

Exegetical Notes, Romans 1:16-17

“Not Ashamed”

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Background

- Paul is writing this letter to the Romans and has just finished his greetings to them, and he is longing to see them. He wants to see them to encourage them and to be encouraged by them in his faith also.
- Paul is writing at a time when Christianity was still in its very early stages probably only 25-30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Verse 16

“I am not ashamed of the gospel,...”

- In Rome, Christianity and Judaism weren't the preferred religion; Paul could have faced persecution for his beliefs and possibly martyrdom. Still Paul is not ashamed or afraid of the truth.
- The gospel that Paul is preaching, now, to both Jews and Gentiles or Greeks all over the world as he knew it, is the story of Jesus being the sacrifice for sinful humanity, his death and resurrection

“...because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes:...”

- The gospel is more than just a good story, more than just a bunch of words that Christians talk about. It has POWER with it. It has the power to save man from the death he will surely face because of his sinful nature.
- There is one catch, however. Salvation can only come if the gospel is accepted by those who hear the good news

“...first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”

- In Matthew 10:5-7 and Acts 1:8, we find the basis for Paul's order, it is directly from Christ. Jesus was sent first to the Jews, God's people, then to the Gentiles, because, as Isaiah had written thousands of years

before, the Jews would not accept the message of the salvation God had given them (Isaiah 6:9-10)

Verse 17

“For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed,…”

- This righteousness has nothing to do with us (see Romans 3:10), because of our sin the only way to obtain a right relationship with God is through His Son, Jesus Christ.

“...a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,…”

- This phrase is literally translated: “from faith to faith”
- There are numerous suggestions from scholars as to what this means. The best interpretation is this: We are saved by a faith, a justifying faith, and in order to stay in right relationship with God we must use this to govern our lives as well. We can’t forget about our duty after our salvation. We must start and end our walk with God with faith. We must finish the race.

“...just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

- Paul is quoting from the Old Testament book of Habakkuk 2:4. In Habakkuk, the verse is talking about waiting on God to put out all the wickedness that is going on in Judah at the time.
- A similar situation is going on right now, but we must continue in our righteousness and wait with faith on the Lord that He will keep his promises.