

## ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH

### III. The Gospel As The Power Of God Unto Salvation

(Romans 1:16-17)

#### I. Introduction

- A. The theme of the epistle to the Romans is that God's righteousness is available to man by faith from start to finish (Romans 1:16-17; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 441).
- B. This belief is often not accepted in Christendom: Some claim one must have faith plus works to be justified, and others say that though we are justified by faith, we cannot righteously live the Christian life by faith.
- C. The theme of the entire epistle to Romans is found in the two verses we study in this lesson – Romans 1:16-17. We view them for our insight and edification (as follows):

#### II. The Gospel As The Power Of God Unto Salvation, Romans 1:16-17.

- A. First, the Apostle Paul claimed that he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, a negative expression meant to give assurance to his readers of upholding Christ's Gospel in a world that countered the truth of God especially in Rome, the "seat of world empire" that "was the epitome of worldly power." (John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 1975, vol. I, p. 26)
- B. Second, Paul explained why he was not ashamed of Christ's Gospel, for it was the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believed, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, that is, the Gentile, Romans 1:16. "God saves through the message of the gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 1:21)," and "the implication is that God's power as it is operative unto salvation is through the gospel alone. It is the *gospel* that is God's power unto salvation. The message is God's word, and the word of God is living and powerful (cf. Heb. 4:12)," Ibid., p. 27.
- C. Dr. Charles Caldwell Ryrie explains that this salvation "has three facets," and we explain (as follows):
  1. In the past tense, one who believes the Gospel of Christ is saved from the penalties of sin so that his soul was forever delivered from eternal condemnation in the lake of fire, Luke 7:50; Revelation 20:11-15. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Romans 1:16) See also John 5:24.
  2. In the present tense, the believer in this earthly life is saved from the power of sin so that he need not commit acts of sin due to God's spiritual provisions, Romans 5:10; 8:3-4; Ibid.
  3. In the future tense, the believer will be saved from the presence of sin in heaven where his current sin nature will no longer exist, and his record of sin will be destroyed by God in grace, 1 Cor. 3:15; 5:5; Ibid. (The presence of sin also coincides with our current mortal bodies so that in the rapture, the sin nature ceases to exist as we are translated into new, eternal, glorified bodies by the Lord, 1 Corinthians 15:51-58.)
- D. The Apostle Paul then explained why the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, for in it the righteousness of God is revealed (Ibid., Murray, p. 26) "from faith to faith," that is, by faith "from start to finish," Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Romans 1:17. This point is very important, and we explain (as follows):
  1. In the world's many religions, salvation is said to be by works or by works plus faith in God or Christ. For example, (a) the Roman Catholic Church claims that salvation is by faith in Christ *plus* that Church's **sacraments of baptism, confirmation, eucharist** (mass), **penance, extreme unction** (last rites), **marriage**, and **orders**, the last two being optional. Some Protestants claim that salvation is (b) by faith *plus living a sinless life* or (c) by faith *plus speaking in tongues* or (d) by faith *plus water baptism*.
  2. However, Biblical Christianity holds to Romans 1:17, that God's righteousness is available **by faith from start to finish**. Paul elsewhere clarified this truth in Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
  3. Furthermore, Paul taught "that one can be righteous in God's sight only through faith; i. e., he who is just through faith shall live now and forever by faith," Ibid. The whole Christian life is to be lived by faith.

***Lesson:*** Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ in a world that countered God's truth, for it was the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believed. That salvation saves one from eternal condemnation in the lake of fire, it saves him from the power of sin that he need not sin now, and it will one day save him from the presence of sin in heaven. The reason God saves through Christ's Gospel is that God's righteousness is revealed to man by faith without human merit or works from start to finish due to God's "grace," that is, His infinite unmerited favor.

***Application:*** (1) May we adhere to the truth of the Gospel of Christ as a foundational truth of our Christian faith. (2) May we adhere to the truth that God's salvation in each facet is ours by faith from start to finish, be it salvation (a) from the lake of fire, (b) from the power of sin in this earthly life, or (c) from the presence of sin in eternity.