

Romans 10

God's Present Dealing with Israel: Romans 10:1-21

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal [religious devotion] of God, but not according to knowledge.

10:1 The heart of every Christian should desire to see souls saved. Proverbs 11:30 says, *"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise"*

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish [secure] their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

10:3 The term *"God's righteousness"* is used in contrast to the *"righteousness of God"* The *"righteousness of God"* refers to God's consistency with Himself in ministering the affairs of the universe. God is holy, just and good. He does all things well.

In the area of salvation God is the Justifier of those who put their faith in Jesus Christ. He can do this because the question of sin has been settled in a righteous way, as the nature of God demanded that it should be. Sin was not *"winked at"* or passed over but was judged at the Cross according to the principle of righteousness.

All of that is as it should be.

However, Paul declares that the Jews were ignorant of *"God's righteousness"*, which means they did not comprehend just how righteous God really is in His own essence. As a result they went about to establish their own righteousness.

This is without doubt the most serious charge Paul levels against the Jews for it touches the essence of sin which is unbelief.

Lucifer did not believe he was inferior to God and decided he would be like the Most High (Isa. 14: 12-15).

Adam and Eve did not believe God when He told them the day they ate of the forbidden fruit they would die (Gen. 2:17).

The Jews did not believe God would justify the guilty on the principle of grace and so moved to establish their own righteousness thereby forcing God to accept them on their terms. They did not submit to gospel terms in order to receive forgiveness for sins by expressing faith in Christ. But they should have for Christ is the consummation of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.

4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

10 4 The apostle means three things by these words.

First, Christ is the goal of the Law in the sense that all of the moral obligations of the Law are fulfilled in Him. Certainly Jesus did not come to violate the Law but to fulfill it, which He did perfectly. (Matt. 5:17; John 8:46)

Second, Christ is the end of the Law's antitypes. In the Old Testament

many sacrifices and offerings were established to teach some spiritual facet of the coming Messiah. In particular there was the Burnt Offering, the Meat Offering, the Peace Offering, the Sin Offering, and the Trespass Offering. (Study book of Leviticus) In Christ, all of the types find fulfillment. This then, is the gospel for the salvation of the sinner. Jesus was sacrificed, according to the *Scriptures*. The Lord died a substitutionary death. Christ was buried, and God raised Him from the dead. There remaineth now no more sacrifice for sin. (Heb. 10:118) Christ is the end of the Law in this matter so that the saint can say,

*“No blood, no altar now,
The sacrifice is o’er;
No flame, no smoke ascends on high,
The lamb is slain no more.”*

As Christ is the goal of the Law and the end of all antitypes, so in Him the Law terminates. The Law holds no binding authority over the believer as a rule of life ceremonially or socially. Christ has terminated it. Now the believer fulfills the righteousness of the Law by walking in the sphere of the Spirit in the newness of life. What was once written on stones is written in the heart. (Heb. 10:16)

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

10:5 Having established the fact that Christ is the end of the Law for

righteousness to everyone that believeth, (Romans 10:4) the apostle presses his point by drawing a contrast between Legal Righteousness and Gospel Grace.

“Moses”, said Paul, “*describeth the righteousness which is of the Law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them*” (Romans 10:5).

One passage that Paul may have had in mind by referring to Moses was Deuteronomy 30:10-16. In that passage the commandments and statutes of the Lord are set forth with the injunction to love God, walk in His ways, keep His Law, and live. But therein lies the problem. Who can ever do all that the Law demands? Who can live? Many have sincerely tried to obey the Law. Many have tried to do good in order to earn or merit eternal life. Many had a zeal for God through legal righteousness, but there was no one who could abide by the Law perfectly.

What then is to be done? If legal righteousness cannot be obtained, is there another righteousness that can be found? The answer is, yes! There is a righteousness of Faith.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down *from above*.)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and

shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10:6-9 What characterizes the righteousness of faith? Good works of another nature? No. *“Say not in thine heart, ‘Who shall ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead)’”* (Romans 10:6,7)

The righteousness of faith is not found by going forth to personally bring Christ from heaven to earth nor by bring Him back from the dead—that would be works.

But what saith the righteousness of faith? *“The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach”* (Romans 10:8).

What is the word of faith? It is the gospel that is proclaimed! And this is the gospel, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”* (Romans 10:9).

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

10:10 The word *“confess”* is a very important word. In the first century, to confess Christ meant a willingness to honor Jesus before a watching world which hated Him.

Both Judaism and Rome felt threatened by the Lord and His followers. For the Jews, if Christ was the

Messiah, then the Jewish leaders had done a horrible thing in delivering their King to be crucified. Moreover, if the Law really did end in Christ as the new theology taught, then the sacrificial system should cease. But a sudden termination of the sacrifices and offerings would disrupt the economy of the Temple, and that could not be allowed to happen.

The Roman concerns were far different than the Jewish interests. It was widely believed that the ultimate bonding of the empire relied upon a social recognition that Caesar was master or lord. To deny Caesar was lord was to unleash the forces of lawlessness and anarchy as individuals struggled with whom would be master of the multitudes.

Therefore, patriotism demanded that honor be paid to Caesar in a special way. This, the Christians refused to do. They would confess no one to be their Lord or Master except Jesus.

To confess Christ was to publicly declare allegiance to Him in a hostile world. Confession of Christ was not something that was done in the safety of a religious ceremony; rather, it was done in the market places of the masses on a daily basis.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

10:11-13 Paul assures the Roman Christians that confessing Christ and believing that God raised Him from the dead brings salvation. *“Thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9).*

Salvation, what a lovely word that is though it is no longer valued very highly. Time has passed. We are living in a generation that no longer asks, *“What must I do to be saved?”* but, *“What must I do to be happy?”* While it is happiness that men seek after, it is salvation that they need.

Now those who do seek for salvation, those who do confess Christ openly will never be ashamed for whether Jew or Gentile the same Lord will rule over both. Whosoever comes to Christ will be saved (Romans 10:11-13).

The only issue remaining for individuals to determine is whether or not they will call upon Christ or try to be saved according to legal righteousness. The choice is real. Either a system of salvation by works resulting in Legal Righteousness will be pursued or the Righteousness of Faith will be followed after. In deciding between the two, it must be said once more that Legal Righteousness based upon the Law will never be obtained and the Law itself is weak and inadequate to help.

*Run and live! the Law commands
but gives me neither legs nor hands.
Yet better means the Gospel brings,
It bids me fly and gives me wings.*

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Come to Christ by the Faith of Righteousness. Believe on the Lord Jesus for salvation for, *“If ever man was God, or God was man, Jesus Christ was both” (Lord George Byron).*

As the God-Man, Christ can help as no one else. Great moral teachers cannot save. Confucius confessed, *“How dare I lay claim to holiness or love; a man of endless cravings who never tires of teaching, I might be called, but nothing more.”*

Great religious leaders cannot help. The grave of Mohammed can still be visited today. But the grave of Christ is empty. He is a risen Savior. Call upon Him, and you will never be ashamed in time or in eternity for you will stand clothed in His perfect righteousness—by faith. To call upon Christ means to believe. To call upon Christ means that you say, *“Lord, help me. Lord, save me from the penalty, the power and the pollution of sin. I do believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I do believe that God has raised you from the dead. I do believe that you and you alone are Lord. Amen.”*

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

10:14-15 Having made a dramatic distinction between the legal righteousness of the Law that cannot save and the righteousness of faith that produces salvation, the apostle continues his reasonable inquiry regarding the way of redemption.

Several rhetorical questions are raised resulting in specific conclusions that may be summarized.

- Every sinner must *call* upon the Lord Jesus Christ and recognize Him as Lord in order to be saved.
- No one can call upon Christ unless they *believe* in Him.
- Belief in Christ is impossible without *hearing* about Him.
- Hearing about Christ cannot take place unless the message of the gospel is *preached*.
- The message and the messenger must be divinely *sent* if sinners are to be saved.

Concerning the matter of the messenger being sent, Jerome (c. AD 345-419), one of the great Bible teachers of the early church observed that there are several classes of ministers.

First, there are individuals who have been sent directly from God such as the prophets and the apostles.

Second, there are individuals sent by God but through men. The church has commissioned these individuals because the local assembly believes that God has honored their ministry in a special way. Barnabas might fall into this category as well as Timothy.

Then third, there are those who are sent by men but not by God. This is the professional minister who sees the ministry as a career choice and not as a divine calling.

To this group another classification could be made according to 2 Corinthians 11:14-15. There are those who are sent by Satan. They are preachers of righteousness but they are ultimately servants of the Wicked One.

Despite false ministers, those who have been sent are happy to proclaim the gospel. They set forth the fundamental character of the gospel as well as its terms knowing that it will have different effects on different people. Someone has said the gospel of the sovereign grace of God *makes sinners mad; it makes the saints glad; and it makes pretenders mad*. How true that is. The gospel reveals sin—and that makes sinners mad. The gospel brings assurance of salvation—and that makes the saints glad. And the gospel make pretenders mad—by stressing free grace and not free will.

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

10:16-17 Those who hear the gospel preached are under a divine injunction to respond in a positive manner by faith. It is faith that saves the soul. But how does one get such saving faith? The divine answer is, “*by hearing the word of God. ‘Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God’ (Romans 10:17).*”

Mr. Spurgeon liked to say, “*Faith cannot be washed into us by immersion. It cannot be sprinkled upon us at a christening. It is not to be poured into us from a chalice. It is not generated in us by a consecrated piece of bread.*”

Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

As the *Bible* is read, Faith leads the soul to the Garden of Eden to experience once more the Fall. As the gospel is heard Faith leads the soul to the Garden of Gethsemane where Christ prayed with

blood and sweat and tears. Faith takes the soul by the hand and leads it to Calvary and says, "*Here is you Lord and your God. Believe.* By faith the soul is able to say, *I believe.*"

*Before the Cross in awe I stood,
Beholding brow and pierced hand;
For me it was He bled and died,
No other price for sin beside
Could pay the price for me.
His precious blood, there flowing red,
Was love's best gift, most freely shed;
No one but He the price could pay,
Or save from death and point the way
For sinners, you and me.
And as I gaze, I seem to hear
Him gently say, My son, draw near;
New life I give and power withal,
Free unto all who on Me call,
Now and eternally.*

~*~

Ernest O. Sellers

18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that* are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my

hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

10:18-21 Because God will save all that call upon Christ, Israel is without excuse. "*Have they not heard?*" Yes, Israel has heard the gospel. "*Verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world*" (Psa. 19:4 cf. Matt. 24:14; Mark 16:15; Romans 1:8; Col. 1:6,23)

"*Did not Israel know?*" Yes, Israel knew the gospel according to Moses and the prophets.

First, Moses saith, "*I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you*" (Romans 10:19 cf. Deuteronomy 32:21).

And Isaiah boldly said, "*I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me*" (Romans 10:11 cf. Isa. 65:1).

So Israel knew that God would one day exalt the Gentiles and entrust to them the gospel so that the entire world, including Israel, would be without excuse.

Israel knew the gospel, Israel heard the gospel, but Israel rejected all the incessant expressions of unwearyingly mercy that were extended. "*But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying [contrary] people*" (Romans 10:21 cf. Isa. 65:2).

It is difficult to stretch out one's hands for even a few minutes let alone a whole day. Yet God says that He has stretched out His hands for a long, long while. Though Israel rejected the outstretched hands of God, we must not.

At Calvary, God stretched out His hands once more in the person of His Son in order to express the extent of His great love and mercy. Believe on Christ

and receive Him as Lord and Savior.
There will be no excuse for not doing
that in the day of divine judgment.

Study Guide

Romans

Questions on Romans 10

1. What is the distinction between “*God’s righteousness*” and “*the righteousness of God*”?
2. List three meanings to the concept that Christ is the end of the law.

3. What honor has the Lord given to preaching?
4. What is the divine means of receiving faith?
5. What is the “*word of faith*” of Romans 10:8?

Answers to Romans 10

1. The “*righteousness of God*” refers to God’s consistency with Himself in ministering the affairs of the universe. It is directed externally. In contrast the term, “*God’s righteousness*” refers to just how righteous God really is in His own essence. IT is directed internally.
2. Christ being the end of the law includes three concepts.
 - First, Christ is the goal of the Law in the sense that all of the moral obligations of the Law are fulfilled in Him.
 - Second, Christ is the end of the Law’s antitypes found in the sacrifices and symbols of the Old Testament.
 - As Christ is the goal of the Law and the end of all antitypes, so in Him the Law terminates.
3. The divine means for receiving faith is to give attention to the *Word*. Romans 10:17 explains how “*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*”
4. God has given great honor to those who minister the gospel. Those who are called to preach are declared to have “*beautiful feet*” in appreciation for the gospel they bring to souls struggling with sin and secret shame. *Romans 10:15 “And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace,*

and bring glad tidings of good things!”

5. What is the word of faith? It is the gospel that is proclaimed! And this is the gospel, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9).

Personal Application and Reflection

1. What specific steps can you take to become a better soul winner for Christ?
2. Have you ever won any one to Christ and heard them call upon the Lord? If so please write a testimony of a soul winning moment.
3. How can you increase your own faith?
4. According to the words of Romans 10:18 is it possible that the gospel has already gone “*into all the world?*” What are the implications of that concept?
5. Which verse in Romans 10 speaks of the patience and longsuffering of God and what does that say to your heart? Was God, is God long-suffering and patient with you?