

## Romans 1 Articles

The gospel comes in fulfillment of a promise. In Genesis, God spoke of the heel of the woman's offspring crushing the serpent (Gen 3:15). Messianic psalms portray the coming deliverer (Pss 45; 72). Jeremiah spoke of a new covenant (Jer 31:31–34). The Old Testament continually points beyond itself to a time of fulfillment, the age to come. God made his promise “through his prophets” in the Old Testament. He entrusted his message to men chosen to speak for him. Beyond that, he allowed his message to be written down. What the prophets wrote became “Holy Scriptures.” Here we have a brief summary of the method God chose in order to communicate with his people. Scripture originated with God. He used prophets to communicate his will, and they accomplished that purpose by writing down what God was pleased to reveal. The result was Scripture that is holy.

**1:3–4** The gospel is “centered in God's Son” (Goodspeed). In him are brought into focus all the hopes of God's people in the Old Testament (v. 3). God's Son is the Father's “game plan” for the reconciliation of lost humanity. Ethics and theology are all subordinate to the Christ event. God's Son enters the scene of history by natural descent. He belonged to the lineage of David. His human nature resulted from genuine participation in the human family. He was truly man. His blood line may be traced back to David. The AV inserts the final clause from v. 4 at this point, “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” Translators apparently were anxious to assure readers that while Jesus as to his human nature came from David, he was at the same time “Jesus Christ our Lord.” The transposition of this clause from v. 4 is grammatically allowable but weakens its place of emphasis in the Greek text.

Theology teaches that Jesus was both God and man. Verse 3 declares his humanity; v. 4 proclaims his deity. Jesus was designated Son of God “by his resurrection from the dead.”<sup>10</sup> It is the resurrection that sets him apart and authenticates his claim to deity. Had Jesus not risen from the dead, he would be remembered today only as a Jewish moralist who had some inflated ideas about his own relationship to God and made a number of ridiculous demands on those who wanted to be his disciples. On the other hand, if it is true that he rose from the dead, then his teachings about himself are true and his requirements for discipleship must be taken with all seriousness. C. S. Lewis wrote: “A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Although the Greek text does not specifically say “his” resurrection, the phrase obviously refers to that event. A number of commentators take it as referring to the general eschatological resurrection of which the resurrection of Jesus is the first fruit.

<sup>11</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 41.

<sup>1</sup> Mounce, R. H. (1995). *Romans* (Vol. 27, pp. 60–61). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.