

Romans 1:2-4

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rom/rom-1/romans-12-4/>

Paul is establishing the facts of the gospel: that Jesus was promised in the Old Testament, he was born of David, was God and man, and was resurrected from the dead by the power of the Spirit of holiness, who is one with Jesus.

The good news of Jesus the Messiah is *promised beforehand through His prophets in the* (Old Testament) *holy Scriptures* (v 2). At the time Paul wrote Romans, the New Testament had not yet been assembled, so his reference to the *holy Scriptures* would have only included the Old Testament.

The first promise of an anointed (Messiah) deliverer who will redeem humanity and the earth from the curse is found immediately after the fall of man in Genesis 3:15. It seems Eve believed she had birthed a divine deliverer when she birthed Cain (Genesis 4:1). But of course that was not the case. From that time forward the hope and promise of a divine deliverer permeates the Scriptures.

An example of a scriptural hope for One to deliver humans from sin is from Isaiah 53:11:

“By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,
For He shall bear their iniquities.”

The Jews understood this, and at the time of Jesus there was extreme expectancy awaiting the promised Messiah/deliverer. But the good news Jesus brought was not presented in a manner Israel’s rulers expected. Accordingly, they rejected Him. This resulted in Jesus’s death on the cross, which covered the sins of all humanity, including Gentiles (non-Jews) (Colossians 2:14).

The resulting deliverance from the penalty, the power, and inevitably from the presence of sin is the best news (“good tidings”) ever told. In the time of Paul the hope of the visitation of a Messianic deliverer had become a reality. Paul already asserted in verse 1 that he had been “set apart” to serve the mission of spreading the amazing “good tidings” of God’s deliverance for humanity.

The central figure in the good news entrusted to the Apostle Paul is *concerning His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ* was God’s Son, *born a descendant of David according to the flesh*, (v 3) and was (according to the genealogies of Matthew and Luke) the rightful heir to the throne of David as King of Israel (2 Samuel 7:13); Jesus was the adopted first son of the rightful heir to the throne, Joseph, as well as the promised son through His mother Mary, who was also a descendent of King David.

Although Paul is writing to an audience that is primarily Gentile, the contesting authorities who slander Paul are Jewish like Paul. It is likely that by speaking of Jesus as being *born a descendant of David* Paul is establishing that he is in no way unraveling the Jewishness of Jesus, or of the *Holy Scriptures* (v 2). He is going to establish that the gospel (good tidings) he presents is consistent with Jesus King of Israel, as well as the message of the Old Testament, while the

message of the Jewish authorities slandering Paul's good news is not only wrong, but also corrupt.

Paul makes clear to these devout and renowned Roman believers that he believes in the Jesus who *was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead* (v 4). The *power of the resurrection* is the *power* of God to deliver humanity from the penalty, the power, and eventually the presence of sin. The *resurrection* is central to God's good news (gospel). It is the *resurrection from the dead* that *declared* that Jesus is the *Son of God*. The resurrection declares that God has the *power* over death through His *Son*.

The gospel writers are adamant that any teacher is false who does not proclaim the divinity as well as the humanity of Jesus along with the factual reality of the *resurrection* (1 John 4:3; John 1:1). Here Paul is declaring early in the letter that he is a true apostle with true beliefs in the person of Jesus as opposed to his detractors who slander his message (Romans 3:8).

The *Spirit of holiness* is the agent through which the *resurrection from the dead* occurred. It is inferred that the *Spirit* of God is the agent through whom God exercised *power* over death by resurrecting Jesus *according to the Spirit of holiness*. Paul will later emphasize that this same *Spirit* resides in each believer and empowers them to live a life brimming with this same resurrection power over sin in their daily living, a power apprehended through faith (Romans 8:1).

The *Spirit of holiness* is also stated to be *Jesus Christ our Lord*. Here is elevated the mystery of the Trinity, that God, Jesus, and the Spirit are One (Deuteronomy 6:4). However, Jesus and the Father are separate, yet One (John 17:21). Amazingly, Jesus prayed that we might be one with them as well (John 17:21). This can occur in the life of believers now through walking in the Holy Spirit, who, from verse 4, is also one with Jesus.

Biblical Text

2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,³ concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,⁴ who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,