

Easy As 1-2-3



Romans 1 & 2

It's As Easy As 1-2-3

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Overall Understanding

Chapter One

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God ²which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, ³concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. ⁵Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, ⁶among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ:

Paul begins his letter by telling them who the letter is from and explaining his calling. He was separated to the gospel of God.

In Acts 20:24 Paul describes His calling as preaching the gospel of grace.

But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

This gospel was promised by the prophets. Jesus was born of the seed of David and declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.

He calls them “the called of Jesus Christ” acknowledging they are believers.

⁷To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to *be* saints:

It’s easy to pass by this as a mere salutation. He calls them the beloved of God. Then he calls them saints—morally pure. We ARE saints. We ARE loved by God.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

It’s easy to pass by this as a mere salutation. He pronounces grace and peace to them. The gospel is often referred to as the gospel of grace and the gospel of peace.

⁸First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

That is a remarkable statement. The Romans Christians already had world-wide recognition concerning their faith.

⁹For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, ¹⁰making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. ¹¹For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— ¹²that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

Paul apparently loved the Romans. He prayed he could see them again. He wants to impart some spiritual gift to them so that they could be established. What does that mean? He explains, “That I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

He longs to see them, but in the meantime, he is going to impart to them one of the most thorough and profound doctrinal letters that he wrote.

¹³Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. ¹⁴I am a debtor both to

Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. ¹⁵ So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

Paul wants to minister to the Romans personally, to see fruit among them as among the other Gentiles. He wants to preach the gospel of peace and of grace to them.

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

We often think of spiritual gifts as the power (*dunamis*) of God, but here Paul calls the gospel the *dunamis* of God. Notice he says it is the power of God to those who believe—to believers—both Jewish and Gentile.

The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith. From the faith we have when we first believe to the faith we have as we live each day in Him.

The just shall live by faith. The just (the justified, the righteous) shall live by faith. Some have translated this verse: The one who is righteous by faith shall LIVE.

When we put our faith in Jesus, we have eternal life. That same life is ours throughout our time on earth and forevermore.

Now Paul shows that all are guilty before God.

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

God has shown Himself to every person by His creation which daily shouts, "I am here. I created everything good that you see."

Instead of worshipping the Creator, they worshipped creation.

²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

God allows us to make wrong choices, but as we go down that path of not believing in the Creator, we become increasingly lured into the lusts of our bodies. "Dishonoring their bodies among themselves" refer to sexual immorality. "The lie" is that there is no God. They worshipped anything else but the true God.

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷ Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

This verse is offensive in our culture. We want to think it's ok to live how one wants to live. But here Paul speaks of sexual immorality as acts against God. This path brings one further deception and bondage.

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, ³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Though he begins with sexual immorality, he mentions multiple other behaviors that are a result of rejecting the Creator. Before denouncing sexual immorality as if it were the worst sin, consider this list as well. They perfectly describe the culture of modern-day society.

We see this as an increasing feature among us. Not only do people practice these immoralities but they approve of those who practice them. They cheer each other on as if their behavior were noble.

Chapter Two

Therefore, you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. ²But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. ³And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? ⁴Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

This letter was addressed to both Jew and Gentile. So far, this letter has focused more on the Gentiles who reject God and therefore participate in immorality.

Even though mankind rejects the Creator and grieves at the resulting sin, He loves mankind. He sent His Son for sinners. He patiently waits for them to repent. He is good to them even though they curse Him.

That goodness leads to repentance.

⁵But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: ⁷eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; ⁸but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, ⁹tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; ¹⁰but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹For there is no partiality with God.

It is easy to judge non-believers for their behavior, but Paul introduces above what he is getting ready to say. EVERYONE is guilty before God prior to faith in Christ, even the Jews. He uses terms like: each one, every soul of man when referring to the consequences of sin and adds, “to the Jew first and also of the Greek.” The Jews were not exempt from being held accountable for their sin.

But Paul also says that those who seek for glory, honor, and immortality, those who obey the truth, will receive glory, honor, and peace “the Jew first and also on the Greek.”

“Obey the truth” surely refers to obeying the gospel, to believing in Jesus.

There is no partiality with God, not only means God loves us all equally, but it is a message to the Jews that they are equal to the Gentiles. This was a shocking thing for a Jew to say. God judges both groups equally, and he will elaborate further.

¹² For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law

Sin is the issue for those who were under the law and for those who were not.,

¹³ (for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;

This verse should not be taken out of context. He is speaking of unbelievers for Jew and Gentile in this chapter, but in this verse, he is speaking to the Jews. Hearing the Law of Moses was not enough. They needed to do the law. Obviously, many of them were not.

¹⁴ for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*)

There were some Jews who without having the law, lived uprightly. They were guided by their conscience.

¹⁶ in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

This is referring to nonbelieving Jews and Gentiles. The Jews who do not believe in Christ will be judged by the Law. The Gentiles will be judged by their conscience.

It should be noted that those who believe in Jesus will not come into judgment.

Paul says they will be judged according to Paul's gospel. Those who reject the gospel, both Jews and Greeks will be judged.

John 5:24

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

¹⁷ Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, ¹⁸ and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, ¹⁹ and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. ²¹ You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? ²² You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? ²⁴ For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.

Ouch. Paul is making it clear to the Jews. The Gentiles are guilty before God, but so are you.

²⁵ For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

Circumcision didn't save the Jews. They had to keep the law of Moses.

²⁶ Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? ²⁷ And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, *even with your written code* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law?

Paul points out again that all are guilty by saying a Gentile that keeps the law is better than a circumcised Jew who does not keep the law. Again, he is reinforcing equality when it comes to sin.

²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; ²⁹ but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and

circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

It is difficult for us to imagine how offensive this statement would have been received by the Jews who thought themselves superior to the Gentiles in every way. Paul is putting them on equal footing.

Circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter. The Spirit is presented as an opposite to “the letter.” “The letter” refers to the law. Those who believe in Jesus are those in the Spirit. He mentions this again in Chapter 8.

The conclusion to both of these chapters is found in the next chapter.

Coming Up in Chapter 3

Paul shows the advantage the Jews had. They had the law to lead them to Christ.

He shows that both Jew and Gentile had sinned.

No one would be justified/made righteous by the law.

Only those who have faith in Christ are considered righteous.