

Difficult Texts In The Bible

Not Ashamed Of The Gospel

(Ro 1:16-17)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Afternoon
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on "Difficult Texts In The Bible."
 - a. We've examined a number of lessons such as...
 - i. The Adulterous Woman - **Jn 8:2-11**
 - ii. Three Questions - **Mt 24**...
 - b. Today we will be looking at...
 - i. Not Ashamed Of The Gospel - **Ro 1:16-17**
3. **Romans 1:17** has been a proof text verse for years concerning the "Faith Only" doctrine.
 - a. Martin Luther in talking about **Ro 1:17** wrote, " I had . . . been captivated with an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. But . . . a single word in Chapter 1 [verse 17], 'In it the righteousness of God is revealed,' stood in my way. For I hated that word 'righteousness of God,' which . . . I had been taught to understand . . . is the righteousness [with which God] punishes the unrighteous sinner... Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at [Romans 1:17], most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted. At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" There I began to understand [that] the righteousness of God is . . . righteousness with which [the] merciful God justifies us by faith. . . . Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates."
(<http://www.soundofgrace.com/piper98/8-09-98.htm>)
 - b. Martin Luther just said what has resounded through the years since concerning this verse we are saved by faith alone.
 - i. However is this the meaning of the verses?
4. Romans explained
 - a. The book of Romans could be broken down as such...
 - i. **Ro 1-8** - "[righteousness], a right standing with God, is by faith rather than by works of the law; that justification, salvation from sin, is by the grace of God rather than by works of man that earn acceptance with God" (Fort Worth Lectureship 1981 "Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained" by Lanier, Roy H. Sr. pg. 156-157)
 - ii. **Ro 9-11** - "Paul deals with the Jews and their relation to the gospel. He affirms the sovereignty of God, shows that God has not broken his promises to Israel, and promises salvation to every Jew as well as Gentiles, who will accept the promised Messiah upon terms of the gospel which he preached."
(Ibid)
 - iii. **Ro 12-16** - "he sets forth the practical side of his gospel, teaching the church how people are to live in this world in order that they may enjoy the world to come." (Ibid)

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I. The Context Of These Powerful Verses

- A. Paul wanted the church to know the gospel he preached
 1. He called it "his gospel."
 - i. **Ro 2:16** "in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."¹
 2. He called it "the gospel of God."
 - i. **Ro 1:1** "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God"
 3. The gospel or "good news" was...
 - i. That which was promised through the prophets.
 - a. **Ro 1:2** "which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures"
 - ii. That which concerned God's Son, born of the seed of David, being declared the Son of God by the resurrection.
 - a. **Ro 1:3-4** "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."
- B. Paul wanted the church to know why he was not ashamed of the gospel
 1. First because it is God's power to save the believer.
 - i. The law of Moses taught that if you followed the law perfectly you would be justified ie live.
 - a. **Ga 3:10** "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.""
 - b. **Ro 10:5** "For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them.""
 - ii. This of course made it impossible to live or gain salvation through the law ie law of Moses.
 - a. **Ro 3:23** "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
 - iii. God's power to save everyone through the gospel of justification by faith makes salvation **attainable**.
 2. Second because in the gospel it is revealed that the justification from all our sins through faith is not by the law of Moses but by faith.
 - i. We like the Jews can never do enough to earn salvation.
 - a. **Ep 2:8-9** "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast."
 - b. **Lk 17:10** "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

¹ All scriptures are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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- ii. We must simply follow God's Word & His plan of salvation.
 - a. **Mt 7:21** "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."
- 3. Third because in the gospel is revealed the wrath of God against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.
 - i. God's holiness will not allow Him to tolerate the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men forever.
 - a. God is patient (**II Pt 3:9**) but His patience will run out on the unholy and then their judgment (**Mt 7:23**).
- C. Thus the context of **Romans 1:16-17**

II. The Truth Concerning These Verses

A. **Romans 1:16**

- 1. As mentioned previously Paul wanted the church to know why he was not ashamed of the gospel.
- 2. Here he makes it clear that he is not ashamed and neither should we.
 - i. We are not to be afraid of what the gospel brings.
 - a. **II Ti 1:8** "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God"
 - ii. The gospel will bring hard physical and emotional times for certain.
 - a. **II Ti 3:12** "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."
 - iii. We do not however have to be ashamed of those times.
 - a. **Ac 5:40-41** "And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

B. **Romans 1:17**

- 1. This is the verse that has had so much written on it and so many different things said about it.
- 2. Paul had a reason not to be ashamed of the gospel and it is found in this verse.
 - i. Observe how verse 17 starts "for." This simply means "here is the reason I'm not ashamed..."
- 3. Let us examine the text now...
 - i. "the righteousness of God is revealed"
 - a. Notice first that there is no definite article in front of righteousness as in "the righteousness."
 - b. This is because it is not talking about the righteous character of God.

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1. I like what brother Roy Lanier Sr. wrote, "If he had used the definite article we might get the idea he meant the righteous character of God; and, scholars have got that idea anyway." (Fort Worth Lectureship 1981 "Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained" by Lanier, Roy H. Sr. pg. 158)
 - c. It is talking about the justification which God ascribes.
 1. The Greek word for righteousness here is "δικαιοσύνη" or "dikaiosune."
 - i. "the righteousness which God ascribes, what God declares to be righteousness" (Thayer, J. H. (1889). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti (149). New York: Harper & Brothers.)
 2. Thus if this word means "right standing with God" and it does that would better be defined as justification.
 - i. In fact where we find the verb form of this word it is translated justify, usually.
 - ii. Why not just make the noun form the same since it is what it means.
 - d. Thus it should be the justification of God is revealed.
 1. Justification is made up of two things.
 - i. A remission of all past sins.
 - ii. God holds no past sin against the one justified.
 - ii. "from faith"
 - a. This is the idea that the one justified puts their faith, belief and trusting obedience, in Christ as the Son of God and Savior.
 1. **Ga 2:16** "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."
 2. **Jn 14:15** "If you love Me, keep My commandments."
 - iii. "for faith" or "unto faith"
 - a. The Greek word for unto or for here is "eis" which literally means towards something.
 - b. Thus you have the idea that belief and obedient trust in Jesus takes you toward faith.
- C. What does all that mean then?
1. It means that Paul was not ashamed of the gospel which teaches that revelation of justification, the remission of sins, is based on one putting their full belief and obedient trust in Jesus as the Messiah which leads to salvation or life.
 - i. Hence you have Paul quote Ha 2:4 in saying the "the just shall live by faith."
 - ii. Only the justified shall have an opportunity of eternity with God.

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CONCLUSION

1. Have you made sure you are justified and thus add by the Lord Himself to His church?
 - a. If not why not make sure you are right with God.
2. a. God's Plan of Salvation
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**