

ROMANS 10

The Word of Faith Brings Salvation

TO THE
ROMANS

God's Wrath on Unrighteousness

us, called to be
the gospel of God,
beforehand through his
Scriptures,³ concerning his
descended from David² according
and was declared to be the Son of
power according to the Spirit of holiness

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is
heaven against all ungodlines
teousness of men, who by their
ness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For
known about God is plain to
God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For
attributes, namely, his eternal po

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Last time in Chapter 9 we saw that the Jews could not establish a legitimate claim on God's favor based on their national heritage. Though they were natural descendants of Abraham, they were not spiritual descendants based on having placed faith in Messiah Jesus.

Their history demonstrated that God carries out His purposes *sovereignly*, with a freedom not limited by human notions of fairness or what man thinks ought to be. Paul showed that the Jews were responsible for their own rejection.

We also saw another apparent unfairness regarding Israel and then offered an explanation. The Gentiles, who had not pursued righteousness by obeying the law as had the Jews, had attained to righteousness by faith! Israel did not understand that God makes people right with Him through faith, not works.

In Romans 10 we will see that if a Jew today wants to come into God's favor, he must come to Calvary as a lost sinner and accept his Messiah as Savior and Lord. This is the theme of Romans 10.

Paul begins Chapter 10 with the same burden found at the beginning of Chapter 9:

Romans 10:1

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

The use of the term "brothers" softens what has already been said and what will follow. Yet Paul does not water down the truth one iota.

Romans 10:2-4

For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³ Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴ Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness

for everyone who believes.

He gives two basic reasons why the Jew is lost, reasons which also apply to Gentiles.

First, the Jew is lost because of misguided religious exercise. “They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” A zeal for God is great as long as it’s rightly directed. But it’s a tragic thing if it takes the person down the wrong road.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “If you board the wrong train it is no use running along the corridor in the opposite direction.”

If you board the train of good works, no matter what you do within it, you’re still going the wrong way. The only way to get on the right track is to disembark and board the train of grace.

Paul finally reached the day when he realized that all his supposed religious assets were actually liabilities, all his good works were equivalent to cow manure. He disembarked the train of good works and boarded the train of grace.

The Jew was lost not only because of his misguided religious exercise, but also because of his misguided religious enterprise.

Romans 10:3

Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.

The great enterprise of the Jew was to build for himself an edifice of righteousness in his own strength based on the edicts (the Ten Commandments) of Mount Sinai—which was an utterly impossible task.

Righteousness is not to be found at Mount Sinai but at Calvary; it lies not in the

acceptance of a precept but of a Person; not by serving commandments but by serving Christ.

Romans 10:4

Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Next, Paul lays out for the Jew (and all people everywhere) how Christ is accepted and true salvation attained. There is something that precedes an acceptance of Christ and something that follows it.

An acceptance of Christ is preceded by a *fair consideration* of Him, and it is followed by a *frank confession* of Him.

Before doing so, Paul takes one last look at Sinai and considers the problem inherent in seeking righteousness by the law.

Romans 10:5

For Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: “The man who does these things will live by them.

The quotation is from Leviticus 18:5 and points out that in order to be saved by the law a person must live according to all the precepts of the law without violation even one of them. Should a person be able to do this, he would have earned his title to heaven.

But the big pink elephant in the room for the Jew was—nobody could live such a life! “Do this and you shall live” is cold comfort for the person who realizes his inability to live according to the divine decree.

Paul’s message is that it is not the law one must appeal to for righteousness, it is the Lord. It is not Moses, it is Christ—the very One they had rejected!

Okay, Paul, then tell us how to do all this! Responded the Jew.

Romans 10:6-7

But the righteousness that is by faith says: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷”or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’ “ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

This quote is from Deuteronomy 30: 11-14. Though the passages seem difficult, they are basically saying, Just as Moses had said that there was no need for anyone to go up to heaven to bring down the law, so it is true that no one needs to go up to heaven to bring the Messiah down.

And just as Moses had said that there was no need for anyone to go “across the sea” to find the law, so no one need “search the depths” to find the Messiah.

In fact, finding the Messiah is much less complicated than all of that!

Romans 10:8

But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:’

Just as in Moses’ day the Word of God was very accessible, so now the Lord Himself is very accessible. The “word of faith” includes the whole message of the gospel with its glorious tidings that Christ has come down from heaven, and the resurrection which tells us that He has come up from the grave. They only have to believe in their heart.

Romans 10:9

That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

This famous passage focuses on the **DEITY** of Christ. He was and is Lord, and He was indisputably raised from the dead. “He was seen! He is risen!” was the confession of the early Christian. And everyone knew it was so (1 Corinthians 15:5-8).

“believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,” says Paul. The gospel appeal is primarily to the heart rather than to the head. God does not look for primarily intellectual assent to dogma, but for personal committal to Jesus as Lord.

In Hebrew thought, “the heart” comprised the whole man. The Savior, says Paul, is very accessible. He must be believed on in the heart and confessed with the mouth. This was the very thing the Jews refused to do, and refuse to do to this day. They will not confess the deity of Jesus.

Why is this important? Paul continues:

Romans 10:10

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

There is a change in the order of “heart” and “mouth” here because in verse 9 Paul is following Moses’ order and in verse 10 the order of experience. Believing comes before confessing.

The “confessing” here is not a legalistic requirement. It is a natural consequence of true faith. Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”—Matthew 12:34 W. E. Vine says, “The actual order is now given: faith first, then confession. Absence of confession betrays lack of faith.”

Another commentator says, “The beginning of the Christian life has two sides: internally it is the change of heart which faith implies; this leads to righteousness,

the position of acceptance before God: externally it implies ‘confession of Christ crucified’”

Next comes great news; *anyone and everyone can be saved!*

Romans 10:11-13

As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Anyone can call out. Jew or Gentile, the young and the old, the bond and the free, the rich and the poor, the cultured and the crude, the down and outer or the up and outer—anyone can call. Confessing the name, confessing Jesus as Lord gives personal expression and public exposure to the fact that Jesus saves.

Next follows a strong call to evangelistic work.

Romans 10:14-15

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”—vs. 14-15

Simply put, to be saved, one must hear the good news. For that to happen there must be a witness. The word for preacher is “herald, proclaimer.” How will they believe if they don’t hear the gospel from a witness? And how will there be a witness unless one is sent?

This is why Jesus told His followers,

Matthew 28:19-20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have com- manded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Next, Paul returns to the sad fact that occupies his mind all through these chapters. The Jew has rejected Christ as Savior. He now shows how unrelenting Jewish disbelief in the Lord Jesus really is:

Romans 10:16-18

But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. ¹⁸ But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Paul maintains that the Jewish unbelief in Christ is unreasonable on two counts:

FIRST, *they could believe*. Yet Paul says, “But they have not obeyed the gospel.” Paul mourns with Isaiah over the unreasonable unbelief of his people, for the gospel is not a new thing; it is rooted and grounded firmly in the O.T.

The supreme tragedy is that the people refuse to hear. Jesus said again and again, “He that has hears to hear, let him hear.”—Matthew 11:15 Yet, even though some may consent to *listen*, they yet fail to *hear*. This was the Jew. He had *listened* but not heard to the point of believing.

SECOND, *they should believe*. The Gentiles had accepted the gospel, Paul argues, and this fact alone should arouse the Jewish conscience. Paul next cites Moses and

Isaiah as witnesses that the Hebrew Scriptures themselves foretold the conversion of the Gentiles. First, Moses:

Romans 10:19

Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, “I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.”

The Jews should believe, if for no other reason, out of sheer jealousy of the fact that the Gentiles have stolen, as it were, their blessing! Next, he quotes Isaiah:

Romans 10:20

And Isaiah boldly says, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”

Again, here we have the sovereignty of God at work. The rejection of Jesus by the Jewish people caused God to turn to the Gentiles. And the Jews to this day continue in their disobedience.

Romans 10:21

But concerning Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.”

The word “disobedient” means “to refuse to be persuaded.”

So far, then, as God’s present dealings with Israel are concerned, He is speaking to the individual Jew. He is offering him salvation on the same basis as the Gentile. Gentiles are pressing into the kingdom while relatively few Jews pay any heed to the gospel call.

THE WORD OF FAITH BRINGS SALVATION

