

Romans 10

The chief emphasis of chapter 10 is the responsibility of man and how it factored into Israel's present rejection.

The same Bible that teaches God's sovereign election also teaches human responsibility. While it is true that God elects people to salvation, it is also true that they must choose to be saved by a definite act of the will. When we come to the door of salvation, we see the invitation overhead, "Whosoever will may come." When we pass through, we look back and see the words, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God" above the door. The truth of man's responsibility faces people as they come to the door of salvation while the truth of sovereign election is a truth for those who have already entered (D. L. Moody).¹

What was the subject of Paul's prayer (v. 1)? Paul again felt compelled to display his heart regarding the lost condition of his fellow Jews (9:2-3). His heart was heavy because they had rejected the Messiah.

What did Paul commend the Israelites for (v. 2)? They were zealous for God. They were very *religious*, observing the rituals and ceremonies of Judaism. **What was he critical of them for?** Their zealousness was not based on knowledge.....knowledge that Jesus is the Messiah. This is a perfect description of the zeal of Paul himself before his conversion (1 Timothy 1:13). Zeal must be combined with truth. **Who might fall into the same category today?** Perhaps some of the zealous cults who totally off base.

What was the Jews' problem (v. 3)? They were ignorant of the righteousness of God not because they had never been told but because they refused to learn. Seeking to establish their own righteousness by keeping the Law, the Israelites refused to submit to the righteousness of God which was a moral/pride problem. Note the emphasis on personal responsibility.

How did Jesus relate to the law (v. 4)? Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the law (Matthew 5:17) which brought the law to an end for those who believe. The law *ends* for the believer in the sense that our obedience to the law is no longer the basis for our relationship with God. The law has *not* come to an end in the sense of no longer reflecting God's character and moral standard or no longer showing us our need for a Savior.

Galatians 3:24-25 *So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.*

Romans 6:14 *For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.* The reign of the law has ended.

How was the righteousness that is by the law described by Moses (v. 5)? The Law of Moses makes the path to righteousness through the law plain. If you want to live by the law (find life through the law), you must *do* the law – and do it completely and perfectly.

The law was designed as a sign post pointing the way. But it could never take them to their destination. The law cannot give righteousness; it can only lead to the Savior who can give righteousness. Paul quoted repeatedly from the Old Testament to prove to the Jews that they did not even understand their own law.

How did Paul explain the righteousness that is by faith (vv. 6-7)? It is based on Jesus, and we don't have to perform heroic feats to get Jesus. We don't have to ascend into heaven to get Christ and bring Him to earth to save His people. Nor descend into the abyss to bring Him up from the dead. God had already accomplished those things in the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ. All they had to do was accept what God had done for them.²

In what sense is the word "near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (v. 8)? We do not have to go to heaven to find Christ. He is near. He is available and accessible. Difficult works are not necessary to be saved. God's way of salvation is not difficult and complicated. You have the message.....the word.....the gospel.....and you can respond by faith and walk with God in obedience. All we have to do is trust Christ

According to Paul, how can we be saved (vv. 9-10)? By *confessing* and *believing* in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Confession has the idea of *agreeing with*. When we confess the Lord Jesus, we agree with what God said about Jesus, and with what Jesus said about Himself. It means we recognize that Jesus is God, that He is the Messiah and that His work on the cross is the only way of salvation for mankind. Good works have no role in salvation.

Believing in your heart is not a mere intellectual agreement with the facts of the cross and the resurrection. It means believing with one's mental, emotional and volitional powers. In Biblical terms, the heart is not merely the seat of the emotions and affections, but is also of the intellect and will.

As far as salvation is concerned, what is the bottom line (v. 11)? Paul quotes the Old Testament prophet Isaiah to bring this truth: Trusting in God and His promises is the sole requirement for salvation. This also provides great assurance to the believer. This was clearly the remedy for their unbelief and rejection.

Who does the truth of v. 11 specifically apply to (v. 12-13)? Both Jew and Gentile. The Jews were quick to take credit for their national or ethnic origin, as if being saved were a matter of being born into the right family. But Paul makes it clear: the same Lord over *all* is rich to *everyone* who calls upon Him. Note the emphasis on *human responsibility*.

What does it mean to call on the Lord? To call on the Lord means to pray in faith for salvation. Note that Paul again quotes from the Old Testament (Joel 2:32) to make his point. In other words, these Old Testament truths are not something new that Paul is inventing. The Jews should have been familiar with them.

What groundwork needs to be laid for an unbeliever to call on the Lord (vv. 14-15)? **1.** The need to hear the truth of God. **2.** The need for someone to be sent by God to proclaim that truth. **3.** The truth proclaimed, heard and believed. Paul rightly observes that it all goes back to the preaching of the gospel. He further reinforces his position by quoting the Old Testament prophet Isaiah.

Why do those who preach have beautiful feet? They partner with God for the salvation of men. They bring the good news of the gospel and freedom from captivity to sin. **Are your feet beautiful? Where/to whom is God sending you?**

What was the lament of Isaiah (v. 16)? Even though the door of salvation was open to Jews as well as to Gentiles, and the gospel message has been clearly proclaimed, the majority of Jews still refused to believe in Jesus Christ. They did not trust in God's word through Isaiah and other messengers of the gospel. Therefore they are not saved.

What is the link between faith and the gospel (v. 17)? Saving faith comes through hearing the gospel message as presented by the Word of God. Though Israel heard, they did not exercise saving faith in Christ – making them all the more responsible.

What was the rhetorical question that Paul asked (v. 18)? Have the Jews been given adequate opportunity to hear the gospel message? **What was the answer?** This quotation from Psalms 19:4 proves that the word of the gospel went forth and Israel heard it, especially from the prophets. This makes them more accountable for their rejection of the good news.

What was the next rhetorical question that Paul asked (v. 19)? Did they not understand that righteousness by faith was offered to all mankind including Gentiles? God told Israel that He would bring others (Gentiles) close to Him and make them jealous. Yet Israel ignored this word also, making them more accountable. Surely if the Gentiles, the spiritually unenlightened, could understand, then the Jews should have been able to understand. God's intent was to bless the Gentiles which would create within the Jews a jealousy that would result in their returning to Himself and accepting the Messiah. However they deliberately chose to reject His overtures. Ignorance was not a factor in their decision. Not only did they hear (v. 18) but they also understood (v. 19).

What did Isaiah prophecy (v. 20)? That a gracious God would reveal Himself to the Gentiles who did not intentionally seek Him. And, unlike the Jews, they would respond and come to God. It is strange that Israel, for the most part, rejected their own Messiah. However, this too was foretold. It didn't surprise God or His prophets.

What was God's assessment of Israel (v. 21)? They were a disobedient, Messiah-rejecting and stubborn people. Even when He reached out to draw His Chosen People to Himself, they persistently refused His overtures and instead chose the path of unbelief and rejection. They ignored the path of faith.

¹ Believer's Bible Commentary, William MacDonald, 1995 Edition, (published by Thomas Nelson Publishers), p. 1715

² Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Romans, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 154