



SMALL GROUP LESSON
THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS, GOD'S SON
ROMANS 1:1-7
SEPTEMBER 18, 2016

Years ago many high schools offered a typing class. Not only did a student learn how to use a typewriter, but he or she also learned to compose various kinds of documents. One of them was a letter. In order to be properly written, there were a number of things that needed to be included such as an inside address, a salutation, a signature, and, of course, the subject matter of the letter. The same is true with regards to letters that were written a long time ago. They too had a standard way of composing their letters, and this is what we find in Paul's letter to the Romans. So let's get started by taking a look at the first seven verses of this letter and see what they tell us about the author, the subject matter which he will be addressing in his correspondence, and the recipients to whom it is being sent. After reading these seven verses, perhaps in several different translations of the Bible so that you can really get a feel for what the author is saying, take a few moments to consider these four questions. You might also wish to take a look at the pastor's sermon at <http://www.bedfordpresbyva.org/sermons/weekly-sermons-text.html>, do a little research on line, or perhaps examine a Biblical commentary on these first seven verses in Paul's letter to the Romans.

1. Why did the author of Romans introduce himself as "Paul," and what did he have to say about himself? The book of Acts contains a wealth of information about Paul, including an account of his conversion in Acts 9:1-19. One of the things you will notice later on in the book of Acts is that he changed his name. Do you know why? If you can figure that out, it will help you to answer the next question.
2. To whom was this letter written, where did they live, and what do you think was their predominant ethnic background? Like Paul, were they mostly Jewish people or were they a part of another group of people with a rather unusual designation?
3. What is the subject matter of this letter? Who is Paul going to be talking about as he composes this document and what does he have to say about him?
4. Finally, why is this letter so important? The pastor said in his sermon that this letter, especially Romans 1:17 (**the one who is righteous shall live by faith**), has literally changed the course on history on multiple occasions. What does this verse mean to you and how might it change the course of your life?