
The Epistle to the ROMANS (3)

COMMENTS AND NOTES ON ROM. 1:16 -17

The two leading doctrines of Romans are stated in 1:16-17. It is as if these two verses were the “text” (the theme) and the remainder of the letter the “sermon” (the explanation and proof of them).

Summary of vs. 16

A. The free offer of salvation to *all men without distinction*

The offer of salvation on the sole condition of faith is made to *all men without distinction – Jews and Gentiles alike*. Many of the Jews believed that God would show mercy only to those who belonged to the nation Israel. If a Gentile wanted to be saved, the Jews thought that he had to submit to the law of Moses, be circumcised, and become a member of the Jewish nation; then God would save him. Paul shows that this is not the case. *All who believe the Gospel*, regardless of their race, or regardless of any other considerations, *are promised salvation*.

1. Paul indicated that he was very eager to preach the Gospel in Rome. (vs. 15). What made him so eager to do this?
2. Paul wrote that “he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.” Can we say that? What are reasons that we may feel ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
3. How did Paul define the Gospel in this verse? Compare that to his descriptions of the Gospel in 1 Cor. 1. Can you illustrate this aspect of the Gospel from Scripture or personal history?
4. Paul summed up the whole message of the Gospel with one word: Salvation! Someone defined salvation as “*To be brought from greatest evil to the greatest good!*”
 - a. What are the Biblical details of the *greatest evil*? Consider as a starter the following verses:
 - Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14
 - Rom. 6:6, 17; 7:21-25a
 - Rom. 7:24, 25, Gal. 5:1
 - Eph. 2
 - b. What are the Biblical details of the *greatest good*? Consult the following verses:
 - Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1
 - Rom. 6:1-4; 12:1,2
 - Gal. 5:1, 2 Cor. 3:17
 - Eph. 2:1, 5, 13
 - Rom. 5:5
 - Col. 3:1-4

5. *Who* experience this power of God unto salvation and *why* do they experience this? How does this illustrate the function or role of faith? Is faith a condition to obtain salvation?

Summary of Vs. 17: Salvation by *faith alone*

The Gospel reveals the “righteousness of God” which is given to all who believe. As will be shown in chapter 3 onwards, sinners gain righteousness only *through faith in Jesus Christ and not by keeping God’s law*. By faith alone the unrighteous or ungodly receive (are credited with) perfect righteousness. (Romans 4:3-5) On the ground of this God-given righteousness they are *justified*.

This word is very crucial to understanding the Gospel. It means to be legally declared to be the right standing before God and consequently acceptable to Him. That implies one is acquitted from all guilt and condemnation as well as having fulfilled all requirements of the law.

It should be noted that the Gospel which Paul preached was taught in the OT. He quotes Habakkuk 2:4 to establish the doctrine of “Justification by Faith” which *is* the Gospel and which *is* the theme of the Roman letter.

But before developing his main theme (A man can only be justified by faith) Paul from Ch. 1:18-3:20 established the fact that all men, whether Jew or Gentile, are sinful to the core. He proved that no one can possibly be justified on the basis of personal obedience to God’s laws.

6. This was revealed *therein*. What does *therein* refer to?
7. What is meant with the righteousness of God?
8. Why did this need to be revealed and how was (and is) it revealed? Is it essential for us all to have this personally *revealed* to us?
9. Paul wrote this salvation in God’s righteousness is ‘from faith to faith’. Typically, we read that salvation is ‘by faith’ but here it says that it is ‘*from faith to faith*.’ What is the meaning and intent of this phrase?
10. Paul showed that the accusation about him by the orthodox Jews was unfounded. For after all, everything he taught was *written or revealed* already in the Old Testament. Where in the OT does God teach ‘justification by faith only’?

To understand the Gospel as revealed in Scripture better, consider that there are two ways of obtaining acceptance with God:

(1) *either by a “legal righteousness” in which man seeks to attain a right standing and acceptance before God **through personal obedience to the law.***

● this way was the ‘covenant of works way’ which we have closed through our fall in Paradise

(2) *or by a “divine righteousness” (righteousness of God) which God confers upon believers **without personal obedience to the law** because He credits (imputes, reckons) to them who believe the obedience of Christ*

● this way is the ‘covenant of grace way’ which God graciously provided

11. What kind of faith is spoken of in vs. 17? What kinds of faith does Scripture distinguish? How do the various faiths affect a person?
12. How can a man be saved *by* faith? Doesn't that make faith itself a work?
13. Scripture teaches faith is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8). How are we to respond to this truth?
14. Find at least 3 passages in which God calls us to believe in the Gospel despite the fact that we are spiritually dead. Is it not contradictory in God's message to command us to believe while we are at the same incapable to believe?