

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

June 21, 2023

Series - The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul

The Letter to the Romans

The Righteousness of God

The Dispensational Section (Chapters 9 – 11)

Text – Romans 10 – *God's Dealings with Israel in the Present*

Introduction

We are now in the middle of this dispensational section of the Letter to the Romans, and are examining God's present dealings with Israel, which means that we are examining how God dealt with Israel during Paul's day and how God is still dealing with them in this present time. This period is known as the Dispensation of the Church, or the Dispensation of Grace.

You will notice that this chapter begins and ends with Israel, because Israel is the main context. However, there are many truths that apply to everyone, whether they are Jews or not. Paul is basically explaining that God's focus on the Nation of Israel has been set-aside for a period, but the individual Jew of his day could be saved just as any Gentile could – by faith. The Jew would then be identified with the Church. In the next chapter we will see that the time will come when God's focus shifts from the predominantly Gentile Church back to the Nation of Israel. This period is known as the Tribulation Period and will begin with the rapture of the Church.

Some have stated that chapter nine deals with divine sovereignty, and that chapter ten deals with human responsibility, which I will accept if we keep in mind that the primary discussion of each of these chapters is still Israel. In other words, we recognize that God, in His sovereignty had chosen Israel in the past, and has now, because of their rejection of Jesus Christ, chosen to set aside Israel as a nation, temporarily, and is focusing His attention on the Gentiles. However, Israel is still responsible for their rejection of Christ, and each individual Jew is responsible today for what they do with Jesus.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John 1:11)

The nation rejected the Lord, but in the past, there has always been a remnant from Israel, and still today, who will place their faith in Christ. Anna and Simeon were faithfully waiting for the Lord when he arrived on earth (Luke 2:25 – 38), but they were the exception, not

the rule.

Note - As we read through this chapter, pay close attention to the many references and quotations from the Old Testament.

I. Paul's Passion for the Salvation of Israel (vs. 1 – 3)

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

(Romans 10:1)

Paul is speaking here of Israel as a corporate body – a nation. He wants more than anything for Israel, as a nation, to recognize their Messiah. He began chapter nine much the same way (Romans 9:1 – 4). Paul has a passion for the salvation of Israel, much like we would like to see America turn back to the God of our Fathers. He will explain in chapter eleven, that Israel, corporately, will someday have the blinders taken off their eyes. (See Romans 11:25 – 26) However, none of this affects the availability of salvation to the individual. The offer of salvation applies to them just as much as it applies to the Gentile. Remember the gospel came to the Jew first, and then to the Greek (Gentile).

Israel's problem was that they didn't feel that they needed salvation. Paul dealt with this in the early chapters of this letter. They knew that the Gentiles needed a Saviour, but they did not recognize their own need. They were interested in what Christ might be able to do for them politically and nationally by eliminating Rome but had no concern for the cleansing of their sin. The elder brother in the story of the Prodigal had this same problem (Luke 15), and so did the Pharisees:

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

Yet, Paul still had a burning desire for their salvation. Considering this verse on a practical level, I wonder how passionate we are about reaching the people that we claim to care

about.

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."

(Romans 10:2)

Paul now explains the obstacles that are in front of so many of his "brethren according to the flesh." The Jews were very zealous for God in Paul's day, and they are still very zealous today. Go to a city like Lakewood, NJ or Borough Park in Brooklyn, NY, and try to do some door-to-door soulwinning or perhaps some street preaching. You will be fortunate if you escape with your life. Their zeal is wrong, however. They, like Paul at one time, are kicking against the pricks. They are fighting against the God that they claim to be for. The next verse will tell us why.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Romans

10:3)

They are still trying to work their way to Heaven. They are still trying to defend their own righteousness. If they are to be saved, they must see Him who they have pierced (Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34), and mourn for him in contrition, and repent of their own self-righteousness. They must come to the foot of the Cross and place their faith solely in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ for their redemption.

Israel will have to be humbled before they will ever turn to God. They will have to recognize their need for Christ.

The Presbyterian preacher, Robert Murray McCheyne, was passing out tracts one day and handed one to a well-dressed lady. She gave him a haughty look and said, "Sir, you must not know who I am!"

In his kind way, McCheyne replied, "Madam, there is coming a day of judgment, and on that day, it will not make any difference who you are!"¹

II. Paul's Preaching for the Salvation of Israel (vs. 4 – 13)

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Romans

10:4)

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 547). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The law is finished for the believer. He was saved through faith, and he must live by faith through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. Consider these statements by Warren Wiersbe regarding this verse:

Everything about the Jewish religion pointed to the coming Messiah—their sacrifices, priesthood, temple services, religious festivals, and covenants. Their Law told them they were sinners in need of a Saviour. But instead of letting the Law bring them to Christ (Galatians 3:24), they worshiped their Law and rejected their Saviour. The Law was a schoolmaster that taught them that they were sinners; it was a signpost, pointing the way. But it could never take them to their destination. The Law cannot give righteousness; it only leads the sinner to the Saviour who can give righteousness. Christ is “the end of the Law” in the sense that through His death and resurrection, He has terminated the ministry of the Law for those who believe. The Law is ended as far as Christians are concerned. The righteousness of the Law is being fulfilled in the life of the believer through the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:4), but the reign of the Law has ended (see Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14). “For ye are not under the Law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14).²

Also notice these statements by McGee:

“Christ is the end of the law,” meaning He the *goal*. Our Lord made it clear. He said in effect, “I didn’t come to patch up an old garment; I came to give you a new garment—the robe of My righteousness” (see Matt. 9:16). The Mosaic Law was given to lead men to Christ; it wasn’t given to save men. Paul said to the Galatian believers that “... the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). The Law was not given to save us, but to show us that we needed to be saved. It takes us by the hand, brings us to the Cross of Christ, and says, “Little fellow, you need a Savior.” The Law came to an end in Christ. “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4).³

***"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them."* (Romans 10:5)**

² Wiersbe, p. 547.

³ McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Epistles (Romans 9-16)* (electronic ed., Vol. 43, p. 42). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

This is a reference to Leviticus 18:5:

"Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD." (Leviticus 18:5)

Of course, the problem with living by the Law is that you must do it perfectly, which no one can do. The Jews kept the Law imperfectly and outwardly, but it was not from the heart. When a young ruler came to Jesus in Luke 18 inquiring about eternal life, Jesus reminded him about perfect obedience to the commandments. The man replied that he had kept all the commandments from the time that he was a youth. He didn't think he had a problem.

"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:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 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;" (Romans 10:6 - 8)

This is a reference to Deuteronomy 30:

"For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." (Deuteronomy 30:11-14)

Notice, however, that Paul replaces the word, "commandment", with Christ. Moses stated that the Commandments, the Word of God, needed to be in the heart and obeyed from the heart, not merely outwardly. Paul uses this familiar Old Testament Scripture to explain that the concept of faith is not hard to understand or inaccessible, but it too must come from the heart. The Gospel is not difficult. In fact, everything they already knew and believed from the Law pointed to it - all they needed to do was trust Christ.

"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)

Here was the difficult part for the Jew, however. They had to believe that Jesus is truly the Messiah, the Lord from Heaven. To do that, they would have to admit that they were wrong about Him in the first place. Notice also that they not only have to believe that Jesus is

their God, but they also need to place their faith in His death and resurrection.

Notice these statements regarding the resurrection:

Outward confession stems from a profound inward conviction. Those who come to Christ must believe in their hearts that Jesus was raised from the dead by God the Father. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the very center of the Christian faith. Apart from the resurrection Christianity would be little more than a well-intentioned ethical system. It is a fact that within history God did something that defies all the laws of nature as we know them. He raised Jesus from the dead. It is the reality of this resurrection that lends credence to all that Jesus did and taught throughout his earthly life. It is God's way of authenticating to us that Jesus is the Son of God (cf. 1:4). The truth of the resurrection was at the very center of the apostolic preaching.⁴

By the way, this is not teaching a works salvation. Jesus is the Lord, and the Jews needed to recognize Him as such. Neither is this teaching that a public profession is a necessary act for salvation; it is saying, however, that the profession is a natural overflow of what was already in the heart, but it must begin in the heart.

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matthew 12:34)

There are a great many people today who know what they need to say, but it is not in their heart. The next verse will explain the proper order.

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:10)

If it is in your heart, it will eventually come out of your mouth.

"For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Romans 10:11)

This is a reference to Isaiah 28:6:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."
(Isaiah 28:16)

⁴ Mounce, R. H. (1995). *Romans* (Vol. 27, pp. 209–210). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Though the reference is not the same, Paul is emphasizing the “belief” part, and that action, or in this case profession, stems from belief.

"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." (Romans 10:12)

The way of salvation is the same for both Jews and Gentiles alike. If the Jew is going to be saved, he will have to call upon the Lord in faith just like the Gentile.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

This is a reference to Joel 2:32:

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call." (Joel 2:32)

Notice these thoughts from Ironside on this section:

He then cites another Old Testament Scripture from the book of the prophet Isaiah (28:16), which declares that "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Romans 10:11). In this way he proves that the universality of the present gospel faith is in no wise in conflict with the revealed Word of God as given to the Jew of old. "Whosoever" includes the whole world. Already he has established the fact in chapter 3 that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, so far as sin is concerned. Now he gives the other side of the "no difference" doctrine. "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (vv. 12-13). To call upon the name of the Lord is, of course, to invoke His name in faith. His name speaks of what He is. He who calls upon the name of the Lord puts his trust in Him, as it is written, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10).⁵

I have used these verses perhaps more than any other in the Bible, but I rarely use them to demonstrate God's present dealings with Israel. However, the principles of salvation apply to all of us.

This entire section emphasizes the difference between “Law righteousness” and “faith

⁵ H. A. Ironside. Romans and Galatians (Kindle Locations 1002-1008). Kindle Edition.

righteousness.” The contrasts are seen in the following summary.

Law Righteousness

Only for the Jew

Based on works

Self-righteousness

Cannot save

Obey the Lord

Leads to pride

Faith Righteousness

For “whosoever”

Comes by faith alone

God’s righteousness

Brings salvation

Call on the Lord

Glorifies God⁶

III. God’s Plan for the Salvation of Israel (vs. 14 – 17)

"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?" (Romans 10:14)

The gospel must be preached by a preacher for the people to hear it and believe it. This truth is so simple, yet so important. We must preach the gospel if people are going to ultimately call upon the name of the Lord.

"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!" (Romans 10:15)

The business of the church is the preaching of the gospel. Jesus commissioned us and commanded us to preach the gospel to every creature in every place. (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8) In Acts 13, Paul was called to take the gospel from where it was preached (Antioch) to where it wasn’t being preached (Asia Minor, and later Greece)

Paul quotes here from Isaiah:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7)

and from Nahum:

⁶ Wiersbe, p. 548.

"Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off." (Nahum 1:15)

Soulwinners don't have exceptionally pretty feet, but the fact that those feet take them to a place and a people that need the gospel is a beautiful thing indeed. It's hard to "go" without a way to get there.

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;" (Ephesians 6:15)

Today, the gospel is not limited to feet. I was saved through a radio program; some people get saved through the medium of gospel literature. I am for every means of getting the Word of God into the ears, eyes, and hearts of people, but we must never get away from going out to where the people are – in the highways and hedges, and the streets and lanes of the city to proclaim the good news of salvation. We must never get too big or too important that we can't go out into our communities and knock on a few doors.

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (Romans 10:16)

Here is where it ties directly back into Israel. The gospel was preached to Israel, but Israel rejected it. The reference here is to Isaiah 53:

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." (Isaiah 53:1-3)

Unfortunately, the Gentiles today are not listening to what God has to say, either. In our town there are approximately 40,000 people, but there are only a handful of them that are saved. We blanket our community with gospel tracts, John and Romans, invitations to church, etc., but very few will come to Christ.

Notice that believing is also associated with obeying:

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:" (Acts 17:30)

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." (Romans 6:17)

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17)

For a person to have faith, they must hear the Word of God. This is why it is so important that we are "Bible-heavy" in our soulwinning and in our preaching. We should spend more time telling people what God said, rather than trying to explain to them what God meant. However, helping people understand the Word of God is important to:

"And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." (Acts 8:30-31)

It cannot be emphasized enough the importance of our preaching the gospel everywhere to everyone:

Some of us share the news here at home, but others are sent to distant places. Despite some closed doors, there are still more open doors for the Gospel than ever before; and we have better tools to work with. My friend, the late Dr. E. Meyers Harrison, veteran missionary and professor of missions, says that there are four reasons why the church must send out missionaries: (1) *the command from above*—"go ye into all the world" (Mark 16:15); (2) *the cry from beneath*—"send him to my father's house" (Luke 16:27); (3) *the call from without*—"come over and help us" (Acts 16:9); and (4) *the constraint from within*—"the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Corinthians 5:14).⁷

IV. God's Provocation for the Salvation of Israel (vs. 18 – 21)

"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." (Romans 10:18)

Paul refers here to Psalm 19 to demonstrate that Israel is without excuse. The gospel came specifically to them, and they rejected it.

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

⁷ Wiersbe, p. 549.

not after me." (Romans 10:19 - 20)

This is a reference to Deuteronomy 32:21:

"They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." (Deuteronomy 32:21)

Paul also dealt with this back in Romans 9:

"As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God." (Romans 9:25-26)

Israel's rejection of the gospel, however, has opened the door for the salvation of the Gentiles. The strange thing, however, is the salvation of the Gentiles will also provoke Israel to jealousy, which will bring them to Christ.

"But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." (Romans 10:21)

This is a quotation from Isaiah 65:2:

"I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;" (Isaiah 65:2)

Have you ever stopped to think how tiresome it is to hold your hands out for a long period of time? Try it sometime and see how long you can do it. It is one of the most tiring things in the world. When Moses held up his hands in prayer to God for Israel's victory in battle, Aaron and Hur had to prop up his hands because he got so tired holding them up (see Exod. 17:9–12). But God says, "I have been holding out My hands to a disobedient people" (see Isa. 65:2). No one knows how gracious God has been to the nation Israel.

Stephen's final word to this nation is revealing: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and

have not kept it” (Acts 7:51–53). This is not confined to Israel. It could be said today that God is holding out His hands to a gainsaying world. I marvel at the patience of God. I do not mean to be irreverent, but if I were running the show on this little earth down here, I would make a lot of changes. I would move in like a bulldozer! But God is just holding out His hands to our gainsaying world.⁸

God cares deeply for the people of Israel and wants them saved as He is “not willing that any should perish” (2 Peter 3:9). In chapter 11, we will learn that God has not abandoned Israel at all, and in fact, has big plans for them.

⁸ McGee, p. 48.