–Save This Page as a PDF–

The Righteous Shall Live by Faith
1: 16-17

The righteous shall live by faith DIG: What does Paul mean when he says he is "not ashamed of the gospel?" What does, "To the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile" mean? Who was Hudson Taylor and what did he think about this verse? How does Paul say people can find freedom from the bondage of sin? What facts about the Gospel can you learn here? Suppose someone is turned off by religious words: how might you explain verse 17 to them?

REFLECT: Are you ashamed of the Good News? How would you describe righteousness to a new believer? Based on this passage, what is required to be right with God (also see John 14:6)? In what ways have you seen the righteousness of Messiah transform your life? Does your place of worship actively seek to win Jews to their Messiah? What grabs you about verse 17? What questions does it raise that you hope further study will answer?

Righteousness only comes by faith, trust, or belief in Yeshua Messiah.

Behind him, a trail of tracks. Beneath him, a pounding stallion. Before him, miles of trail to cover. Within him, a rock-hard resolve.

Squinty eyed. Firm jawed. Rawboned. Pony Express riders in the American old west had one assignment – deliver the message safely and quickly. They seized every advantage: the shortest route, the fastest horse, the lightest saddle. Even the lightest lunchbox.

They only hired the sturdy. Could they handle the horses? The heat? Could they outrun robbers and outlast buzzards? The young and the orphans were preferred. Those selected were given $125 a month (a good salary in 1860), a Colt revolver, a lightweight rifle, a bright red shirt, blue pants, and eight hours to cover eighty miles, six days a week. Hard work and high pay. But the message was worth it.

The apostle **Paul** would have loved the Pony Express. For **he**, like the riders, had

been entrusted with a message. **“I have a duty to all people (1:14 NCV),” Paul** told the church at **Rome**. **He** had something for them – a message. **He’d** been entrusted as a Pony Express courier with a divine message . . . **the Good News**. Nothing mattered more to **Paul**. **He** wrote: **For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God’s** power**ful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting. He** existed to deliver that message.[26]

A. Good News: For I am not ashamed of the Good News (1:16a). Paul was imprisoned in Philippi, chased out of Thessalonica, smuggled out of Damascus and Berea, laughed at in Athens, considered a fool in Corinth, and declared a blasphemer in Jerusalem. **He** was stoned and left for dead at Lystra, and some pagans of **Paul’s** day accused believers of cannibalism because they misunderstood the **Lord’s** Supper.[27] But **he** never wavered. The content of **the Good News** is **Messiah’s** substitutionary **death**, burial and resurrection **(First Corinthians 15:3b-4)**. This is the **power** by which **He** saves. Thus, **to** be **ashamed of the gospel** is not to believe it **(Mark 8:38; Second Timothy 1:8-12).** How often believers hide **the Good News** of **the Messiah** out of fear or **shame** – fear of being rejected, opposed to the shame or embarrassment of being thought foolish or “different.” How can such unworthy feelings be overcome?

> **B. Salvation: Since it is God’s powerful means of bringing salvation. Salvation** implies escape, safety, protection, soundness, healing and deliverance from the consequences of **sin**, chief of which is **death (Genesis 2:17)**. The Hebrew word for **salvation**, *yeshu’ah*, is the feminine form of the **Messiah’s** name, **Yeshua**. While **the Good News** is **powerful**, it can seem **foolish**; but it is the **foolish** things of **ADONAI** that confound **the worldly-wise (First Corinthians 1:18-31)**. **The Good News brings salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting (1:16b).** To many **Jews**, the word **trusting** comes closer to the biblical concept of **salvation** than the word **believe (Acts 3:16)**, because the present tense of a Greek verb implies ongoing activity, not a once-and-for-all event.
>
> **B. To the Jew especially: The Ruach Ha’Kodesh** inspired **Paul** to write: **To the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile (1:16c).** This is a major theme of the book of **Romans** – some would say the main theme – is that, so far as **salvation** is concerned, **Jews** and **Gentiles** are equal before **ADONAI (2:7-12, 3:9-31, 4:9-12, 5:12** and **17-19, 9:24, 10:12-13, 11:30-32)**. There is a disconnect today between the Church and the Messianic Community. Many **Gentile** churches read this and think this is a

"chronological" statement. Implying that **the Jews** were given the first opportunity to receive **the Lord Jesus**, both during **His** earthly ministry **(John 1:11)** and also in the Dispensation of Grace **(Acts 1:8** and **3:26).** It's as if they are saying, "Well, **the Jews** blew it. **They** crucified **Jesus**, so now **the gospel** needs to be preached to **the Gentiles**." But to **the Jew, especially,** means that there is a "present priority" to proclaim **the gospel** to **the Jews**. There is, therefore, a great responsibility laid upon the Church to share **Messiah** with **Jewish** people in a culturally sensitive way. This does not mean that every single **Gentile** believer should seek out **Jews** in **their** community and witness to **them** before telling any **Gentile** about **Yeshua** – although that is exactly what **Sha'ul** did throughout the book of **Acts**.[28]

On the first day of every year during his time as head of the China Inland Mission (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship), Hudson Taylor sent a check to the Mildmay Mission to **the Jews**, London, on which was written: **To the Jew first.** And, at the same time, John Wilkinson, leader of the Mildmay Mission, sent his personal check to the China-Inland Mission with the notation: **And also to the Gentile**.[29]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for **Your** awesome grace **(Ephesians 2:8-9)** which **You** offer to both **Your firstborn Isra'el (Exodus 4:22)** and to **the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:13-18).** Praise **Your** great love which adopts as **Your children** through **Yeshua** – all choose to follow **You (Ephesians 1:4-5).** For **You** are all **the children of God** through **trusting** in **Messiah Yeshua**. For all of **You** who were **immersed in Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah (Galatians 3:26-27).***

*How thankful I am that in this time of fear and uncertainty, **Your children** can have peace and calmness, as **we** focus on the certainty of **our eternal home in heaven (Revelation 21:4)** with **Daddy**. I rejoice in the indwelling of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** for all who go beyond hearing of the gospel – to **believing** it by making **Yeshua their Lord and Savior**. **We** are **sealed** with **the** promised **Ruach Ha'Kodesh**, who guarantees **their** home in heaven. **After you heard the message of truth – the Good News of your salvation – and when you put your trust in Him, you were sealed with the promised Ruach Ha'Kodesh. He is the guarantee of our inheritance, until the redemption of His possession – to His glorious praise (Ephesians 1:13-14)!** I love **You** and look forward to both bowing at **Your***

*feet in worship of **You** and also giving **You** big hugs in joy at **Your** being our wonderful **Father**! In the name of **Your** holy **Son** and **His** power of resurrection. Amen*

It is important to understand that the book of Romans, within the epistles, is the doctrinal foundation of the B'rit Chadashah. The book of Acts traces the application of that doctrine in the history of the early Messianic community and is a transitional and a historical book. But you can't establish doctrine based upon history. We base doctrine on clear theological statements. Historical facts can illustrate doctrine, but they cannot develop doctrine on their own. Therefore, for anyone to say that Paul's statement in 1:16c implies that the Jews were merely first "chronologically" would be a historical statement, violating the principle that Romans teaches doctrine, not history.

Stating that **the Good News** is the same for **the Jew** and **the Gentile**, this verse contradicts the "Two-Covenant" theory that non-Messianic **Jews** believe in, which says that **Jews** and **Gentiles** have different paths to **YHVH**. **They** say, "We **Jews** have our way, Judaism; and you **Gentiles** have your way, Christianity. We will each serve **God** best by following the path provided for us. It is a manifestation of **God's** grace that **He** has provided **Jesus** for you **Gentiles** and Torah for us **Jews**." Unfortunately for this theory, it does not fit the reality of the B'rit Chadashah at all. **Yeshua said: I AM the Way – and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6).**

Finally, to the point of **1:16c**, we also need to understand that **the New Covenant** is made **with the house of Isra'el and with the house of Judah,** and not **the Gentiles** (see the commentary on **Jeremiah, to see link click Eo – The Days are Coming, declares the LORD, When I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el**). The "partners" of the B'rit Chadashah are, in biblical terms, **YHVH** and **the** whole **house of Isra'el**. Although not a formal partner of **the New Covenant**, **Gentiles** in the Church Age "participate" when **they** make the Jewish **Messiah, Yeshua**, **Lord** of **their** lives **(Ephesians 1:13-14).** Therefore, "participation" would be a better term to use. This is why **the Good News** needs to be brought **to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile (1:16c)**.



A. Good News: **For in the Good News it is revealed how God makes people righteous,** or blameless, **in His sight; and from beginning to end it is through trust — as it is written in Habakkuk 2:4, "But the person who is righteous will live his life by trust"** (Greek: *pistis*, meaning *faith, trust* or *belief*) **(1:17).** In quoting **Habakkuk**, **Paul** shows us that **righteousness through trust** is not a new idea. That's how it has always been. From **Genesis** to **Revelation**, regardless of which Dispensation one lives in, **the righteous will live by faith** (see the commentary on **Hebrews CI – The Hall of Faith**). That is, the source of this new life in **Messiah Yeshua** is **trust**; it is the means by which we are **justified**.

How can we have a relationship with a perfect **God**? Gospel 101. Perfect **God**, we fall short – we need some help. **Yeshua** is our mediator between us and **God the Father**, and **Messiah** took on human flesh to relate to humanity. Other religions get the first part. **YHVH** is totally **righteous**. People understand there is **Someone** bigger than us. We fall short and we're not connected. Something is broken. But the big debate is . . . how do you fix it![30]

The Good News is that when we **trust God's** grace to save us through **Yeshua's** sacrifice on the cross, when we **believe** by **faith** that **He died** and was resurrected on the third day, when we **believe** that our **sins** are forgiven, we get a new purpose for living, we are saved from our **sins** and we are promised a future home in heaven. We need to acquire **righteousness** to relate to a **righteous God**. So, when we **trust** in **Messiah**, all of **His righteousness** is transferred to our spiritual bank account . . . and we are **justified**. What is true of **Messiah** is true of us, minus **His** deity. We are then eternally secure (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ms – The Eternal Security of the Believer**).

Would you like to follow the Romans Road to **salvation**?

The first verse on the Romans Road to **salvation** is **Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and come short of earning God's praise"** (see **Az – The Need for Justification**)**.** We have all **sinned**. We have all done things displeasing to **God**. There is no one who is innocent. **Romans 3:10-18** gives a detailed picture of what **sin** looks like in our lives. **Messiah died** for us!

The second Scripture on the Romans Road to **salvation**, **Romans 6:23**, teaches us about the consequences of **sin**, **"For what one earns from sin is death"** (see **Bt – Slaves of God**)**.**

That's the bad news, but there is Good News, **"But God demonstrates His own love for us in that the Messiah died on our behalf while we were still sinners" (Romans 5:8). Yeshua Messiah died** for us! **His death** paid the price for our **sins** (see **Bj – The Restoration of Justification**). **Yeshua's** resurrection proves that **God** accepted **Yeshua's death** as the payment for our **sins**.

The fourth stop on the Romans Road to **salvation** is **Romans 10:9, "If you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord and trust in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be delivered"** (see **Cu – Sharing with the Jewish Community**). Because of **Yeshua's death** on our behalf, all we have to do is **believe** in **Him, trusting His death** as the payment for our **sins** – and we **will be saved**. **Romans 10:13** says it again, **"For everyone who calls on the name of ADONAI will be delivered." Messiah died** to pay the penalty for our **sins** and rescue us from eternal **death**. **Salvation**, the forgiveness of **sins**, is available to anyone who will **trust** in **Yeshua Messiah** as their **Lord** and **Savior**.

The final aspect of the Romans Road to **salvation** is the results of **salvation**. **Romans 5:1** has this wonderful message, **"So, since we have come to be considered righteous by God because of our trust, let us continue to have shalom with God through our Lord, Yeshua Messiah"** (see **Bh – The Blessing of Justification**)**.** Through **Yeshua Messiah** we can have a relationship of peace with **God**. **Romans 8:1** teaches us, **"Therefore, there is no longer any condemnation awaiting those who are in union with the Messiah Yeshua."** Because of **Yeshua's death** on our behalf, we will never be condemned for our **sins**. Finally, we have this precious promise of **God** from **Romans 8:38-39, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor other**

heavenly rulers, neither what exists nor what is coming, neither powers above nor powers below, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which comes to us through the Messiah Yeshua, our Lord” (see **Cm – The Certainty of Redemption**).

Would you like to follow the Romans Road to **salvation**? If so, here is a simple prayer you can pray to **God**. Saying this prayer is a way to declare to **God** that you are relying on **Yeshua Messiah** for your **salvation**. The words themselves will not save you. Only faith in **Yeshua Messiah** can provide **salvation**! **“God, I know that I have sinned against you and am deserving of punishment. But Yeshua Messiah took the punishment that I deserve so that through faith in Him I could be forgiven. With your help, I place my trust in You for salvation. Thank You for Your wonderful grace and forgiveness – the gift of eternal life! Amen!”**[31]

If you were to **die** right now, where would you go? That’s right, heaven.

Why should **God** let you into **His** heaven?

That’s right, because **Yeshua died** to pay for your **sins**.

If you have prayed this prayer, see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Bw – What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith**.