



Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph ¹ like a flock:
shine forth, you that are enthroned up-¹ on the cherubim.

²In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, ¹ and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and ¹ come to help us.

³Restore ¹ us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we ¹ shall be saved.

⁴O LORD ¹ God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your ¹ people pray? **R**

⁵You have fed them with the ¹ bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of ¹ tears to drink.

⁶You have made us the derision ¹ of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh ¹ us to scorn.

⁷Restore us, O ¹ God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we ¹ shall be saved.

⁸Let your hand be upon the one at ¹ your right hand,
the one you have made so strong ¹ for yourself.

⁹And so will we never turn a-¹ way from you;
give us life, that we may call up-¹ on your name.

¹⁰Restore us, O LORD ¹ God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we ¹ shall be saved. **R**

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ³which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ⁴the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁵and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

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

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹¹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ¹²But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ¹³She will bear a son,

and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ¹⁴All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

¹⁵"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

¹⁶When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ¹⁷but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.