

DEEP DIVE: ROMANS 1:1-7

Love Rooted in God's Faithful Promise

Advent Week 4 - "Love Takes Flesh"

Why This Passage Matters

Romans 1:1-7 is not a polite greeting or theological warm-up. It is Paul's **compressed gospel announcement**: introducing who God is, what God has done in Jesus, and what kind of response that love creates.

In just seven verses, Paul weaves together:

- covenant promise
- incarnation
- resurrection
- mission
- and the transformation of human allegiance

This is Advent theology at its deepest level.

Romans 1:1-7 in One Paragraph

Paul announces the gospel as God's promised message about His Son, Jesus the Messiah, who enters history as a descendant of David and is revealed in power through the resurrection. This gospel fulfills Israel's Scriptures, unveils Jesus as the true Lord, and creates a worldwide community marked by grace, peace, and faithful obedience. God's love is shown not as a sudden impulse, but as long-standing covenant faithfulness that takes flesh and calls people into a life of trusting allegiance.

Key Theological Movements in the Passage

1. The Gospel Is Promised, Not Invented (v. 2)

Paul insists the gospel was "promised beforehand" in the Scriptures. Christmas is not God changing His mind, it is God keeping His promises. Love, in biblical terms, is **faithful over time**, not reactive or fragile.

2. The Gospel Concerns a Person (vv. 3-4)

The gospel is not an abstract message, it is “concerning His Son.”

- **According to the flesh:** Jesus enters real history as Israel’s Messiah.
- **According to the Spirit of holiness:** Jesus is vindicated as Son of God in power through resurrection.

Incarnation and resurrection belong together. Love takes flesh, and that flesh is raised.

3. The Gospel Creates Allegiance (v. 5)

Paul’s mission is to bring about “the obedience of faith” among the nations.

Faith is not merely agreement; it is **trust expressed through allegiance**. God’s love does not simply comfort...it claims, reshapes, and sends.

4. The Gospel Forms a People (vv. 6-7)

Believers are described as:

- **called** to belong to Jesus
- **loved by God**
- **called to be holy ones (saints)**

God’s love creates a new identity and a new way of life, grounded in grace and peace.

Short Greek Glossary (Key Words Only)

- **εὐαγγέλιον (euangelion)** *gospel, good news*
A public announcement of victory or kingship; not private spirituality.
- **δοῦλος (doulos)** *servant/slave*
One whose identity is shaped by allegiance to a master.
- **υἱός (huios)** *son*
Carries royal and covenant meaning, especially in Davidic contexts.
- **κατὰ σάρκα (kata sarka)** *according to the flesh*
Refers to Jesus’ real, historical humanity.
- **κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης (kata pneuma hagiōsynēs)** *according to the Spirit of holiness*
Points to resurrection power and divine vindication.
- **ὀρίζω / ὀρισθέντος (horizō / horisthentos)** *to appoint, mark out, determine*
Indicates public declaration, not adoption.
- **πίστις (pistis)** *faith, trust, loyalty*
Includes belief and relational allegiance.
- **ὑπακοή πίστεως (hypakoē pisteōs)** *obedience of faith*
Faith expressed through faithful obedience; trust enacted.

Intertextual Echoes to Notice

- **2 Samuel 7** - Davidic sonship and kingship promise
- **Psalms 2** - Royal “Son of God” language
- **Isaiah’s Davidic hope** - Righteous king and restored people
- **Imperial Rome** - Competing “gospels” and claims of lordship

Paul’s opening lines quietly but decisively announce: **Jesus, not Caesar, is Lord.**

Connecting Romans 1 to Advent: Love Takes Flesh

Romans 1 helps us avoid reducing Advent love to sentiment.

- God’s love is **covenant faithfulness**, not seasonal emotion.
- God’s love **enters history**, not distance.
- God’s love **creates a people**, not just comfort.

This is why Joseph’s obedience matters. His faithful response mirrors what Paul calls “the obedience of faith”: the human answer awakened by divine, incarnate love.

For Further Study

1. How does seeing the gospel as a *royal announcement* change the way you think about faith?
2. Where do you tend to separate belief from obedience—and how does Romans 1 challenge that split?
3. What does it mean, practically, to belong to Jesus as Lord in everyday life?
4. How does understanding Christmas as covenant fulfillment deepen your experience of Advent?

“The dawn has broken. Love has taken flesh. And God is with us.”