

## More Good News

Let us continue this week with “more good news.”

**Romans 1:14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.**

**Obligation.** The translation is OK, but why is Paul under obligation? The Greek word means a debt owed as when someone borrows money and needs to pay it back. But here, Paul does not owe anyone money.

This is in a spiritual sense. He owes them Bible information that he calls the good news. But why?

Here is my explanation. We each have a God-given mission in our Christian lives. God outfitted us with spiritual gifts tailored to our assigned mission. For Paul, he was given a mission to the “Gentiles.” He has an obligation given to him by God.

**Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him (Ananias), “Go, for he (Paul) is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;**

**Acts 9:16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”**

At the point of salvation, Paul was appointed an apostle and given a lifelong mission, a duty, an obligation.

So too, we have an obligation to apply our individual gifts for the building up and strengthening of the Church. As per last week’s lesson, that may be simply to encourage other believers. For me as a pastor-

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teacher, I am obligated to you to teach using my gift to study, study, study and then teach. After coming to this conclusion, I decided to peak at what Robby Dean said on this. Surprise! He says something very similar.

“He is not under obligation to them because of something that the Greeks and barbarians have done, he is under obligation because of the grace of God in his life and because God saved him and gave him the gift of apostle and the mission to take the gospel to the Gentiles. He was under obligation to fulfill the mission that God gave him in terms of his spiritual gift. In that, Paul isn’t any different from anyone in this room. At the instant we were saved God gave us a spiritual gift that we were to use under spiritual maturity to the benefit, edification and encouragement of the body of Christ. And that is part of the mission that God has given each and every believer, so that we are under obligation to God to the same degree the apostle Paul was, to grow to maturity and to serve God and to minister in terms of our own spiritual gift which was given for the purpose of using it in relation to the body of Christ.<sup>1</sup>”

You have perhaps detected that I often mention your spiritual gifts. I am only echoing what Herman Mattox taught about spiritual gifts. That is, they are given to individuals but they are for the benefit of local churches and also to the Church at large. They are not to be used like the Corinthian church. “Look, I have a better gift than you do. I can do this and that...” No they are to be used in love (i.e. filling of the Holy Spirit) for the purpose of building up the Church. Their use can be a great blessing to the one who possesses it. Take for instance, a hypothetical. Suppose you have a gift of helps or encouragement or something similar. What if there is a young Christian contemplating suicide and you provide good news for that Christian. You get that person to start walking by faith and communicating with God the Father. That person forgets about

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1 <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/romans-menuitem/message/2010-romans-008b/read>

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the stress, anxiety and depression (SAD) that nearly brought an end to his or her life. In your mind you may want to drop to your knees and thank God for what He did through you.

**Greeks/Barbarians...Wise/Foolish.** These are merisms.

Merism. This is a literary technique for describing the whole of something by using two extremes. For instance, “the in’s and out’s” of something. Or “day and night.” Here Greeks are cultured, living in established cities. Barbarians are uncouth, uncultured, often nomadic warriors who attempt to conquer settled people. These are extremes of the human condition. That is a bit of a hyperbole for sure. With these words, Paul is saying he is under obligation to all. There is that word again. Paul uses “all” over and over again to emphasize that the gospel is for all. Yet it is disguised in a merism. “All” is not filtered. Everyone. Anyone who has positive volition, who is willing to listen to the message of good news. This reminds me of the Youtube video of John 3:16 done by Focus on the Family with the little kids reciting the verse. In it the children say “...Everyone...anyone...that’s a lot of people...” That is what Paul is saying. All. Everyone.

**Romans 1:15 So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.**

So, for my part I am eager. Paul starts this verse with an adverb + article + preposition + personal pronoun and then adjective (eager). He is reeeeeaaaallllllyy eager.

As a side note, the first word translated in the NASB as “so” is the same word used in John 3:16. A literal translation as Herman and others give it in John 3:16, is “In this manner.”

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As a side note to the side note, there was a Greek scholar, Adolph Deissmann, who saw the apostle John as “interpreter of Paul.” John narrates events that illustrate some of the concepts that Paul talks about, but uses very simple language.

**Eager.** This is more than “willing” as some translations have it. This is again an expression of Paul’s emotion of wanting to very much to visit and preach in Rome. Eager is OK for a translation.

After saying he is under obligation to all Gentiles, Paul says he wants to preach in Rome. It kind of reminds me of that quote from the movie Casablanca: “Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, she walks into mine” But Paul is more explicit in his desire. “Of all the peoples and places in the world in which I could preach, I pick Rome.”

**To preach the gospel.** This is a single word, a verb. There is no noun “gospel.” A slavish literal translation might be “evangelize.” But in this context, it is about announcing or teaching the good news. It includes not only the salvation message of justification, but also the phase 2 message of sanctification in our daily lives.

Something that Robby Dean has made a point of saying in various places in his lessons is that there is no one set way to present the gospel. We see this in Paul’s missions in the book of Acts. In some places he can say “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” The Corinthian jailer understood the basics of the gospel. So all Paul had to do was communicate the last bit of information. But in the case of others, Paul had to start with God as the creator. Then he had to explain the need for salvation and the person who makes that possible: Jesus Christ. We must keep this in mind when we evangelize young people who have been taught in a God-less school. Sometimes, communicating the good news starts with what I call the witness of the life. It is important that we live a

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“Christian” life walking by faith-dependence on the Holy Spirit. Witness of the life.

There is a true story that illustrates this. I witnessed it so I tell it from my perspective. Prior to coming to Spring Valley Bible Church, I attended a church in Rockwall. I am not including names or exact places. That is not important. At one point, there was a man that started going to this church in Rockwall while he studied to get his degree from Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS). Once he got his degree he returned home to somewhere in the Midwest. Some weeks later, this man returned with a sad commentary on his life and how it impacted his ministry. Prior to leaving the Midwest he had been in real estate. In order to ensure his family had plenty of money to live on while he was away at DTS he swindled another man in a real estate deal. Not a small swindle but a whopper of a swindle. When the recent graduate returned to the Midwest, he bought a nice home. He decided to go next door to give the gospel to his neighbor assuming him to be an unbeliever. It turned out that his next door neighbor was the man he had swindled in the real estate deal. Obviously, his ministry had just been negated in the eyes of his neighbor. We should not judge the graduate. He learned from his mistake. That issue is between God and the graduate. He acknowledged to God his mistake. Let us learn from his mistake that he narrated in front of the church in Rockwall. Witness of the life is important.

**Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**

**Ashamed.** We are not to be ashamed of the Gospel. Even Jesus said

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**Luke 9:26 For whoever is ashamed (our word) of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed (our word) of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.**

For new Christians, this is a danger when attempting to give the gospel. This is especially true on college campuses. You might bump into someone whose life ambition is to destroy the faith of Christians. Some atheists actually say this. You can find them on Youtube. These people have read up on supposed flaws in the Bible or dig up the history of terrible sins of Christians in history. They use them to embarrass young Christians in an attempt to get them to abandon their faith. To get them to feel ashamed of being a Christian. To be ashamed of the gospel.

**Romans 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”**

**Righteousness.** I am not going to go into detail on the righteousness of God here. At a later time I may. Suffice it to say that this is a characteristic of God’s essence. God’s behavior is perfect. There is no flaw in it. Everything He does is right. He is righteous.

Something I had not noticed is the repeated reference to God.

Gospel of God - verse 1

Son of God - verse 3

Beloved of God - verse 7

Will of God - verse 10

Power of God - verse 16

Righteousness of God - verse 17

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The gospel of God involves the whole character of God. Throughout the book of Romans, the character of God that is most emphasized is His righteousness which we have in this verse.

**Revealed.** Literally, “uncovered.” The good news was always in the Old Testament, starting with Genesis 3:15, the “protoevangelium.” But in the life of Jesus Christ, his death, burial and resurrection God’s righteousness was manifested in a physical way and fulfilled Old Testament expectations.

Job expressed the issue

**Job 14:4 “Who can make the clean out of the  
unclean? No one!**

**Job 8:3 “Does God pervert justice? Or does  
the Almighty pervert what is right?**

Satan’s job was to protect God’s righteousness. Rather than just state that as fact, let me present some information to support that claim. The information presented is just cursory as this could easily lead to a long in-depth description and history of cherubim.

Satan was the anointed cherub. Although not specifically named, it is usually understood that only Satan matches the description given in this part of Ezekiel chapter 28.

**Ezekiel 28:14 “You were the anointed cherub  
who covers, And I placed you there. You were  
on the holy mountain of God; You walked in  
the midst of the stones of fire.**

**Covers.** The Hebrew word can mean different things. It can mean to cover as a protection.

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Dr. Barnhouse in his book on the invisible warfare explains. “We read, “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth” (Ezekiel 28:14). The idea expressed in the word covereth has been widely interpreted by the commentators, but we find the most satisfactory idea not in a commentary but in the French translation of Segond: “Thou was the protecting cherub with spread-out wings.”<sup>2</sup>

Even in English, some translations include guard:

**Ezekiel 28:14 (New English Translation) I placed you there with an anointed guardian cherub; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked about amidst fiery stones.**

The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT) supports this interpretation as meaning covering in the sense of protecting, guarding.<sup>3</sup>

If we go back to the Garden of Eden and the stationing of the cherubim to protect it, we get another verb that specifically means to guard

**Genesis 3:24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.**

“The Garden of Eden is a temple-garden, represented later in the tabernacle. Cherubim protect its sanctity (Gen 3:24; Ex. 26:1; 2 Chron. 3:7) so that sin and death are excluded (Gen. 3:23; Rev 21:8).<sup>4</sup>”

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2 Donald Grey Barnhouse (1996). The invisible war : the panorama of the continuing conflict between good & evil. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House. Page 28.

3 Gerhard Johannes Botterweck (2001). Theological dictionary of the Old Testament. 10, Nāqam - 'āzab. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.

4 Waltke, B.K. and Fredricks, C.J. (2001). Genesis: a Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan. Page 85



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There is a sad irony to Satan's life. He was created as a guardian of God's holiness/righteousness. Yet, he was the first to violate the standard of perfect righteousness. Satan is constantly challenging God when He does something that appears to violate His righteousness. Satan might say, "You can't do that. It will pervert your perfect righteousness."

So in Job 14:4 and 8:3, Satan's thinking is reflected by humans. If God can condemn a perfect creature who sinned to the Lake of Fire, then how can He save an unrighteous sinner? How can He make the clean out of the unclean without perverting His righteousness?

The answer is contained in the good news. Jesus Christ went to the cross and received the divine judgment for all sin. The only requirement for the creature is to have faith, to trust Jesus Christ, His work on the cross for imputation of God's righteousness. It is easy to say, but the implications run all through the Bible, all through the fabric of Scripture.

Back to Romans 1:17

**From faith to faith.** What does this mean? Robby Dean explains the problem:

"It is hard to understand what Paul means by these two uses of PISTIS here, which is the Greek word for faith. Is it faith to faith meaning faith at justification, to faith at sanctification (ongoing spiritual growth), or is he simply saying "from faith to faith" as a summary of the entire spiritual life of the believer from regeneration and new birth, which is faith alone in Christ alone, to the fact that every step of the way we are constantly growing in our faith all the way through until we are absent from the body and face to face with the Lord? Because his explanation here comes from a quote from Habakkuk 2:4, "The just shall live by faith." Herein lies a problem. This is an extremely difficult verse to translate and to interpret because of the question: is Paul using this in its original sense?

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If he is then it is not a gospel justification by faith verse because that wasn't the issue in Habakkuk 2:4.<sup>5</sup>

I don't have enough time to delve deeply into all that is involved in this quote from Habakkuk, so I will provide a summary of the information. Then, at a later time delve into some of the details.

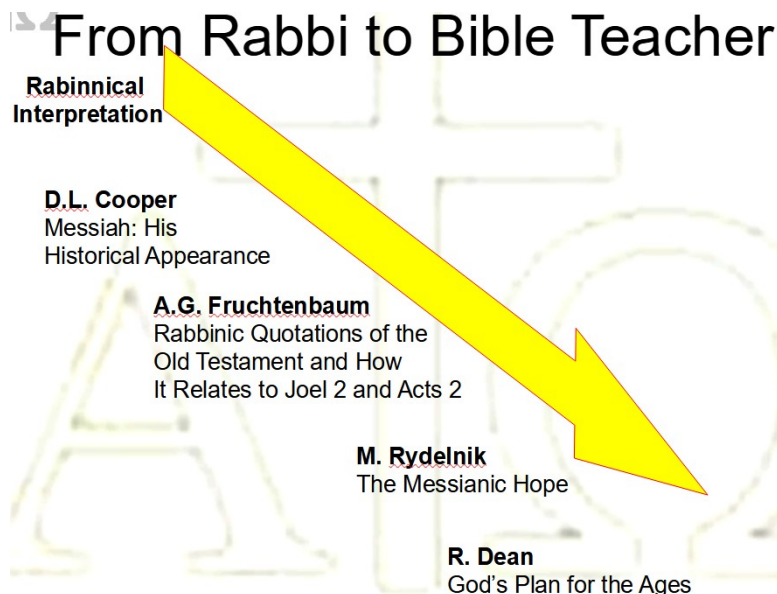
Remember next week is Resurrection Sunday. I want to attempt to deal with 1 Corinthians chapter 15. That could potentially take two weeks to deal with.

In order to deal with faith to faith and the quote from Habakkuk, there is a progression of topics:

**faith to faith → explained by Habakkuk 2:4**

**Use of OT quotes in NT → Context of Habakkuk → Habakkuk 2:4 → Romans 1:17**

In the past, I have presented information about New Testament usage of Old Testament quotes. I acquired this information from Robby Dean who studied books and articles by D. L Cooper, Arnold Fruchtenbaum and Michael Rydelnik.



<sup>5</sup> <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/romans-menuitem/message/2010-romans-008b/read>

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The “slide” is from my series on “Fulfillment” as is the following “slide.”

Direct Fulfillment: Literal prediction and literal direct fulfillment.

Typical Fulfillment: A literal, historical event applied typologically.

Applicational Fulfillment: An historical event is used to draw out an application with reference to a future event.

Summary Fulfillment: No actual event is prophesied, but the fulfillment represents a summation of Old Testament prophecies.

Quoted from Dean's Lessons 15 & 16 of God's Plan for the Ages - Dispensations (2014)

Paul is using the “applicational fulfillment” to apply a principle from Habakkuk to the gospel which is good news for both the unbeliever and believer.

**Habakkuk 2:4 “Behold, as for the proud one,  
His soul is not right within him; But the  
righteous will live by his faith.”**

The sentence, “But the righteous will live by his faith” has been interpreted various ways. There is a difficulty with the word “faith” in the Hebrew.

Let me give you a couple of quick quotes to give you the answer. We will return and delve into some of the difficulties.

Concerning “from faith to faith.”

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Robby Dean:

“There is a lot of discussion about the phrase “from faith to faith,” it is somewhat ambiguous. But the best explanation in terms of context is “from faith,” i.e., the initial faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament who died as the final and complete sacrifice for sin on the cross (justification faith), to sanctification “faith,” the faith that is essential to grow as a believer.<sup>6</sup>”

Dan Hill (I have not used Dan previously but now I found where some of his material is located at GraceNotes.info)<sup>7</sup>

1. God's righteousness demands our righteousness
2. But man is incapable of perfect righteousness, the best he can do is a righteousness that is relative to man.
3. Therefore, God provided a way He can give or impute to us His own righteousness. READ 2 Cor. 5:21.
4. At salvation this is done as a result of our faith in His Son
5. And in the Christian way of life, it is accomplished the same way.
6. Faith is what unleashes the power of God in the life of the one who believes.
7. This shows us the power of God in doing for us that which was impossible for us and through this being able to have a relationship with us.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/romans-menuitem/message/2010-romans-010b/read>

<sup>7</sup> <https://gracenotes.info/romans/rom001.pdf>

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Herman Mattox:

From faith to faith

First time faith is used, it refers to Salvation 1 faith

Second time faith is used, refers to Salvation 2 faith

Salvation 1 faith that reveals the righteousness of God is a pattern for revealing the righteousness of God in Christian life

Faith in Son of God for E-L (eternal life) that reveals righteousness of God is a pattern for faith in Spirit of God that reveals righteousness of God—in our lives.

Faith to be saved is patter of how we are to live

Out of faith to be eternally saved into faith to live the Spirit Filled Life<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Romans/notes/20080203Romans27.htm>