

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Romans 1: 2-4

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Romans chapter 1, verses 2 to 4.

The theme of the Book of Romans is the complete gospel. Believing in Jesus, repenting, being baptized, and joining the church is only the beginning of the gospel. Every Christian must spend a lifetime knowing, experiencing, and receiving the benefits of the gospel until Christ returns, when our bodies are redeemed, and the gospel is fulfilled. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called by God to be an apostle to the Gentiles, separated himself unto the gospel of God. His existence was for the gospel; the purpose, value, and meaning of his life were all for God's gospel. His labors, travels, preaching, debating, training coworkers, and establishing churches were all part of the gospel. His life was the gospel. Where he lived, to whom he preached, and where he went were all to bear witness to the gospel. Ultimately, he became a person constituted by the gospel.

What exactly is the gospel? Paul uses verses 2 to 4, the scriptures we are studying today, to define the gospel.

Verse 2: "Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures."

This gospel was not a spontaneous idea of God or initiated to address certain difficulties. It was God's eternal purpose and plan before the foundation of the world, promised through His prophets in the Old Testament scriptures. The Greek word for prophet, prophetes, comes from pro (before) and phetes (from the root for light), meaning those who see the light first and speak according to it. Prophets are those who speak for God and express God, having received His revelation in the light. They recorded their words in the scriptures, becoming God's promises to

humanity. Every reader of the scriptures must also be in the light to understand God's promises.

Before his conversion, Paul studied the scriptures under Rabbi Gamaliel. Though familiar with them, he lacked light and could not see God's promises, treating God's words as mere legalistic texts. This led him to persecute Christians. On the road to Damascus, he saw a great light and, through Ananias' laying on of hands, was baptized and became a Christian. In Galatians 1:16-18, Paul writes, "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days" (KJV).

Paul clearly states that after his salvation, he did not confer with anyone but went alone to the wilderness of Arabia for nearly three years before returning to Damascus. In that time, he received the light of God's Son and, in that light, re-understood the Old Testament promises. Scriptures he once knew well were now imbued with new meaning.

He began to understand God's promises. He saw Adam as a type of Christ, calling Christ the last Adam, and Eve as a type of the church, which comes from Christ. He saw God's judgment on the serpent, that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, referring to Christ. Many other promises in the Old Testament revealed the gospel, showing that it was promised long ago. So, what is the gospel? The next two verses provide its definition, which is crucial, and saints are encouraged to memorize them.

Verse 3: "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh."

The subject of this verse is the gospel. The gospel is not something God does but centers on a person: “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” The gospel is centered on and embodied in a person.

This person has four aspects: “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” The first aspect is the Son of God, equal with God—eternal, self-existent, all-sufficient, and full of divine glory. The scriptures tell us all things were created by Him and for Him, and He possesses all the riches of divinity.

The second aspect is “our Lord,” meaning He has complete sovereignty over us, the Master of our lives. That the Creator of the universe would govern our lives is a great honor. Though we are but specks of dust in the universe, He values us, desires a relationship with us, and governs our lives.

The third aspect is Jesus. To relate to us, the Son of God became a man named Jesus. In His humanity, He is full of compassion, empathizing with our weaknesses, sympathizing with our failures, weeping with us, rejoicing in our victories, and blessing our progress. Having lived a human life without sin, He became the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

The fourth aspect is Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. In His divinity, He leads, supplies, and empowers us with His resurrection power. The gospel concerns God’s Son, our Lord Jesus Christ—this is its content.

Paul then introduces the gospel from two perspectives: according to the flesh and according to the Spirit of holiness. First, “according to the flesh,” Jesus was born of the seed of David. Born of the Virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit, He is fully human and fully divine. In His humanity, He is a descendant of David, Israel’s greatest king, and thus of royal lineage.

The New Testament genealogies in Matthew and Luke confirm this. Matthew 1:1-16 records Jesus’ 42-generation genealogy, with 14 generations from Abraham to David, fulfilling God’s promise to Abraham that his seed would inherit the land. From David to Jeconiah are another 14 generations of kings. After Israel’s exile to Babylon, another 14 generations lead to Jesus. Matthew 1:16 states, “And Jacob

begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ” (KJV). Jesus was born of Mary, not Joseph, His foster father. As Joseph’s son in name, Jesus inherited the royal line through David’s kingly lineage, not for an earthly throne but for the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 3:23-38 traces Jesus’ genealogy backward from Jesus through 74 generations to Adam, through Mary, His biological mother, proving His full humanity. Luke 3:31 notes, “Which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David” (KJV). Mary, a descendant of David through Nathan (not Solomon, the royal line), gave Jesus His perfect humanity.

In 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin” (KJV), the phrase “knew no sin” is revelatory. If Jesus were born of both Joseph and Mary, descendants of Adam, He would have inherited the sin nature. But Isaiah 7:14 prophesied, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (KJV). Fulfilled in Mary’s virgin birth, Jesus, as the Son of Man, had no inherent sin nature and “knew no sin.”

Like Adam before the fall, Jesus was sinless but faced Satan’s temptations. Unlike Adam, Jesus resisted all temptations, living 33.5 years without sin. Hebrews 4:15 says, “For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (KJV). Because He never sinned, Jesus qualified as the sinless Lamb to bear our sins. In His humanity, He overcame all temptations and can sympathize with our weaknesses, supporting us throughout our lives.

Verse 4: “And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

“According to the spirit of holiness” uses a unique term, not “Holy Spirit” (which denotes the person of the Spirit in the Trinity). Born of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is Immanuel, God with us. Externally human, He was indwelt by the spirit of holiness,

a spirit that sanctifies, distinct from the person of the Holy Spirit. This spirit, present in Jesus from His conception, is contrasted with “according to the flesh” in verse 3.

“Declared to be the Son of God with power” is complex but central to Romans. Why does Paul say Jesus was declared God’s Son by His resurrection, when He was already God’s Son? In eternity, the Son was in the Father’s bosom (John 1:18, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” [KJV]). Ephesians 1:4-5 states, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself” (KJV). Our adoption as sons depends on Jesus’ resurrection, which declared Him God’s Son with power.

While fully divine as God’s Son, Paul emphasizes Jesus’ humanity. As David’s seed in His humanity, Jesus had to pass through death and resurrection to be declared God’s Son with power. His death on the cross was all-inclusive, removing all negative things in the universe. His death accomplished at least three things:

Removed the sin nature. John 1:29 says, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (KJV), where “sin” is singular, referring to the sin nature.

Bore our sins. 1 Peter 2:24 states, “Who his own self bares our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (KJV), where “sins” is plural, referring to sinful acts.

Destroyed the devil’s power of death. Hebrews 2:14 says, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (KJV).

While Jesus’ body died, His spirit—the spirit of holiness—remained alive, undefiled, and descended to Hades. 1 Peter 3:19-20 notes, “By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah” (KJV). Jesus’ spirit proclaimed victory to the spirits in Hades and, through the life-giving spirit of holiness,

resurrected His body on the third day. This powerful, triumphant resurrection exalted His humanity.

Acts 7:55-56 records Stephen seeing “the Son of man” standing at God’s right hand, emphasizing Christ’s exalted humanity. Paul stresses that Jesus’ humanity, through death and resurrection, was declared God’s Son with power, making Him the prototype for our salvation. Hebrews 2:10 says He leads many sons to glory (KJV). Every saint must die to sin, live to God, and walk the path of sanctification to be declared God’s sons in glory.

The complete gospel is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. According to the flesh, He was born of David’s seed; according to the spirit of holiness, He was declared God’s Son with power by His resurrection. His death accomplished redemption, granting forgiveness through faith; His resurrection empowers us to walk the path of sanctification, ultimately declaring us God’s sons.

Let us pray: Lord, we thank You! Through Your death on the cross and resurrection on the third day, You brought us a rich salvation. Your death resolved all our problems, and Your resurrection gives us new hope. May we live daily in the newness of resurrection life, gaining strength to be free from sin, the world, and our flesh, becoming pleasing to You. We pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ.