

Romans 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Analysis

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Paul's declaration οὐ γάρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, 'for I am not ashamed of the gospel') uses litotes—understatement expressing strong positive conviction. In Greco-Roman culture prizes rhetoric, philosophy, and social status, proclaiming a crucified Jewish messiah invited ridicule (1 Corinthians 1:23). Yet Paul boldly affirms the gospel because δύναμις γάρ θεοῦ ἔστιν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, 'it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes').

Dunamis theou (δύναμις θεοῦ, power of God) is not merely information but divine energy accomplishing salvation. Sōtērian (σωτηρία, salvation) encompasses justification, sanctification, and glorification—rescue from sin's penalty, power, and presence. The universal scope παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι (to everyone who believes) breaks ethnic and social barriers. Yet historical priority remains: Ιoudaiō te πρῶτον καὶ Hellēni (Ἰουδαίω τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι, 'to Jew first and also to Greek'). Israel's historical privilege as recipients of God's oracles (Romans 3:1-2) and the lineage of Messiah grants them temporal priority, but salvation is equally available to Gentiles through faith alone.

Historical Context

To preach Christ crucified in Rome was to proclaim a convicted criminal as Lord, subverting Roman authority and inviting persecution. Crucifixion was shameful, reserved for slaves and rebels. Yet Paul glories in the cross (Galatians 6:14). The gospel's 'foolishness' and 'weakness' in human estimation is God's wisdom and power (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). Early Christians were mocked as atheists (for rejecting pagan gods), cannibals (misunderstanding the Eucharist), and insurrectionists (for confessing 'Jesus is Lord' not 'Caesar is Lord').

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Where are you tempted to be 'ashamed' (ἐπαισχύνομαι) of the gospel—embarrassed by its exclusivity, supernatural claims, or moral demands?
2. How does understanding the gospel as 'power of God' (δύναμις θεοῦ) rather than good advice or moral example change your evangelism?
3. What does 'to the Jew first' mean for contemporary Christian witness and missions strategy?

Interlinear Text

Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ·

not For I am of the gospel of Christ

G3756 G1063 G1870 G3588 G2098 G3588 G5547

δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστιν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ

the power For of God it is unto salvation to every one G3588

G1411 G1063 G2316 G2076 G1519 G4991 G3956

πιστεύοντι Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἔλληνι

that believeth to the Jew and first also to the Greek

G4100 G2453 G5037 G4412 G2532 G1672

Additional Cross-References

Mark 8:38 (Parallel theme): Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

2 Timothy 1:8 (References God): Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

1 Peter 4:16 (References Christ): Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

2 Timothy 1:12 (Faith): For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Luke 9:26 (Parallel theme): For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

2 Corinthians 4:4 (Faith): In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

1 Corinthians 2:4 (Parallel theme): And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

Romans 10:17 (Faith): So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

1 Corinthians 2:2 (Salvation): For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Hebrews 4:12 (References God): For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org