

Romans Verse-By –Verse

Romans 1:16-17 B

Student Notes

Recap: The gospel is the dunamis, the power for the salvation of everyone who believes.

- **Salvation, Soteria, and Yasa:**

Greek word for salvation: “soteria” (verb, “soza”), which means salvation or more properly deliverance. It’s a word rich in meaning – from both the Old and New Testament perspective.

The term “salvation” (sōtēria) was common in Hellenistic religions, but as usual, Paul adapted it for his Christian audience. He gives it nuances there were not common for Greek religion.

- **Old Testament Salvation/Deliverance: “YASA”**

Romans 1:2 “... The gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures...”

Many Hebrew words for salvation, but “yasa” is the most common. In essence, it means, “to be wide or roomy” in contrast to being narrow or constricted. Used over 350 times in the Old Testament with the first occurrence in Exodus 14:30.

As the word for salvation expanded in the Old Testament it came to refer to such ideas as “to save”, “help in distress”, “rescue”, “deliver”, and “set free”.

Salvation is the overriding theme of the entire Bible. A simple Old Testament definition is impossible because the idea of salvation is

Multidimensional.

Old Testament references to yasa as physical deliverance more than spiritual: Psalm 18:2; Psalm 18:17 Psalm 55:1-23. Old Testament writers see salvation as a reality more physical than spiritual, more social than individual.

Individual stories serve as a model for the entire faith community: i.e., God's blessings prepare individuals as agents for some greater work: Moses, Joseph, Noah, Abraham, & Esther.

- **Only God Can Deliver:** Common O.T. theme: Isaiah 43:14; Hosea 1:7; Psalms 62:1.

The content of God's salvation includes personal and national deliverance from one's enemies, deliverance from slavery (Deuteronomy 24:18), ongoing protection and preservation from evil (Psalm 121), escape from death (Psalm 68:19), healing (Psalm 69:29; Jeremiah 17:14), inheritance of land, multiplication of descendants, and long life.

- **Salvation and Sin:**

Salvation from sin is not the dominant theme throughout the Old Testament. While mentioned many times in the prophets, it is not the overarching concern in the Old Testament.

Salvation or deliverance from sin is much more common when it is used in the sense of national restoration rather than personal. The repeating theme: God will at one point redeem, restore, or deliver his people from sin (a national deliverance.)

The "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah chapter 53: The bridge from the Old Testament to the New. A tension between the anticipation of the Messiah mostly found in the prophetic writings and the New Testament.

In Messianic and New Testament passages: salvation as a both spiritual and physical, individual and corporate, with both temporal and eternal objectives.

The soteria that Paul references in Romans 1:16 and elsewhere in the New Testament includes material preservation but it usually signifies a deliverance with special spiritual significance.

- **New Testament “salvation”** (soteria)

Includes the negative need for forgiveness for sin and deliverance from the penalty of sin. But, it also includes the positive idea of personal relationship with God – meaning the restoration of relationship that had been ruined through sin. (See: Romans 5:10-11).

Paul: Only the message of the cross can energize the power of God and restore the relationship between sinner and Lord. That’s what he means by, “it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: **first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.**”

Since the first covenant was with Abraham’s people, the first offer of salvation – or restoration of relationship – falls to them.

Jesus: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” – (Matthew 15:24).
Syro-Phoenician Mother: “Yes, Lord, ...but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

What the Jews almost unanimously rejected, the Gentiles grasped and received. (See John 1:11-12)

- **The Requirement For Salvation:**

The power for salvation leading to a restored relationship with God is not automatically operative in everyone. Paul: “The gospel is the power of God for the salvation **of everyone who believes...**”

Paul will make this requirement crystal clear throughout the book of Romans. He will tell us salvation is by faith alone (Romans 3:21-31; 4:1-25).

- All humans are sinners (Romans 3:9-20)
- The gospel deals with the issue of sin and alienation from God (Romans 5:1-11)
- All humans are freely offered the gospel irrespective of nationality, religion, sex, education, etc.

Those who trust in the gospel of God concerning his son will experience the power of God for salvation. **The offer is universal, but participation is limited to those who trust.**

But the gospel does more than provide a way back to God. It actually creates a type of righteousness – right standing with God.

That's what we will see next time.