

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.*

Jaques, "As You Like It" Act 2, scene 7

1. Cast = a “divine summons;” God calls together His cast of characters in this story called the “Gospel.”
 - a. God (the Father) = the Playwright and Director. He has sovereign control of the gospel story from start to finish (1:7).
 - b. Jesus Christ our Lord (the Son) = Jesus did not come to do His own will, but of Him Who sent Him, namely, the Father (1:3-7; cf. John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38-39).
 - i. Promised “beforehand” in the OT (1:2).
 - ii. Christ = Greek: “Christos”. Mentioned four times in this section with the name “Jesus”. Means “anointed one,” that is chosen of God for a specific mission.
 - iii. Lord = Greek: “kurios”. A respectful title to one who is supreme in authority. Used twice in this section.
 - iv. Human origins = descendant of David (1:3).
 - v. Divine origins = declared to be the Son of God at His resurrection (1:4).
 - vi. Through Him and for His name’s sake the Apostles and early church leaders received grace and apostleship (i.e., authority) to issue God’s call among the nations (1:5).
 - c. Spirit of holiness (the Holy Spirit) = intermediate agent in the resurrection of Jesus (1:4; cf. 8:10-11).
 - d. Paul = Doulos and Apostolos. Doulos by nature and choice. Apostolos by God’s appointment/call (1:1).
 - i. Bondservant (NASB) = “doulos” in Greek; used commonly in NT along the lines of Hebrew meaning: a servant who voluntarily stays with a master he loves.
 - ii. Apostle = “apostolos” in Greek, means, “one who is sent on a mission as an ambassador.” Special office in the founding of the church, primarily the 12 disciples Christ chose. They had power to perform miracles (Matt. 10: 1; 2 Cor. 12:12) and speak as His representatives (John 14:26).
 - iii. “Set apart” = walled off; set aside for God’s good news by God the Father (implied); basically the concept of holiness.
 - iv. Paul is establishing himself as an authority in the eyes of the Roman church with the issue of his apostleship being challenged at the Corinthian church fresh on his mind.
 - e. Prophets = God’s “intermediate agents” who wrote in the OT about God’s promise of the gospel (1:2; cf. Heb. 1:1-2).
 - f. Ministry team = “we” received grace and apostleship (1:5-6).
 - g. Saints = the audience for this play is also a part of it.
 - i. God has called them out from the nations (literally, “ethnicities”) to obey the

- Faith (1:5).
 - ii. All believers are Doulos; not all are Apostolos.
 - h. Roman church = a subset of the “saints”; primary audience of this letter.
 - i. Loved by God
 - ii. Called (divinely summoned) saints; Greek: “hagios”. Means something morally pure; clean; innocent.
2. Props = In addition to His cast of intermediate agents, God also employs a series of props to tell His story
- a. Holy Scriptures = God’s promises of redemption, healing, restoration and peace through the coming Messiah (1:2).
 - b. Gospel = literally, “good news.” Taken from the Roman custom of emperor worship whereby a herald would use this word to announce good news related to the benevolent and wise emperor. Using it in the context of coming from God, however, evokes this image of the good news coming from the Throne of the Universe with unquestionable authority and must be obeyed (1:1b-4; cf 1:16-17).
 - i. Promised in the OT by God through His prophets
 - ii. Focuses on Jesus Christ, His Son and the “Star of the show”
 - c. Faith (1:5) = used as a noun here. Has two forms: “the Faith” and “faith.” The Faith (used in that sense here) is a synonym for the Gospel, the message of redemption and body of doctrine from God. “Faith” is almost a verbal form, meaning a power the believer possesses to access grace in his life for the enablement of what he needs in his role in God’s story.
 - d. Power (1:4) = Greek, “dunamis”. Power of the HS for resurrection, first in Jesus, later in the Saints.
 - e. Holiness (throughout) = walled off and separated for a high moral calling above and beyond the ordinary. Used of the Spirit, of the Apostles, and of the Saints in this section.
 - f. Love of God (1:7) = Mentioned once in connection with the Saints at Rome and their call from God.
 - g. Grace (1:7) = Mentioned only once at the end of the section along with peace as a benediction.
 - h. Peace (1:7) = See above.
3. Events
- a. Resurrection of Jesus
 - b. Promises from “times past” in the Scriptures
 - c. Calling
 - i. of Paul
 - ii. of the Apostles
 - iii. of the Saints