

## **Jesus' Coming is All Grace!**

Unfortunately, misperceiving God the Father, Son and Spirit in our sin has bred "self-chosen" relationships. A "self-chosen" relationship has been defined as "*a situation where a social relation is entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with each other; and which is continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfactions for each individual to stay within it.*", Andrew Root, "*Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*", p. 43. With such prevailing notions about relations, no wonder our relationships are broken, gainful employment is too often short-term, and pastors are even forsaking "their" flocks! An "I'm only in it for me!" attitude is simply not the Good News we're looking for!

In stating his credentials to the Church at Rome, the Apostle Paul cuts through this bad news of the self-chosen relationship and shares marvelously in its fix – the self-giving and unconditional nature of God the Trinity's Love and Grace toward us in His coming to us:

- ***Rom. 1:1* Paul was made a servant (slave) of the Gospel, called to be an Apostle (sent), and set apart for the Good News of God the Trinity by Jesus Christ in His coming. All of Grace!**

No wonder Paul's ministry still encourages, exhorts and emancipates people 2000 years later! It wasn't Paul's ministry, but Jesus' coming, calling, and classifying Paul in His unconditional ministry of love that makes the lasting difference. All of Grace!

- ***Rom. 1:2-4* Without any request from sinful humanity, or for His own sake and personal benefit, the Triune God promised, through the prophets and even the O.T. scriptures, to come and Be, Himself, our Good News, and Lord. All of Grace!**

Specifically, the Apostle Paul says that the Triune God promised and came:

- To be both God and Man in one Person (meaning that forever all of humanity belongs to God the Father, Son and Spirit in Jesus Christ and we get to experience and share in His exact nature of unconditional love.) All of Grace!
- To be humanity's Lord *and* to remain God and Man in One Person for our sake as Jesus Christ our Lord (meaning no one can make Jesus their Lord and Savior because he will be Lord and Savior to all humanity forever.) All of Grace!
- To be our resurrection from the dead, in His Resurrection of our humanity (means that when Jesus lived, all of humanity lived. When He died, all of humanity died. When He rose from death and ascended into heaven, all of humanity rose with and ascended in Him! All of Grace!

- ***Rom. 1:5-7* The Apostle Paul, all of the Apostles, the Church at Rome and all those who belong to Christ by faith as well as by grace RIGHT NOW, are also called and sent forth in His Coming with this Good News of Who Jesus is. We are authorized through our proclamation to help more people participate in the truth with Jesus' obedient faith and for His sake in God's grace and peace! All of Grace!**

The term 'apostle' is used in most of the NT of someone who has seen Christ and been specially commissioned by him to function as part of the 'foundation' of the church (Eph. 2:20; see Acts 1:12-26). Paul, then, owed his authority as an apostle not to any human appointment or abilities, but to the risen Lord's call and gifts<sup>1</sup>

It is also instructive and encouraging to notice that believer/followers of Jesus are called "Saints", not called "to be saints!" Being a saint (set apart to Triune God) is not a self-chosen relationship, self-selected identity or self-term. It is given to us right in the middle of our sinfulness - All of Grace!

~ Tim Brassell

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NT New Testament

<sup>1</sup>Carson, D. A.: *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*. 4th ed. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA : Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, S. Ro 1:1