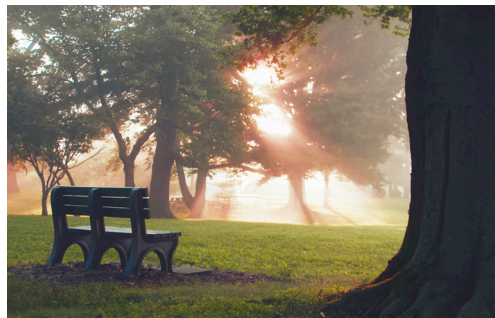


Jesus – The Son of God in Power Who Loves Us

By Daryl Wingerd



The Apostle Paul’s opening salvo in his letter to the church at Rome is a magnificent seven-verse, single-sentence greeting in which he trumpets the central truth upon which he will build the rest of the letter. If you know anything about grammatically diagramming a sentence—something most of us haven’t done since high school, if even then—this particular sentence is actually just a sequence of modifiers of the author’s

name (plus further modifiers of those modifiers!). The first seven verses basically say, “Paul (v. 1) . . . To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints” (v. 7).

In between the bookends of “Paul” and verse seven, Paul inserts the following key topics, each new point modifying the previous one:

- Paul’s apostolic mission and “the gospel of God” — the message of salvation with which he has been entrusted (v. 1)
- The fact that this gospel was promised by God throughout the long ages of redemptive history as recorded in the Old Testament (v. 2)
- The fact that the Old Testament Scriptures were all about God’s Son, Jesus, descendant of David, the king of Israel (v. 3)
- The fact that through his resurrection from the dead, Jesus has been declared by the Spirit of God to be not only God’s Son, but “the Son of God *in power*” (v. 4, emphasis mine)
- The central purpose of Paul’s apostleship: to proclaim the message about the crucified and resurrected Jesus so as to bring about salvation through “the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations” (v. 5)
- And finally, the fact that God’s redemptive activity through the gospel included the members of the local church in Rome to whom he was writing — people who, according to Paul, had been “called to belong to Jesus Christ” (v. 6)

Paul’s sentence builds a mountain of truth that reaches its pinnacle in verse four. Jesus, God’s Son, the Messiah/Savior promised in the Old Testament Scriptures, born to Mary and Joseph as the physical descendant of King David, crucified by Pilate at the insistence of the Jews and buried in a tomb, ***did not remain in the grave***. By his bodily resurrection, Jesus has been

declared by the Spirit of God to hold the position of ultimate power and authority over all the world. As Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, when God raised Jesus from the dead, he “seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come” (Eph. 1:20-21).

Follower of Jesus, this “Son of God in power” is the Savior and Lord you know and love and trust and obey. Whatever challenges or opposition or persecution you face in this life because of your faith in him, remember that the one who promised to “never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5) is not just some well-meaning but powerless friend who will stay by your side through thick and thin. He is the ruler of the universe! “All authority in heaven and on earth” belongs to him (Matt. 28:18). A legion of demons once begged him not to throw them into the abyss (Luke 8:31)! They know who he is, and they shudder (James 2:19)! He commands even the wind and the sea, and they obey him (Mark 4:39-41)! This same Jesus once said of his own followers, “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand” John 10:28).

Precisely because Jesus is “the Son of God in power,” Paul not only greeted the Romans with this glorious truth, but he also closed the first major portion of the letter with comforting words grounded in the same truth.

Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies? Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

For your sake we are being killed all the day long;

we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:33-39).