

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN FROM START TO FINISH

Part I: Introduction, Romans 1:1-17

B. The Divine Sufficiency Of The Biblical Christian Gospel (Romans 1:8-17)

I. Introduction

- A. In 1 Corinthians 1:18, Paul wrote that the preaching of the cross was to them that perish foolishness, what was especially true in the city of Rome, the seat of Rome's imperial world power. For withdrawing from the "close knit framework of pagan society," the Christians in Rome when Paul wrote this epistle faced "animosity" from the pagan Roman society, Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., vol. Four, p. 411; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1593.
- B. However, Paul was eager to preach the Gospel there, and his confidence to do so regardless of the animosity he was sure to face in that imposing city is explained in Romans 1:8-17 for our insight and edification:

II. The Divine Sufficiency Of The Biblical Christian Gospel, Romans 1:8-17.

- A. Paul wrote to cheer believers in Rome who faced animosity from their powerful, pagan society, Rom. 1:8-12:
 1. In his opening greeting, Paul expressed thanksgiving to God in his prayers for his Roman Christian readers that their faith had been a topic of conversation throughout the Roman world, Romans 1:8. They had been a witness for Christ even though facing animosity from Roman society for holy living, Ibid., Z. P. E. B.
 2. Paul added that he always made mention in his prayers of his readers that he might have opportunity to visit and thus edify them and they in turn to edify him, Rom. 1:9-12. His claim of imparting some spiritual gift to establish them (Rom. 1:11) does not imply he was going to give them a spiritual gift for service, what only the Holy Spirit does (1 Cor. 12:1-11), but he explained in Romans 1:12 that this gift would involve the mutual sharing of encouragement between Paul and his readers when he met with them.
- B. Yet, Paul claimed that he himself was ready to preach the Gospel even in potentially hostile, powerful Rome:
 1. The apostle claimed he had often wanted to visit Rome, but he had been hindered from doing so, for he wanted to have some converts in preaching the Gospel in Rome as he had in other places, Romans 1:13.
 2. Paul was motivated to preach to the "Greeks" in Rome, those in society who had adopted the politically correct Greek culture as well as to the "Barbarians," those who had not adopted that culture (Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Rom. 1:14), for he felt indebted to do this for the salvation of all men.
 3. He was thus ready to preach the Gospel to *all* men in Rome where Christianity was already being viewed with animosity by powerful, influential people in the empire, Romans 1:15.
- C. In Romans 1:16-17, Paul told **why** he was ready to preach the Gospel in potentially hostile, powerful Rome:
 1. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel as it was the entity through which God demonstrated His **power** that infinitely exceeded the limited power of the Roman Empire and its capital city of Rome, Romans 1:16a.
 2. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel as it led to the salvation of **all** who believed, Roman or other, v. 16b.
 3. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel as it led to the salvation of everyone who **merely believed** in Christ in vast superiority over Roman paganism with its required meritorious works, Romans 1:16c.
 4. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel as it was to the Jew first and also to the Greek, leading to the **fulfillment** of the **Abrahamic Covenant** to bless Gentiles through Abraham's seed, Christ, a covenant far superseding the Roman Empire as to precedent and effectiveness, Rom. 1:16d; Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:16.
 5. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel as it was the vehicle through which God provided **HIS perfect righteousness** to those who believed in Christ in infinite superiority to man's futile religions, Rom. 1:17a.
 6. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel as it was the vehicle through which God saved men by faith "from start to finish," thus, by **faith ALONE** in vast superiority to man's self-help religions, Rom. 1:17b; Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Rom. 1:17. The Greek words *ek pisteos eis pistin* literally translate, "out of faith in reference to faith," so the righteousness from God "is totally unachievable by human efforts," B. K. C., N. T., p. 441.
 7. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel as it reflected God's saving by **faith throughout history** in superiority to man's religions, seen in Paul's citing 665-year-old Habakkuk 2:4 to that end; Ibid., Ryrie, p. 1296, 1593.

Lesson: Paul was fully confident of the sufficiency of the Biblical Christian Gospel to preach it even in powerful, hostile Rome, for it was backed by God's infinite power, able to save all who merely believed in Christ in fulfilling God's Abrahamic Covenant that supersedes all man's efforts today through providing God's perfect righteousness to lost men by faith alone in accord with God's salvation provision precedents all through human history.

Application: May we trust the divine sufficiency of the Biblical Christian Gospel and so proclaim it to the world!