

## Man's Responsibility, Israel's Rejection of the Gospel

### *Romans 10*

**Romans 10.** Paul does not close out this subject before presenting the other side of the great dispensational change that had occurred. In chapter 9, Paul presented God's sovereignty in the past with Israel, showing that blessing is owed to the sovereign mercy of God alone. He showed that if sovereign mercy is the principle of blessing, God is not limited in His mercy, and the door of blessing stands open to the Gentiles. But man's conscience must be engaged, and so now he moves to address Israel's responsibility (and failure) to receive Christ, and the salvation through Him. He now shows that man must believe God's testimony in order to be blessed. These two lines of truth run through Scripture side by side; *God's sovereignty* and *man's responsibility*.

#### Contents

- [Israel's Responsibility to Believe the Gospel \(10:1-4\)](#)
  - [Paul's Love and Desire for Israel \(v.1\)](#)
  - [Israel's Big Mistake in Clinging to the Law \(vv.2-3\)](#)
  - [Christ Is the End of the Testing of Man Under Law: Israel Missed It \(v.4\)](#)
- [The Blessing of the Gospel Is by Faith, Thus It Is Within the Reach of All \(10:5-13\)](#)
- [The Responsibility of Preaching and Receiving the Gospel \(10:14-21\)](#)
  - [God Uses Preaching to Give Man an Opportunity to Believe \(vv.14-15\)](#)
  - [While God Is Calling Gentiles, Israel Shut Themselves out in Unbelief \(vv.16-17\)](#)

## Israel's Responsibility to Believe the Gospel (10:1-4)

### Paul's Love and Desire for Israel (v.1)

#### CHAPTER 10

¶ Brethren, the delight of my own heart and my supplication which *I address to God for them is for salvation.* v.1 While the Jews had stumbled at the stumbling stone (end of ch.9), that in no way hindered Paul's love for Israel. Paul had been accused by the Jews of anti-Semitism, but this verse proves otherwise. It was right for Paul to desire their salvation, and that is what Christians should pray for. Christian Zionists sometimes go too far by putting financial and military aid first; clearly, the Jews' soul-salvation is the most important thing. However, love for Israel didn't give Paul the prerogative to go to the circumcision (Gal. 2:7). This very love for Israel got him off the path of the Spirit's leading in the end of Acts. And yet, even in this Paul's heart was right, and God turned it into blessing.

## Israel's Big Mistake in Clinging to the Law (vv.2-3)

2 For I bear them witness that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. v.2 Israel was sincere, but they were sincerely wrong. They had "*a zeal*" for their national religion, but their zeal was misplaced (see Gal. 4:18). Paul could speak first-hand about "*zeal without knowledge*" because of his previous career (Gal. 1:13-14).

3 For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own *righteousness*, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. v.3 What "*knowledge*" did they lack? They did not understand "*the righteousness of God*" which is revealed in the Gospel (Rom. 1:17). That term refers to God's righteousness in justifying the sinner. They had not submitted themselves to God's consistency in requiring payment for sin, and in providing Christ as a sacrifice to meet that need. That error both robs God of His glory, and denies the total depravity of man.

## Christ Is the End of the Testing of Man Under Law: Israel Missed It (v.4)

4 For Christ is *the end of law for righteousness to every one that believes.* v.4 The coming of Christ and His death on the cross marks the end of the dispensational testing of the First Man under law. The word "end" here has the thought of termination. When Christ came, the probationary period of Law was terminated. Over four-thousand years God tested the First Man (using Israel as a sample) in every possible way. The results are documented in this very book: Rom. 3:12; 7:18. The result being manifest, God is no longer testing man under law. The Jews, not believing the Gospel, have failed to heed the road sign declaring "end of the Law". Instead they are continuing on that principle, driving forward to their own eternal loss. Christ is the "*end of the law for righteousness*". The death of Christ has

not only terminated the Law, but also formed the basis by which God can reckon the sinner righteous who “believes” in Jesus. Note: it would be incorrect to read this expression as “law-for-righteousness” as it gives the wrong impression.

**“End” as in “Termination” or “Object”?** There is a question as to whether the expression “*Christ is the end of law*” utilizes the word “end” in the sense of “termination”, or in the sense of “object/aim”. Both are true. The coming of Christ is the termination of the Law as a dispensational principle, and also Christ is the great object in view within the Law in the sense of Old Testament scriptures (such is the point being made in 2 Corinthians 3:13). However, the absence of the definite article indicates that it is the law-principle that is being referred to, not the law-scriptures. Therefore, “end” in the sense of termination seems to be the contextual solution. Note: W. Kelly and J.N. Darby favor “termination” while F.B. Hole favors “object”. C. Stanley seems to combine them both; Christ is the object of the law, thus the termination of law!

## The Blessing of the Gospel Is by Faith, Thus It Is Within the Reach of All (10:5-13)

Even in the Old Testament, during the period of the law, you can see “*the righteousness of God without the law... being witnessed by the law and the prophets*” (Rom 3:21). It wasn’t fully declared in the Old Testament, but it was certainly hinted at, as we will see in vv.6-7. What Paul does in the following verses is trace the *two systems* of righteousness in the Old Testament. The two systems are *law* and *faith*; DOING and DONE.

¶ 5 For Moses lays down in writing the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who has practised those things shall live by them.” [Lev. 18:5] v.5 First, Paul takes up the principle of righteousness by the law. Paul has already established that it is impossible for man to be justified on this basis because all have sinned. The point he is making now is that the principle of “righteousness by law” is a system of works! Doing in order to live (see Luke 10:28). The most this system of works could offer was life on this earth, never the blessings of Eternal Life, or a portion with Christ in heaven.

6 But the righteousness of faith speaks thus: Do not say in thine heart, “Who shall ascend to

the heavens?" [Deut. 30:12] that is, to bring Christ down; 7 or, "Who shall descend into the abyss?" [Deut. 30:13] that is, to bring up Christ from among *the dead*. vv.6-7 But there is another "system" if you will in the Old Testament. It is called, "righteousness by faith". Paul has labored extensively to show that this is the only system by which any saint at any time was ever justified (Rom. 4). He quotes from Deut. 30, where God is giving Israel instructions for what to do *after* they had been taken captive and scattered to the nations. The context is after Israel has broken the Law and were suffering the consequences. From that position, there was still a path for blessing, and it had *nothing to do* with the Law because its fulfillment would be at that time impossible. Instead, they could appeal to the mercy of God *by faith*, through expressing *repentance* from a far country! He tells Israel that they wouldn't have to do anything to merit this favor. They wouldn't have to return to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices; which would require flying through "the heaven" over great distances, or swimming their way across vast oceans. Those things are humanly impossible! And that is the point. We don't need to do "*some great thing*" (2 Kings 5:13) in order to be saved; it has all been done. But Paul adds spiritual significance to ascending and descending. "*Who shall ascend?*" - faith does not deny that Christ has come down. "*Who shall descend?*" - faith does not deny that Christ has died and has risen again. You don't have to go to heaven to bring the Savior to earth; God has sent Him (John 3:16). You don't have to pull Him up from the grave; God has raised and glorified Him (Eph. 1:20). It is DONE!

**8** But what says it? "*The word is near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart:*" [Deut. 30:14] that is, the word of faith, which we preach: v.8 To be saved we don't need some great work, but only believe. Faith realizes that blessing does not come through works but through Christ. All that is needed is the confession of Christ, which is the expression of faith in the heart. It is NOT a long reach. The very words were in their mouths, through their familiarity with the Old Testament scriptures. The gun is loaded, the hammer is drawn, the safety is off... just pull that trigger! Note: These scriptures will be acted on by the remnant of Israel in a future day. They will turn to God in faith in a land of exile, acknowledge the ruin of the Nation, and the impossibility of setting themselves aright through law-keeping. When they awake, they will find the "*word nigh them, even in their mouths*". They will confess Jesus Christ as Lord, and believe in their hearts the glad tidings.

**9** that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from among *the dead*, thou shalt be saved. v.9 God wants to see two things: (1) confession, which is the soul's agreement with God that Christ is your Lord, and (2) faith, which is the heart-belief that the work is finished because God has raised Christ from the dead. Note that resurrection necessarily implies death. So the whole work of atonement is included here. The order in v.9 follows the order in v.8, and is an

*evangelistic order*. We hear the confession, and then trust that the heart has believed (c.p. with the order in v.10).

1. To “*confess*” means “to express agreement”. *Public* confession, or an “altar call” is not required. To whom do we express our agreement? To the only Person that really matters: “*Every tongue shall confess to God*” (Romans 14:1).
2. Believing “*in the heart*” is a special kind of believing. The heart is connected with affection. Believing “in the heart” is believing with a personal interest in that which is believed. We often use the expression; “Jesus is my personal Savior”. It isn’t the idea of a *measure* of affection, because again that would be a system of merit; i.e. “I must love God enough, then He will accept me”. No, salvation is by grace through faith *alone*.

**10** For with *the heart* is believed to righteousness; and with *the mouth* confession made to salvation. v.10 This verse emphasizes the *moral and chronological order*: (1) Faith of the heart comes first, and that is what justifies (“*to righteousness*”). But faith produces (2) confession of the mouth, which is the outward proof of sincerity. The confession is “*unto salvation*”, in the full sense of salvation. Placing ourselves under the Lordship of Christ (by confessing Him) is the key to not only an eternity with Christ, but a life presently of joy and spiritual freedom!

**11** For the scripture says, “No one believing on him shall be ashamed.” [Isa.

28:16] v.11 Every human support or refuge will fail you; but faith in the testimony of God is grounds for perfect confidence. This is a prophetic quotation that is directed to the faithful remnant of a future day. Apostate Israel will have entered into an agreement with the Western Confederacy for protection (Dan. 9:27); called “a covenant with death ... and agreement with hell” (Isa. 28:15). The great fear of the Jews will then be the “overflowing scourge”, or impending attack of the apocalyptic King of the North. He goes on to say that their covenant “shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through”. But those that would instead trust in God’s “corner stone” or “sure foundation” would never be caught by surprise. The same is true for the sinner today. We have every reason to be confident in the long run because of the Person we believe on.

**12** For there is no difference of Jew and Greek; for the same Lord of all is rich towards all that call upon him. **13** For “every one whosoever, who shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” [Joel 2:32] vv.12-13 It doesn’t matter about a person’s background, it only matters if they hear and call. Confessing the name of Jesus in faith always gets a person the support of God, no matter who they are. “*Whosoever*” is a broad word that takes in the

whole human race; not only Jews but also Gentiles. Prophetically, the gospel of the kingdom will be carried by the remnant, not only to the scattered tribes of Israel, but to the Gentiles also. This scripture is applied by Paul to the universality of the gospel of the grace of God going out today. There are two 'no differences' in Romans. In Rom. 3:22 (from our side) there is 'no difference' between Jew and Gentile because all have sinned. In Rom. 10:12 (from God's side) the heart of God abounds in grace to Jew and Gentile equally!

## The Responsibility of Preaching and Receiving the Gospel (10:14-21)

**vv.14-21** Paul has raised the issue of the wide scope of blessing through the Gospel. This brings up a follow-on point: how can those who are afar off call upon the name of the Lord if they have never heard the Gospel? He next takes up the responsibility of preaching and the responsibility of receiving the Gospel.

### God Uses Preaching to Give Man an Opportunity to Believe (vv.14-15)

**14** How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without one who preaches? **15** and how shall they preach unless they have been sent? according as it is written, "How beautiful the feet of them that announce glad tidings of peace, of them that announce glad tidings of good things!" [Isa. 52:7] vv.14-15 Paul is using the Old Testament to defend his life's work of bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles who have never heard. Clearly, it refers to the messengers of the Gospel of the kingdom who go out with news that the King has returned! So precious to the hiding remnant will those tidings be that the very feet of the runners will be to them a beautiful sight. Note that Paul does not quote the end of the verse: "that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Clearly, this is future, but Paul is applying the principle to his own preaching at the present time. He traces the process backwards like this:

Salvation ← Calling (Confessing) ← Believing ← Hearing ← Preaching ← Sending  
(Commissioning)

**Preaching** was not part of the Law. The Law expected something from Israel and did not bring anything. But in the Gospel we have the grace of God *going out to man*, coming to man where he is. Thus preaching is characteristic of the people of God ever since the cross, where redemption was accomplished. In vv.14-15 Paul shows that preaching is a fundamental step that is used by God in the process of a soul's salvation.

## While God Is Calling Gentiles, Israel Shut Themselves out in Unbelief (vv.16-17)

**16** But they have not all obeyed the glad tidings. For Esaias says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" [Isa. 53:1] v.16 While the Gospel has gone out, the Jews had largely rejected it. Not only did the Jews refuse to believe the Gospel themselves, but they also resisted it going to others (v.15). See 1 Thess. 2:14-16; and Matt. 23:13. By saying "our report" we can see that Isaiah was speaking on behalf of all the prophets sent to Israel who had prophesied of the coming Messiah. It wasn't an obscure thing; Israel missed the boat!

**17** So faith then is by a report, but the report by God's word. v.17 The "report" (a preacher's words) is just a means. It all comes to rest on the Word of God. The Jews had rejected the report, but they were really rejecting God and His Word. This verse encourages us to draw our gospel messages from the Word of God, not the mind of man. It is really the power of the Word of God that opens the spiritual faculties of man. This is called 'new birth' or 'quickenings' (John 3:3-5; Eph. 2:1, 5). The preacher's report is what reaches our ears, but it is backed by the authority of God's word. By believing it we can say like the Queen of Sheba, "It was a true report that I heard" (1 Kings 10:6).

**vv.18-21** These verses answer the question: "Was Israel warned that they would be set aside and the Gentiles brought in if they continued in unbelief?" Paul quotes three Old Testament scriptures showing that "YES" they were warned; first from the Psalms (v.18) then the Law (v.19), then the Prophets (v.20-21). See Luke 24:44 for a summary of the three parts of the Old Testament.

**18** But I say, Have they not heard? Yea, surely, "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the extremities of the habitable world." [Psa. 19:4] v.18 Paul now brings in the universality of God's testimony in creation (Psa. 19) to show God's desire for *all men* to receive a testimony of Himself. The testimony of God in creation, limited though it may be, has gone out over all the earth, addressed to no country or ethnic group in particular (Acts 14:17). This condemned the attitude of the Jew who would deny that the heart of

God encompasses more than just the Land of Israel; and it also supported Paul's efforts to bring the gospel to the "regions beyond" (2 Cor. 10:16).

**19** But I say, Has not Israel known? First, Moses says, "'I' will provoke you to jealousy through *them that are* not a nation: through a nation without understanding I will anger you." [Deut. 32:21] v.19 A secondary purpose of the blessing of the Gentiles is to show the Jews that they missed the path, and to stir up in them a desire for fellowship with Jehovah. God has put Israel to shame because they were slow to believe, but even in that His intention is toward Israel, that they might be stirred up yet again in repentance.

**20** But Esaias is very bold, and says, "I have been found by those not seeking me; I have become manifest to those not inquiring after me." [Isa. 65:1] **21** But unto Israel he says, "All the day long I have stretched out my hands unto a people disobeying and opposing." [Isa. 65:2] vv.20-21 These verses are comparing the great efforts of God with the Jew to the shift in God's dealings, who is flowing out now toward those who weren't looking for Him. "*Those not seeking me*" are the Gentiles brought into blessing; prophetically in the Millennium, but here applied to the present time. "*A People disobeying and opposing*" are the children of Israel, who refused to hear the voice of God. It wasn't a one time rejection, but a course of things lasting "*all day long*". Their rejecting the Christian Gospel message is just a continuation of Israel's history of unbelief. Clearly, Israel had been duly warned that their unbelief would trigger a great *reversal* in blessing.