

What Does Romans 1:16-17 Mean?

By Moshe Schwab

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:16-17 NKJV

Explanation

I am not ashamed of the Messianic message of Messiah for it is the power of God to deliver (and help) all who believe, of course for the Jew, but also for Gentiles. For the message reveals the right ways of God from our present faith toward continued faith. It is written, "The just shall live with faith." Namely, according to Habakkuk, we are to live with trusting faithfulness while keeping God's commands.

Gospel refers to the Messianic message; salvation means deliver and not a rubber stamp of salvation; the Jew first means the Jews would be the first to accept because they want to follow God; the Jews would continue in their faith (faith to faith); and Shaul quotes the Old Testament where it talks about keeping God's commandments with "trusting faithfulness."

Further Study

The word "gospel"

The word gospel is a reference to messianic scriptures in the Old Testament portion so gospel means messianic message.

The word "salvation"

The word salvation is the Greek word for deliverance, rescue, save.¹ The word deliverance is a better word in this context because the messianic message is helping us. From the context, the messianic message delivers us through the right ways of God for those who have faith and then continue in faith while keeping God's commandments.

First for the Jew, faith to faith

We know that the Jews understood Shaul; so in his time, the Jews would be the first to want to accept what he has to say. The Gentiles could also believe on the Messiah Yeshua. He is giving a positive affirmation towards the faith of the Jews. The Jews would continue in their faith – from faith to faith. There is no change in their faith Shaul assures them. He is telling them something they already should know.

Shaul is quoting Habakkuk 2:4

The scriptures are talking about God's commandments because the quote from Habakkuk 2:4 is about keeping God's commandments with faith. "Look at the proud: he is inwardly not upright; but the righteous will attain life through trusting faithfulness." Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV. Righteous means to do what is right; it is a commandment from Deuteronomy 6:18. Because Shaul quotes Habakkuk, we know exactly what he is talking about in these verses. Those who do what is right (righteous) attain life by trusting faithfulness.

One of the problems associated with having faith in God is just going through the motions of life without having faith in God. We are to keep God's commandments because we trust in God. We should want to do what is right because we trust in God (righteous means to do what is right). We have trusting faithfulness in doing what God commands us.

¹ "g4991. σωτηρία sōtēria; feminine of a derivative of 4990 as (properly, abstract) noun; rescue or safety (physically or morally): — deliver, health, salvation, save, saving." - Strong's Enhanced Dictionary