

# I Am

Romans 1:14-17



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**FOCAL Read Responsively** **Romans 1:14-17** I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. (15) So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. (16) **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.** (17) **For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.**<sup>KJV</sup>

**Illustrate & Introduction** When scientists look at apes and other lower forms of life, they base their theory of evolution – the concept that man evolved from lower creature to where we are now – on the ability of animals to use *tools*. They assert that we humans use tools and, if they can see tool use in other creatures, then they have undeniable proof that we were once ape, reptile, fish, and amoeba. They often show apes on *National Geographic* television specials fishing termites or larvae out of logs and piles of dirt with twigs. As the animal does this the narrator drones on, bombarding us with the idea that this monkey is a close cousin to humanity. No one ever asks these *brilliant scientists* the obvious questions, such as:

- If man descended from apes, why are there still apes? Is it just that – like the comedian said – some of them couldn't make it over the evolutionary “hump”?
- Why does science have such a low view of “tool use”? Yes, I see the monkey fishing termites from the rotted log. When I see the skyscraper that “Monkey

Construction Company” has made, when I see these creatures welding and hammering nails in order to do something more creative than *eating bugs* – that's when I'll be impressed! When I look across the aisle of my local Sears Department Store and see an ape checking out the latest *Sears Craftsman*® tools, THAT's when I'll become a believer.

- And why, pray tell, are these so called “relatives of man” eating these things raw? If they're smart at using tools, how about rubbing two sticks together and cooking that mess before you eat it?

What makes man uniquely different from the animals?

The fact is, *tool use* is not what distinguishes man from animal. What makes us *uniquely different* is our creation. God said in His Word:

**Genesis 1:26-27 And God said, Let us make man in our image<sup>1</sup>, after our likeness<sup>2</sup>: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (27) So God created**

1 H6754, צֶלֶם, tselem, tseh'-lem, From an unused root meaning to *shade*; a *phantom*, that is, (figuratively) *illusion, resemblance*; hence a representative *figure*, especially an *idol*: - image, vain shew.

2 H1823, דְּמוּת, d'mûth, dem-ooth', From H1819; *resemblance*; concretely *model, shape*; adverbially *like*: - fashion, like (-ness, as), manner, similitude.

**man in his [own] image<sup>1</sup>, in the image<sup>1</sup> of God created he him; male and female created he them.**

Man and woman<sup>3</sup>, unlike other created life, is made *in the image or likeness of God*, what the Hebrew calls צֶלֶם, or tselem, (pronounced tseh'-lem). This same word is repeated *three times* in Genesis 1:26-27. Mankind is made in the *likeness or image of God*. We were made this way by God Himself, designed to be like Him. I have had people ask me, “Brother David, what difference does it make if two people sleep together apart from Biblical marriage? What difference does it make to you if we legalize *same sex* marriage in America, or all over the world? What difference does it make if we legalize drug use in this country? What difference does it make if we redesign morality based on *what we feel* rather than on *what God has said*? What difference does absolute truth make?

It makes a lot of difference.

You see, man and woman was made *distinctly different* from the animal. Humanity was to have *dominion* over the animals, not to lower themselves and join in with them. Satan – from the beginning – entices man to move from his proper place (the image of God) and into the lower place (the animal kingdom). This is the reason that Satan approached Adam and Eve in the form of a *serpent* (**Genesis 3:1**). Humanity was duped into lowering

3 When I use the word "Man" this is to be taken for *both* man and woman or *mankind*. The Scripture is clear that *both* male and female are *in God's image*.

themselves so as to follow the animal, rather than remain in the image of God and follow our Creator.

When I rearrange truth to suit base emotion rather than what God has said, I am lowering myself to be like \_\_\_\_\_

This, by the way, is the *exact same battle* that is going on in America today. The serpent, our enemy Lucifer, has convinced many that there is no difference between animal and man. Most animals instinctively mate, satisfying base urges without regard to morality or God. Satan has convinced many humans that there is nothing wrong with following the potential of the animal rather than following the *image of God*. Many animals kill without regard to the potential value of life itself. For instance, a hungry lion is just as satisfied eating a newborn as it is to eat the adult of that particular creature. Animals know nothing of the *Ten Commandments of God*. No animal will be convicted – or convinced – that there is such a thing as lying, stealing, murder, adultery, coveting, or blaspheming God's Holy Name. Since animals are not made in the *image of God* they have not been given any of the restrictions that God has imposed on humanity.

In our focal text today we will see three **I Am** statements made by the great Apostle Paul. These statements make *absolutely no sense* if man is only a *higher form of animal*. Paul said:

- I Am Debtor

- I Am Ready
- I Am Not Ashamed of The Gospel

These three statements applied not only to the Apostle, but they should apply to *every Christian* saved by Grace. Let's look at these statements.

### 1. I Am Debtor

**FOCAL** Romans 1:14 **I am debtor<sup>4</sup> both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians<sup>5</sup>; both to the wise, and to the unwise.**

The Apostle considered himself to be an *ὀφειλέτης*, *opheiletēs*, (pronounced *of-i-let'-ace*), an *ower* or *someone who is indebted to another*. His debt was to the **Greeks or the wise, and to the Barbarians or the unwise**.

*ὀφειλέτης*, *opheiletēs*, (pronounced *of-i-let'-ace*), means “an *ower* or *someone who is indebted to another*”. Why would the Apostle consider himself to be indebted to the **Greeks** and to the **Barbarians**?

First of all, the Christian – the person saved by faith in Christ – is under an obligation to God. You were saved

4 G3781, *ὀφειλέτης*, *opheiletēs*, *of-i-let'-ace*, From G3784; an *ower*, that is, a person *indebted*; figuratively a *delinquent*; morally a *transgressor* (against God): - debtor, which owed, sinner.

5 G915, *βάρβαρος*, *barbaros*, *bar'-bar-os*, Of uncertain derivation; a *foreigner* (that is, *non Greek*): - barbarian (-rous).

freely by faith in Christ. God required nothing from you to be saved but that you:

**Acts 16:31 ... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ...**

Once saved, though, the believer enters into the Family of God. Those whom God saves *He always sanctifies* or sets apart. You are saved, but you are saved to serve. After salvation you were given a Great Commission, a charge to keep – to tell others about Jesus. When Jesus rose from the grave He told us:

**Luke 24:46-47 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: (47) And that repentance<sup>6</sup> and remission<sup>7</sup> of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

Jesus Christ was under obligation to suffer and die for our sins, and He was under obligation to rise from the grave on the third day. Our Lord fulfilled His Commission, then passed on to each of us a commission to *tell others the Gospel of God*. We are to preach or proclaim **repentance**, that is, **turning away from sin**. We do not turn away from sin in our own power, but we

6 G3341, **μετάνοια**, metanoia, *met-an'-oy-ah*, From G3340; (subjectively) *compunction* (for guilt, including *reformation*); by implication *reversal* (of [another's] decision): - repentance.

7 G859, **ἄφεσις**, aphasis, *af'-es-is*, From G863; *freedom*; (figuratively) *pardon*: - deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission.

turn away from sin *in the power of God*. Further, we are proclaim **remission**, that is, **pardon, deliverance, and liberty from sin**. This is a far cry from *dumbing down* the Gospel in order to appeal to the world around us.

The proclamation of the Gospel *never acts* to draw men toward greater sinning, but always draws humanity *farther from* sin.

C.H. Spurgeon said:

“... let me tell you that if you have a peace to-day which enables you to be at peace with your sins as well as with God, that peace is a false peace. Unless you hate sin of every sort, with all your heart, you are not a child of God, you are not reconciled to God by the death of his Son. You will not be perfect; I cannot expect you will live without sin, but if you are a Christian you will hate the very sin into which you have been betrayed, and hate yourself because you should have grieved your Savior thus. But if you love sin, the love of the Father is not in you. Be you who you may, or what you may, — minister, deacon, elder, professor, or non-professor — the love of sin is utterly inconsistent with the love of Christ. Take that home, and remember it.”

Paul saw himself under obligation or indebtedness to *preach the full Gospel* to those who were **Greek and Barbarians**. The **Greek** or the *wise, the philosopher, the scientist, the evolutionist, the educated* had to hear the Gospel – Paul was obligated to them. He was obligated

because Jesus saved him from his sins, and commanded that Paul himself “**go, and teach all nations**”. Paul did not look at the wondrous buildings the Greeks made, the marvels of architecture, the vast libraries and scholarly colleges and say, “they must be saved, for they are good, educated people”. Paul knew that Jesus commanded that **all nations be taught to observe all things the Master – our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20)**. A Christian is a person under obligation, under indebtedness. Jesus loved us, and saved us from our sins. Though the Greek society (which was all throughout Roman culture) brought with it cleanliness, education, government (our Senate is based on the Greek method of governing), and orderly society, a system of capitalism that seemed to work, nonetheless the Greek for all his or her wisdom is *lost and undone without a relationship with Christ our Lord*.

Good people don't get into Heaven – saved people get into Heaven. The Greek culture brought many good things with it, but it did not bring Christ.

**Romans 10:11-13 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (12) For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. (13) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

The Jew, the *religious person*, needs to be saved. The **Greek**, the wise and scholarly *irreligious person*, needs to be saved. But you have a third category of person that Paul felt himself under obligation to, and that was **the Barbarian**. This was the **non-Greek** or the **foreigner**. Paul felt under obligation to all people, to tell them of Jesus and of His saving Grace. No matter how far from God a person is, the Lord will save their souls if they will come to Him. You cannot be *too good* for God, neither can you be *too bad*. If you will **repent** of your sins, **calling upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ**, you will be saved. **Christopher Love** stated:

**"If the Lord should bring a wicked man to heaven, heaven would be hell to him; for he who loves not grace upon earth will never love it in heaven."**

That which the Great Fisherman catches, He also *cleans*. The Lord is able to save all people, to cleanse all people, to help all people reach their God Given potential in Christ.

Paul – and every Christian – should feel an obligation to the Lord Who saved us to tell others about His awesome power. On the day that you were saved, God the Holy Spirit came into your life. When the God Who is love came into your lives, **the love of God came with Him**. The Apostle Paul was under obligation to the Greeks and Barbarians because God, *who indwelt Paul, made this obligation known*. The Bible says:

**Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**

Charles Stanley in his book, *Living in The Power of the Holy Spirit* states:

**“It is the Holy Spirit Who continually prompts us to find new ways of reaching out to others with genuine compassion and godly love. The Holy Spirit constantly points out areas in which He desires for us to move beyond our own self centered wants and to help others in material and practical ways. *The Holy Spirit compels us to love as Christ loved us* with a heart that refuses to judge or condemn, a heart willing to sacrifice so that others might be saved.”<sup>8</sup>**

Paul felt the obligation of love toward every person, no matter who they were, to tell them about Jesus Christ and the salvation that is available only through faith in His Name.

What are *four questions* every Christian should ask the Lord every single day?

Paul was always asking the Lord:

- **What do You want me to do?**
- **How do You want me to act?**

<sup>8</sup> Pages 41-42, emphasis mine

- **When do You want me to act?**
- **How can I best represent You today?**<sup>9</sup>

If each and every Christian recognized themselves as people *obligated to share Christ with others*, and if each and every Christian asked themselves these four simple questions each day, the Church could reach true revival in America.

## **2. I Am Ready**

It is one thing to feel yourself to be *under obligation*, but it is quite another thing to be **ready** to meet that obligation. The Apostle said:

**FOCAL** Romans 1:15 So, **as much as in me is, I am ready<sup>10</sup> to preach the gospel<sup>11</sup> to you** that are at Rome also.

Paul was **ready in spirit, predisposed, and willing to announce the good news of Christ** to the Romans. Why are we often *not* prepared to tell others about our Lord Jesus? Perhaps we are reluctant to share Christ with others because our *lifestyle* has been shameful. The Christian is to be a *branch connected to Christ*. Jesus said:

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from *Living In The Power Of The Holy Spirit*, Charles Stanley, questions on pages 46-47

<sup>10</sup> G4289, προθυμος, prothumos, *proth'-oo-mos*, From G4253 and G2372; *forward in spirit*, that is, *predisposed*; neuter (as noun) *alacrity*: - ready, willing.

<sup>11</sup> G2097, εὐαγγελίζω, euaggelizō, *yoo-ang-ghel-id'-zo*, From G2095 and G32; to *announce good news* (“evangelize”) especially the gospel: - declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (the gospel).

**John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.**

The Christian is called to *abide in Christ*, to allow the Lord to work through the framework of his life. That which Christ saves He always *sanctifies*.

Paul had surrendered his life to the Lord, not to sin. Paul had surrendered himself to "the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

The Word of God has an awesome power in the life of the Believer - IF you will utilize it. So many believers today **want the power of the Lord but not the Sword of the Lord in their lives**. You cannot have one without the other. This generation of Americans are like the Greek society of Paul's day. They believe in many gods, many truths, many ways. Yet, dear friends, if you are saved by faith in Christ, you will only be *empowered by faith in God's Word*.

In his book, *The Incredible Power of Kingdom Authority*, Adrian Rogers *quoted* Billy Graham as saying<sup>12</sup>:

**"I surrendered my will to the living God revealed in the Scripture. I knelt before the opened Bible and**

**said, 'Lord, many things in this Book I do not understand, but Thou hast said the just shall live by faith. All I have, I have received by faith. Here and now by faith, I accept the Bible as Thy Word. I take it all. I take it without reservations. Where there are things I cannot understand, I will reserve judgment until I receive more light. If this pleases Thee, give me authority as I proclaim Thy Word, and through that authority convict me of sin and turn sinners to the Savior."**

This is why the trademark term that Billy uses is "**The Bible says**".

The Apostle Paul was ready to **preach the good news** because he knew that Christ - the Living Word - is real. He also knew that God's written Word is real and trustworthy. These things are accepted *by faith*. In our modern society we are being asked to accept that the Bible is true in all matters of *faith and practice*, but false in matters that deal with **all things Greek such as evolutionary theory and the Biblical model of creation**. If you disconnect parts of the Bible because they do not agree with current scientific theory, then you pollute the Gospel message. What is the message of the Gospel? The Bible says:

**1 Corinthians 15:1, 3-5 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ... (3) For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that**

**Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; (4) And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: (5) And that he was seen ...**

Paul was always ready to present the Gospel because he knew that the Scripture taught:

- **Christ died for our sins**
- **Therefore, we are all sinners in need of the Savior**
- **There are many who claim to be Saviors, but *only Jesus rose from the dead***
- **There are *many* eyewitnesses to that reality**

Now we are being asked by **Greek society in America** to reject God's Word in certain areas, and accept that Word in other areas. For instance, we are being told to reject the Biblical Creation account of **Genesis chapter one**. The Bible is clear that all of creation was formed in *six literal days*, and that all of mankind descended from Adam and Eve, the first parents, who fell into sin when they ate of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. The Bible explains sickness, disease, death, Christ's need to die for the whole world based on the teachings of the *whole of Scripture*. Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, is proven Messiah because *His lineage is traced back to Adam (Luke 3:38)*. Jesus acknowledged the creation account of Genesis when He said:

**Matthew 19:4 {Jesus} said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the**

**beginning made them male and female**

**Mark 10:6-8 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. (7) For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; (8) And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.**

Jesus recognized that the first parents were created by God, one male and one female, and these two became one flesh. Paul was ready to preach the Gospel because *his Biblical foundations were sure*. The Bible, God's Word, is what we stand on. We accept it wholly, in every part, believing it because it IS God's Word. We are told in Scripture:

**2 Corinthians 2:17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.**

Paul was ready to preach or proclaim the good news of Jesus because Paul refused to compromise God's Word. Be ready, Beloved, to tell others. Study God's Word. If you find a section that you do not understand, trust God anyway. You will be blessed!

**3. I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel**

**FOCAL** Romans 1:16-17 For **I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ**: for it is the power<sup>13</sup> of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (17) For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith

The Gospel of Christ is the *δύναμις*, *dunamis*, (pronounced *doo'-nam-is*) or **miraculous explosive power of God**. What are two *English* words we get from this Greek word? \_\_\_\_\_

We get two English words from DUNAMIS: **dynamite** and **dynamo**. As *dynamite*, the Gospel of Christ has the power to destroy those who disbelieve its promises (just as unbelievers will be judged by it at the Last Judgment). As a *dynamo*, Gospel of Christ has the power to energize or build up the believer who trusts in the Lord.

The Christian way of life is a *supernatural* way of life. The day that you accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, the day you said "I believe" to His promises, on that very day you were saved. A Christian is not a worldling, not the same as an unbeliever. A Christian is a person who has been forgiven and, following forgiveness, been *adopted* into the Family of God. A Christian is a person who has been given great tools to

13 G1411, *δύναμις*, *dunamis*, *doo'-nam-is*, From G1410; *force* (literally or figuratively); specifically *miraculous power* (usually by implication a *miracle* itself): - ability, abundance, meaning, might (-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) miracle (-s), power, strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work.

live his spiritual life by. The Christian is saved from a life of *helpless servitude to sin* and has been made over. God indwells you, dear Believer, and empowers you to live for Him.

The word **gospel** means **good news**. When you look at the television news in today's world, you never get any **good news**. It's always bad, and the badder the more sensational. The Gospel of Christ, on the other hand, is the Good News of God. Yes, it is bad news that our first parents sinned and plunged all of humanity into spiritual death. Yes, it is terrible that death entered this world through the one man Adam:

**Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**

but the **good news** is that Jesus Christ made payment for our sins on the Cross of Calvary. Salvation has *always* been by faith in God's provision.

What was the difference between the Old Testament and New Testament methods of salvation? **(Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 3.11; Hebrews 10.38)**

The Old Testament saint offered animal sacrifices *looking forward* to the day when Messiah – Jesus Christ – would come and die once and for all for us all. The New Testament saint *no longer offers animal sacrifices*

because our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

**1 Peter 2:21-24 ... Christ also suffered for us ... (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.**

We who are now saved *look backward* to the Cross, knowing that our salvation is sure because **God is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9).**

**FOCAL Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power<sup>14</sup> of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

The **Gospel, the Good News of Christ** has POWER, saving POWER. Do not mock the Word of God by thinking that other things are more important than this Gospel. I have known local churches to die when the Gospel is deemphasized and other things, like *singings and feasts and parties* are emphasized. The **Gospel is**

<sup>14</sup> G1411, δύναμις, *dunamis*, *doo'-nam-is*, From G1410; *force* (literally or figuratively); specifically miraculous *power* (usually by implication a *miracle* itself): - ability, abundance, meaning, might (-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) miracle (-s), power, strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work.

**the dynamic power of God that saves.** When one hears and responds to the Gospel message that person comes from the state of being lost to a permanent state of being found. You turn from a *son of Adam* and into a *son of God*. You turn from being *inches from hellfire* and become *Heaven bound*. Nothing else will do this but faith in the Gospel of Christ.

**FOCAL Romans 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.**

Nothing else will produce God's righteousness in a person *but* faith in the Gospel of Christ. Too many local churches keep getting confused by this, keep adding rituals or things to do to *remain* saved. We are saved by faith in the Living God. Once saved by faith the Christian – in love with his Savior – seeks to know Him more and more. **Jonathan Edwards** said:

**"The enjoyment of [God] is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows; but God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams. But God is the ocean."**

God dwells with those who love Him, who hear His

Word, who seek His face. God dwells with the repentant, the surrendered, the pliable, ever submitted to His Will. If you are saved, you were saved by surrendering to the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. You gave your life to God, and God came into you to live and abide forever. If you came to God with your lips one day, but did not surrender yourself to Him. If you are not led by the Great Shepherd in your daily lives. If you do not love Him, and obey His commandments as He asks, remember the Scripture:

**1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would [no doubt] have continued with us: but [they went out], that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.**

Those who are saved *remain in the house of God.*

Those who have been saved by faith *know His voice, and follow Him.* Those who proclaim to be saved and yet never follow the Lord are probably not saved at all. The **Gospel of Christ is the dynamic power of God unto salvation.** It is real, it is connected to life, and it changes those whom it touches.

May God bless your hearts with these words.



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