

Romans Chapter 10

This chapter actually starts at the end of chapter nine, Vs. 30, (read 9:30-10:4).

Here we read of Paul's sadness for his fellow Jews. Paul starts with a sincere appeal to his fellow Christians to have sympathy for their Jewish brothers. Paul's concern is for the salvation of the Jews and he hopes that the fruit the gospel bears among the Gentiles will make his fellow Jews envious of God's grace and draw them to faith and realisation of Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Paul may be speaking from personal experience in 10:2, when he talks about the Jews having a misplaced zeal for God (see also Phil. 3:4-6). In Vs.3, Paul contrasts the righteousness that Jesus provides to the efforts of people to establish their own righteousness through observance of the law. Even in the context of the covenant, the Jews perverted God's grace by seeing it as dependant on their own law keeping, or put another way, by their works. When we think like this, we are no longer thinking about grace, we are thinking about justice because justice is deserved, grace is given. Paul goes on to say that, *'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes'* What he is saying is that in His fulfilment of the law Jesus ends any pursuit of the law in order to establish righteousness. In fulfilling the law Jesus has satisfied the requirements of the law perfectly, something we are unable to do, and now His righteousness is imputed to us upon salvation.

Verses 5-13

Paul again looks to scripture to support his argument and here he looks to Lev. 18:5, which says, *"You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the Lord."* Originally this statement was speaking about God's redemptive grace and God's requirement for a person to be obedient. However, if a person rejects God's grace then only perfect obedience to the law can merit eternal life, this is something which is impossible for us to do because we are sinners. The law shows us that God's salvation is secured not by human effort, but by divine grace. By seeking self righteousness a man attempting to do what only God alone can do and has done through the person and work of Jesus in His life, death and His resurrection.

Paul goes on to quote from Deuteronomy 30, to warn his audience about being ignorant regarding the nature of righteousness. (read Dent.30:11-14). In Deuteronomy 30, here Moses is close to death, and is giving the law to the second generation of Israelites just prior to them entering the Promised Land. The first generation of Israelites, who were rebellious, have died after forty years of wandering in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 2:16-18). The rules of Leviticus given to the first generation did not change Israel's heart; although they remained the elect of God, they did not receive the reward of the inheritance of the Promise Land. So now in Deuteronomy 30:11-20, Moses tells the Israelites that the path to gaining the blessing of God is not difficult to understand. It is simple (Deuteronomy 30:12), *"Who will ascend into heaven?"* In other words, they don't need someone to go up to heaven and get a divine revelation in order to understand how to be blessed. Why? Because it is simple; no heavenly explanation is needed. *"Neither say,"* Moses continues, *"Who will descend into the abyss?"* In other words, they don't need a missionary, or an expert, to come from *"over the sea"* to explain it. Why? Because it is simple, and does not need an expert's explanation. So, what do they need? They need to listen to the word that is in their heart. To listen to that word, speak that word, and do that word. What Paul does as he quotes Deuteronomy 30, is he applies each verse to Christ. Therefore, in order to find true righteousness, the righteousness of faith, we don't have to get Jesus to come down from heaven again and explain it (that is, to bring Christ down, Vs.6). And we don't have to get Jesus to come over the sea, or the abyss of death and come back to life in order to explain it to us (*'that is, to bring Christ up from the dead,'* Vs.7) Why? Because it is simple, we, like the O.T. Israelites, have the word of God written down for us and we have the preaching of the gospel. If we are truly saved the gospel is in our hearts and the word is near you. The more we nurture our relationship with God and submit to His authority over us, the more we submit to the teaching and correction of the Holy Spirit, the more the gospel will be in our mouth and in our heart.

To gain true righteousness, we simply need to listen to that word, speak and meditate on that word, and do that word of faith which Paul is preaching. The 'word' is, of course, the gospel of grace, the true gospel Paul preaches. The gospel of grace is the way to true righteousness, not the law.

This is why we need the whole bible, both old and new testaments, because together they bring us the whole counsel of God and His intended revelation for us. This is why Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:10, to be, *'diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practise these qualities you will never fail'*. He also says in 1 Peter 3:15, we are to, *'honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;'*

So, as Israel prepared to enter the promised land, Moses reminded the people that God did not give them the land because of their righteousness, He gave it to them because of the wickedness of the land's inhabitants (Deut 9:4–6). When Moses gave the law to the Israelites in Deut 30:, he urged them not to think of the requirements of the law as being too difficult to understand, or as if they needed someone to explain it to them. Just as Moses announced the accessible nature of the law, Paul announces the accessible nature of the gospel. The word is near (Vs.8), because the Holy Spirit has written it upon the hearts and minds of believers (Jer 31:33; 2 Cor 3:3).

In Vs.9, Paul describes an outward expression of an inward trust. Paul does not regard believing in the heart and confessing with the mouth as separate, but as parts of a single expression of faith in Jesus' Lordship. Paul presents God's resurrection of Jesus as the basis for the believer's justification before God (see Rom 4:25; 5:1), therefore, faith in the resurrection is essential. The resurrection also shows that God vindicated Jesus from the shame of the cross as stated in 9:33. Elsewhere in his letters, Paul associates Jesus' resurrection with His Lordship (Eph 1:19–22; Phil 2:9).

In Vs.11, Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:16, adding the Greek word *pas*, meaning "everyone" or "all," to demonstrate that this promise applies to both Jews and Gentiles alike. Just as God makes no distinctions between men in their sin, God makes no distinction in showing His grace to all those He chooses, regardless of race or background. Paul quotes from Joel in Vs.13, when he said, *"And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls."* Some scholars believe that this statement was fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:21). But this prophecy is also fulfilled in Gentiles as a whole, because when they come to salvation they identify themselves with the true Israel, which is personified in Jesus, and are included as God's chosen people alongside the Jews. Both Jews and Gentiles now form the nation of people chosen by God to be *"His people."* (See also Acts 2:17-21 & 10:44-48).
Verses 14-21

In this passage, Paul gives an analysis of what is involved when someone calls upon God for salvation. In Paul's view it is Jesus who is the one true preacher of the gospel, and His voice is carried through the ages by His servants who proclaim His gospel (see Eph. 2:17; John 10:16).

In Vs.15, quoting from Isaiah 52:7, Paul shows us the great honour and privilege we have in our ministry of preaching the gospel. Again relying on O.T. scripture to support his argument, in Vs.18, Paul cites Psalm 19:4. This Psalm speaks of both the general revelation of God in nature, and the special revelation in His Word. So, if people have 'heard' the message of God through creation, how much more do those who have heard the gospel through preaching possess the special revelation of God. This special revelation of saving grace through Jesus as our saviour is spreading throughout the world and the gospel stands alongside nature as a complete revelation of God's eternal power and divine grace.

In Vs.19, Paul turns his attention again to Israel. The failure of Israel cannot be excused, they cannot say they did not hear or understand the message of God.

Paul quotes from Moses and Isaiah who both contrast Israel with people who lack understanding, in Deuteronomy 32:21, in 'The Song of Moses,' he says,

*“They have made me jealous with what is no god;
they have provoked me to anger with their idols.
So I will make them jealous with those who are no people;
I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.”*

And Isaiah says in chapter 65:1, of his book,

*“I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me;
I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me.
I said, “Here I am, here I am,”
to a nation that was not called by my name.”*

Here Paul is illustrating how both the prophets and the law testify to the nation of Israel being held responsible for their unbelief and refusal to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. However, we know from the books of Daniel, Revelation and the prophets that there will be a day when Israel will turn to Jesus, Zechariah says in 12:10, of his book,

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.”

However, Zechariah goes on to prophecy in 13:1, that,

“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.”

In the closing verses of Romans 10, Paul expands his quote from Isaiah and describes the contrasting nature of salvation. Gentiles who did not seek God, have been called and found Him. The Jews, who are His chosen people, have rejected Him. Both in the original context of Isaiah and here in Romans, Israel rejects God's grace. Israel's repeated rejection of God and their resistance to Him calls into question their role in the future plans of God, and that is what Paul will be exploring in the next chapter.