

Paul's Letter to the Romans:



THE PINNACLE OF
CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

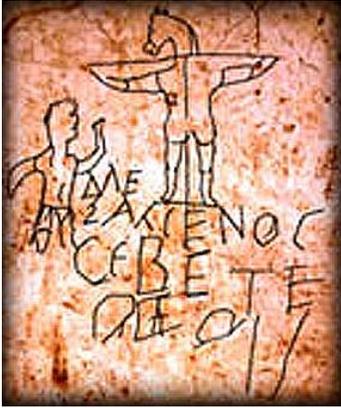
Obligated, Eager and Unashamed Romans 1:16-17

There is a famous piece of graffiti found on a wall near the Palatine Hill in Rome. This particular piece of graffiti dates back to the first or second century AD and has become quite famous. It is known as the **"Alexamenos Graffito"**.¹ It portrays a man hanging on a cross with another man standing nearby looking up to the man on the cross holding up his hands in adoration and love. Beneath the two figures there is a roughly scratched, almost childishly drawn caption, which reads, **"Alexamenos worships his God."**

Now you might be thinking, **"How wonderful! How wonderful that God has providentially preserved some ancient artisan's perception of Christianity in first-century Rome."** If you said that, you would be right. This particular piece of graffiti certainly expresses how the artist viewed Christianity.

On the other hand you may have also been thinking, **"I bet the artist sketched this piece of graffiti to honor some Christian in the act of worshipping the crucified Christ."** If you said that, you would have been wrong, definitely wrong. That was not why this particular piece of graffiti was drawn. You see I

have left out one small detail in describing the picture. The man on the cross was drawn with the head of a donkey.



Now there are a few scholars who have argued that this particular piece of graffiti shows that ancient Romans were confused about Christianity. They argue that the first century Romans may have thought that Christians worshipped a god who was half man and half animal. But, of course, that is not what is going on at all. In fact, you don't have to read very many ancient Roman comedies to realize that they were just as vile, just as profane in their mockeries as many modern comedians are today. They even used some of the same contemptuous expressions we use today and one of those was to charge a man with buffoonery by calling him a **"mule, a donkey or an ass"**.² You see the artist here was trying to say that he thought the worshipper in his picture was a fool. He was either saying that or that he thought the whole idea of a crucified god was idiotic. You see the artist used this piece of graffiti to communicate his attitude toward Christianity and his attitude was one of contempt. The artist sketched this picture implying that Christianity was a **"jackass"** religion. What he was doing was castigating both Christians and Christianity. What he was doing was blaspheming against our Lord by saying that the whole idea of Christianity was stupid, moronic, idiotic and empty-headed. He was saying that contemplation of our God ought not to provoke us to adoration. Instead, it ought to cause us to be ashamed.

Now, whenever see this particular piece of graffiti, my mind is drawn to Romans 1:16-17.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:16**...I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

When I see this picture I just cannot help but think of this verse. Of course, when I read Romans 1:16-17, my mind's eye is drawn right back to this particular piece of graffiti. I suspect that today, twenty centuries later, that the graffitist that drew this...this thing...has had ample time to reflect on just how wrong he was and I suspect that as each new day dawns, he longs for God to send an earthquake, fire, flood, or even some modern graffitist with a can of spray paint to smash to pieces or at least cover over the faint outline of the image he wishes he had never drawn. And I suspect that each day as one glorious day of worship in heaven turns to another, the Lord Jesus Himself turns to the beaming face of Alexamenos and asks, **"Should I take down today that contemptible piece that mocks us both?"** And I suspect that Alexamenos answers, **"Lord, do whatever pleases you. For my part, O Lord...I am still not ashamed."**

You see Christians, genuine Christians, understand the contempt with which the world views us and we do not care.

Now last week I mentioned that this wonderful expression **"not ashamed"** comes in a string of three very visual, very descriptive verbs. Those three verbs are **"obligated, eager and not ashamed."** Paul argued first that he was **"obligated"**, really a debtor, to preach the gospel to all men everywhere. He did that in verse 14.³

^{NIV} **Romans 1:14** I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.

He understood himself to be in the role as the ambassador of the King of kings. He believed he was just as duty-bound to deliver the gospel to all people, as Moses had been to deliver the Ten Commandments to the nation of Israel. He believed he had been entrusted to deliver the gospel to Jews and Greeks alike, to the educated and to the ignorant.

Because he felt an intense sense of “**obligation**”, Paul was “**eager**” to fulfill his charge.⁴ Look at how he says that in verse 15.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:15** That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

Now, I spent a great deal of time arguing last week that Paul was eager to preach the gospel to the Romans. He was eager to do that even though they were already converted. Of course, his motivation was different in preaching to the Romans than it would have been had they been unbelievers (vv. 11-12). He wanted to preach to the Romans to build them up, to strengthen them in their faith. Paul, you see, believed that the gospel was just as important to Christians as it was to the lost.

I mentioned as well last week that had a lot to do with why Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans in the first place. You see Paul wrote this wonderful letter to...**prepare a church he did not know for an intended visit. He did that by comprehensively explaining the gospel he preached and he did that in order that they might...**

...be edified,
...be at peace with one another
...help him on his way to Spain

And Paul was enthusiastic about carrying out his plan, about preaching the gospel to the Romans. He was like a well-trained sprinter loaded in the starting blocks waiting for the sound of the starting pistol. But Paul was always ready, always coiled, always prepared to spring forward to fulfill his obligation. Paul was eager to preach the gospel. He was anxious to preach the gospel. How different we are from that. We are always looking for the right opportunity. For Paul, every opportunity was the right opportunity. Paul, and I say this reverently, reminds me of one of my dad's best, bird dogs.

My dad used to have this pointer named Sandy. He was an absolutely brilliant dog. When we let him out of his trailer, he just knew instinctively which way to go. It was almost as if he could just survey the terrain and know intuitively where the birds were hiding. But **"quail hunting"** was not Sandy's passion. Sandy's passion, the thing he was most eager to do, was chase rabbits. He would rather chase a rabbit than eat, drink or play. In fact, I guess I saw my dad pull his ears a hundred times trying to break him off chasing rabbits. My dad even, and I am sorry to have to say this in front of any of you squeamish dog lovers, my dad even shot him two or three times with birdshot before he managed to get Sandy to stop chasing rabbits.

Of course, not even that broke him off of chasing rabbits completely. If a rabbit jumped up, Sandy would simply turn his head toward my dad to see if he was carrying his shotgun and if he was wasn't, off he would go. You Sandy was **"eager"** to chase rabbits. In fact, he had to have a compelling reason not to chase them and that is exactly how it was with Paul. Unless something got in his way, unless something or someone stopped him (vs. 13), Paul *was* going to preach the gospel. He just could not help himself. Listen to how he puts it.

^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 9:16** Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

Oh that God might give us that same kind of eagerness! Oh that God might instill in us that same holy desire to preach the gospel, to proclaim the gospel, to be gospel men and women always ready, always anxious to share the hope that is in us.

Now, let me turn to the third verb in this string, the verb **“not ashamed.”** In fact, let me read verse 16 again,

^{NIV} **Romans 1:16**...I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Now what I want to do is to connect these three verbs in a string for you. I want to do that because I want you to see the force and design of Paul's argument. First, Paul said that he was obligated. **Now why was he obligated?**

He was obligated because he had been entrusted with a sacred duty as the ambassador of Christ (vs. 1:5). Because he was obligated, Paul was anxious or eager to discharge his obligation. That is, he was eager to preach the gospel. **And what was it that made him so eager to preach the gospel?**

The thing that made him eager to preach the gospel was that he was not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God unto salvation. Now let me ask you a question, **“Why on earth would anyone be ashamed of the gospel?”**

I think to understand the answer to that question you have to understand how the message of the cross was viewed in the ancient world. It was not treated with anything like the kind of sophisticated opposition that it faces today. Christianity

was scorned, scorned as the very lowest dregs of culture and society. Listen to Robert Haldane.

The Pagans branded Christianity as Atheism; the Jews abhorred it as subverting the law and tending to licentiousness; while both Jews and Gentiles denounced Christians as disturbers of the public peace, who, in their pride and presumption, separated themselves from the rest of mankind. Besides, a crucified Savior was to the one a stumbling-block, and to the other foolishness.⁵

Now, of course, it is hard for us to imagine a world in which Christians were only viewed with contempt and only with contempt. In our day, even our most ardent enemies will admit Christianity has accomplished some good. They hate us to be sure and they hate our Savior but they are willing to admit that we are industrious, that we advance education wherever we go, that we are prone to build hospitals and practice mercy and build orphanages. But in Paul's there was no nuance in the opposition against Christianity. I think that is one of the reasons it is almost impossible for us to understand the depth of that contempt Christians faced at the end of the first century. You see we live in an age and culture where the influence of Christianity is mocked but not denied. They lived in an age when the underlying idea of the gospel was derided as stupid and the ethic of mercy and compassion was thought of as weakness. Listen to Paul in 1 Corinthians 4.

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:9...For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. ¹⁰ We are fools for Christ...We are weak...we are dishonored! ¹¹ To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. ¹² We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure

it; ¹³ when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.

That is the manner in which Christians were treated by both Gentiles and Jews. Our holy faith was viewed by Greek philosophy as dishonorable and hopelessly unsophisticated. The Jews, on the other hand, viewed us as lawbreakers blindly following a fallen Messiah whose only claim to fame was that he was an executed criminal. I think Paul sums up the world's view perfectly in 1 Corinthians 1:18.

NIV 1 Corinthians 1:18...For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." ²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²² Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

Does that seem like Paul is putting the world's contempt too strongly? If it does listen to the biting words of Juvenal the satirist:

Christians belong to the sewage of the Orontes, which had discharged itself into the Tiber.⁶ (The Orontes was a river of Palestine that dumped into the Mediterranean near Antioch.)

You don't have to read much Roman history to realize that Christians were viewed with contempt the first and second century. You can find slanders in

Tactitus, Pliny, Marcus Aurelius, and Suetonius. One of the clearest expressions of contempt is credited to the philosopher Celsus who wrote this.

“Their injunctions are like this. ‘Let no one educated, no one wise, no one sensible draw near. For these abilities are thought by us to be evils. But as for anyone ignorant, anyone stupid, anyone uneducated, anyone who is a child, let him come boldly.’ By the fact that they themselves admit that these people are worthy of their God, they show that they want and are able to convince only the foolish, dishonorable and stupid, and only slaves, women, and little children.”

“Other *mystery religions trying to gain converts say this*: ‘Whosoever has pure hands and a wise tongue.’ And again, others say: ‘Whosoever is pure from all defilement, and whose soul knows nothing of evil, and who has lived well and righteously, *come to us*.’ Such are the preliminary exhortations of those who promise purification from sins. But let us hear *those Christians call*. ‘Whosoever is a sinner they say, ‘whosoever is unwise, whosoever is a child, and, in a word, whosoever is a wretch, the kingdom of God will receive him.’”

“Why on earth this *contemptible* preference for sinners?” ⁷

You can see how he has taken a basic premise of Christianity, that God has used the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and perverted it in mockery to express his scorn. You can see that he viewed Christianity and Christians with scorn. Still, how is it that Paul answers?

^{NIV} **Romans 1:16**...I am not ashamed of the gospel...because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

You see Paul was saying, “**You can mock all you want, I am not ashamed.**” Now more than one commentator makes the observation that this figure of speech Paul uses here is a figure called litotes. That means that he expresses his thought by negating the opposite of the actual fact. Let me see if I can illustrate what I

mean. If Dr. Bingham were here, he might say, **"I am not a short man."** What does he mean by that? He means I am a tall man. Or if I were to use litotes I might say, **"I am not a thin man."** What do I mean by that? I mean I am a big sucker. Now if this is an example of litotes here in Paul's epistle what does he mean when he says, **"I am not ashamed of the gospel."** Well I think you would have to say either Paul is proud of the gospel or at very least he is confident concerning the gospel. I think you could argue that Paul is saying that he is not worried about the gospel producing or doing what the gospel always does and the reason he is not worried about that is because the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Now I want to talk about that at length but before I do that I think I might like to address this important question. That question is, **"What is the gospel?"** If Paul is, in fact, not ashamed of the gospel...if the gospel is the power of God unto salvation what is the gospel? Now there is a sense in which the gospel can be defined in a very strict sense. I think Paul does that 1 Corinthians 15.

^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 15:1**...Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

I think you can say that Paul says here that the gospel he preaches concerns the life, death, burial and resurrection of Christ according to the Scriptures. Of course, it seems clear to me that there are other things subsumed under those headings. For example, Paul does say Christ instead of Jesus? He says that because he is including the idea that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah. He says

that that because he is alluding to the dual nature, human and divine, of Jesus. Certainly the notion of Jesus' two natures is covered in Romans 1:3-4. But notice Paul's point, the gospel is an objective event in history. You see Jesus Christ really did live. He really did die. He really was buried and He really was resurrected from the dead. That is the objective reality of the gospel. That is the **"good news"**. Now there are implications connected to that **"good news"** and it is certainly important that you subjectively, personally lay hold of the truth of the gospel by faith. But make no mistake about it, the gospel is objectively true and real whether we believe it or not. In that sense the gospel is completely outside of you. Now there is a reason I am making such a big deal out of this at this point. I am making a big deal here because most of the time when you ask a person to define the gospel, they define it in terms of something you ought to do. They will say something like, **"The gospel is that you ought to trust in Christ or put your faith in Jesus or walk an aisle or repent and be baptized."** But that is not the gospel at all. The gospel is not about what you ought to do. The gospel is about what God has done. Now certainly you ought to believe and you ought to respond to the gospel in faith and you ought to be baptized but those are subjective responses to the gospel. What the church has done is to start preaching for a response to the gospel instead of boldly proclaiming the gospel itself.

Now let me illustrate how that can get really goofed up. During the years that I taught over at over at Bethel with Larry there was a young man there named Dennis who was hired as minister of evangelism. Larry and I both liked Dennis very much and we used to engage him from time to time in theological conversation. I asked him once how he was managed to bring so many people to faith. His answer went something like this:

Oh, I might meet someone in the park and I will introduce myself and then eventually turn our conversation to spiritual things. Then I ask them if they believe in hell. Almost everyone does. I then ask if they know how to avoid hell. If they say no, I tell them they can avoid hell or be saved by trusting in Christ. I then ask them to pray a prayer of repentance, a sinner's prayer. Then I urge them now that they are converted to be baptized and start attending church faithfully.

Then either Larry or I asked, **"How many of your converts stick."**

"Not very many," he answered, **"maybe one out of twenty."**

"Why do you think that is?" we asked.

"I don't know. Maybe we don't follow up as well as we ought."

Now please don't get the impression that I am caricaturing Dennis. I am not. He was doing what he was taught to do. He certainly had a wonderful zeal. But his zeal was directed primarily to bring a person to a decision. He could do that as well as anybody I ever met. The only problem was that he was taught to bring a person to decision in a way that didn't always get around to an actual proclamation of the gospel. Now why is that important? Well let me read Romans 1:16 to you again.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:16**...I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

You see it is important that we not disconnect our evangelism from the gospel because Paul says the gospel is the power of God for salvation. When we divorce our evangelism from the gospel, we reach over and pull the plug on God's power. Do you see that? The other thing I want you to notice is that it is not our power for salvation but **"God's power"** for salvation. God has chosen to add

people to His kingdom through the proclamation of the gospel. That's what he means when he says?

^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 1:21**...For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

You see that is why Paul can say, **"I am not ashamed of the gospel."** What he meant by that was that he believed in the power the gospel. He believed in it so much that he didn't want to change it. He didn't want to alter it or add to it or even contextualize it. He believed the message of the gospel was God's power and he had confidence in it to do what God wanted to do and that was to save all kinds of people, people from every tongue, tribe and nation. Look at verse 16 again/

^{NIV} **Romans 1:16**...I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

You see the gospel that Paul preached is a message that will save both Gentiles and Jews. It will save the wise and the foolish. It will save the moral man and the immoral man. It will save everyone who believes in it. That is why Paul makes it such a point elsewhere to point out that he is not interested in diluting the power of the gospel with his own personal magnetism or his own personal wisdom. Listen to what he told the Corinthians.

^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 2:1**...When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. ² For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. ⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and

persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,⁵ so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

Now don't I am trying to denigrate Paul in your eyes here. He had plenty of wisdom. He had a real measure too, I think, of personal magnetism. His point here is that he decided to lay that stuff down when he preached because he didn't want to get in the way of the power of God unto salvation. Do you see that?

I don't know how many times I have heard Larry quote Reinhold Niebuhr who said, **"No man can at the same time show himself to be clever and Jesus as mighty t save."** Do you see that is what Paul is saying?

Now that raises another question and this is it. Why is it that the gospel is so powerful? How on earth can it do all that? Verse 17 tells us the answer.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:17** For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Now the NIV here is very interpretive. It interprets the Greek correctly, I think, but it goes way beyond actually translating the text here. Here's what I mean. There is no **"from"** in the text. The NAS is much closer to the original Greek.

^{NAS} **Romans 1:17** For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous *man* shall live by faith."

Now that raises the question, what is the **"righteousness of God"** that is revealed in the gospel? Is it the **"righteousness that God possesses"**, the **"righteousness that God requires"** or the **"righteousness that God provides"**? Now I don't need to tell most of you, although I will tell you in detail next week,

that up until the Reformation historically most of the church held that the **“righteousness of God”** here was both the **“righteousness that God possesses in His own person”** and the **“righteousness that required”**. Now it easy to see how they came to that conclusion but it is hard to see how they thought there was any good news there.

Now what we will see next week is that in the Reformation Martin Luther came to an understanding that the **“righteousness of God”** here was not the **“righteousness that God possessed”** intrinsically in His own person but rather **“the alien righteousness that God provided in the person and work of Jesus Christ”**. Now you can see I hope how that is **“good news”** there. Because if God has provided a means of **“righteousness”** that will cover the sin of desperate and alienated sinners and that righteousness will save them *that is good news* indeed. Luther took this righteousness to be that exact same righteousness spoken of in Philippians 3.

^{NIV} **Philippians 3:9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Now the next thing I want you to see is that this **“righteousness”** is a righteousness that is revealed.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:17** For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

You see, we can see the glory of God revealed in creation. I think Romans 1:18-32 says quite plainly that the truth that there is God and that He is angry with sin is revealed to all men everywhere in both the glory of creation and in our own

consciences. But this **“righteousness of God”**, this **“righteousness that God provides”** is only found in the gospel. That is why we can say, there is no other name under heaven hereby men must be saved. That is why we can say there are not many roads to God but one road only.

^{NIV} **John 14:6** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

After that is the little phrase **“by faith from first to last”**.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:17** For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

There is a sense in which the NIV does the same thing with this phrase that it did with the phrase **“the righteousness of God”**. It interprets it rather than translates it and I would have to say again that I think it is right in the way it interprets it. Still, you need to know that underlying Greek is just **“from faith to faith”** just like the NAS and KJV have it.

^{NAS} **Romans 1:17** For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous *man* shall live by faith."

^{KJV} **Romans 1:17** For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Karl Barth here says that faith to faith means from the **“faithfulness of God”** to the **“faith of man.”**⁸ And actually that is not too bad. It could very well be that. Calvin thought that it meant from the **“beginning of faith”** to the **“maturity of faith”** and certainly it could be that.⁹ But I think C.K. Barrett has it right when he says that it is probably better to use faith the same way in both places. In other

words, it is more consistent to say **“faith”** to **“faith”** instead of **“faithfulness”** to **“faith”** and if you do that it winds up meaning by **“faith from first to last”**¹⁰ Or if you want to stand with Luther, you could get to heart of the matter and say by **“faith alone”**.

Finally, and we will stop here Paul quotes from Habakkuk 2:4. Now this is a wonderful verse and is quoted three times in the New Testament.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:17** For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Now Paul is and I think almost all scholars agree on this emphasizing the aspect of the **“the righteous or just man”** by faith shall live. They think that because Paul is going to go on here and expand on the doctrine of justification, which we will begin to discuss next week. That is a bit different than what Paul stresses in Galatians. There the Galatians thought in terms of adding works to their faith so Paul the fact that the just man **“by faith”** shall live and that is also different than what the author of Hebrews stresses. He seems to stress the fact that the just by faith **“shall live”**. He does that to encourage his Hebrew audience to keep on in the faith.

Let me just stop there. These two verses form the great theme of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans and next week we will take the time to see how Martin Luther was used by God to recover their importance and to restore the glorious truth of a gospel of which we ought not be ashamed.

¹ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987; reprint 1993), 560.

² *Ibid*, 561.

³ Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Romans Volume 1: Man's Ruin 1:1-32 and God's Wrath 2:1-3:20* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1952 and 1953; reprint 1994), 152-153. "Paul was debtor to all in a very special sense, it is true that every Christian is to be a witness, but Paul had a special debt that was above and beyond our debt, for he was the man to whom God made the special revelation that was to be passed on to us..." "When Moses had received the tables written with the finger of God, and the pattern of the tabernacle for Israel, he was bound, he was a debtor, both to God and to Israel, to deliver those tables and that pattern, as given to him by God. To Paul, the risen, glorified Christ Himself had given the gospel by a special revelation (Gal. 1:11, 12); and Paul, as we know, was especially to go to the Gentiles. Just as definitely as Moses received the law for Israel, so Paul received the gospel for us, and he was a debtor, both to God and to us, till he had the gospel committed to all."

⁴ John Stott, *Romans: God's Good News For the World*, (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 59-60. It is interesting that Leon Morris does not agree that Paul considered the Romans to be Christians. That is perhaps the reason why he rather minimizes Paul's "eagerness" and states Paul's desire to discharge his debt more as a general readiness than eagerness. Cf. Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988; reprint, 1994), 65.

⁵ Robert Haldane, "Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans" on the SAGE Digital Library CDRom, 65-66.

⁶ F.F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969; reprinted 1980), 401. He quotes Juvenal's Satire iii.62.

⁷ Ferguson, 563.

⁸ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwin C. Hoskyns, from the 6th ed., (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 41.

⁹ John Calvin, *Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. John Owen Sage Digital Library CDRom, 44.

¹⁰ C.K. Barrett, *Romans: The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957), 31.