

[Click this to return to the Free Articles Menu](#)

### **A challenge to my reformed friends to explain Romans 1:16**

If you claim to be “reformed,” and you teach what most reformed people teach about the gospel, I hereby challenge you to explain Romans 1:16 in a way that is consistent with your theology. If you are reformed, then you believe that unless and until God regenerates a person, he is spiritually dead and unable to make himself believe. (I believe this too.) If you are like most reformed people, you also think that when Paul used the word “salvation” in Romans 1:16, he was referring to the salvation that accompanies regeneration and conversion. This, I do not believe. But if you believe this, please explain how the gospel is the power of God unto (leading to) the salvation that accompanies regeneration and conversion, especially since Paul said elsewhere that *the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing* (I Corinthians 1:18). Since you and I both believe that the gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing, how can it be the power of God unto regeneration/conversion? If on the other hand it is the power of God unto salvation only to those who are believing (like the text says), should we not conclude that Paul was referring to the salvation ready to be revealed when Jesus comes back, as he clearly does in Romans 13:11.

I wrote this challenge hoping to get my reformed friends to think more precisely about the word salvation (soteria) as Paul used it in Romans 1:16. Once a person realizes the exact concept Paul was talking about in regard to salvation, then he is more likely to understand why the gospel is God’s power that propels **those who are believing** unto the salvation that is ready to be revealed when Jesus comes back. (It does not propel unbelievers unto regeneration/conversion because it is foolishness to them.)

Because of God’s gospel promise to glorify those who believe (and continue to believe), those who believe His promise are highly motivated to confess and continue to confess Jesus before men. They are driven to pray and continue to pray that God will empower them to endure persecution and not shrink back unto perdition. In this way, the gospel is truly God’s power that propels them unto the salvation that will take place when Jesus comes back.