



Righteousness Comes From God Alone Romans 10

Introduction

In this most excellent letter to the Roman Christians, Paul has been explaining the gospel of God which is, *the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith"* (Romans 1:16-17). Paul has made it abundantly clear that the way to righteousness is by faith alone and not by the works of the law. This was true from the beginning with Israel's great patriarch, Abraham. *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness* (Romans 4:3).

Paul had preached the gospel far and wide; from Jerusalem, through Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece. He had preached to both Jews and Gentiles, but while many Gentiles had come to faith, the majority of the Jews had rejected the gospel. If the gospel is *the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes*, for the Jew first, why were many Gentiles being saved while most Jews were not? This was a question which must have plagued many of the Jewish believers. It was certainly a matter of great concern for Paul and that is evident in Romans 10.

As a matter of fact, chapters 9 through 11 of Romans all begin with the expression of Paul's concern for the Israelites, his *brethren*, and *countrymen according to the flesh* (Romans 9: 3). His concern in chapter 9 was to show that God's promises to Israel had not failed. In chapter 10, he expresses concern over Israel's failure to submit to God's righteousness. Although they had a *zeal for God* (10:2), they went about it the wrong way--by their dedication to the letter of the law. They thought their own efforts to follow the law would make them righteous. But this was *not according to knowledge* (10:2). There is only one way to righteousness. That is Jesus Christ. The Jews were actually a disobedient and obstinate people because they did not subject themselves to God's righteousness through Christ. They held to the letter of the law, but did not obey the gospel. Paul shows that this was inexcusable because their own Scriptures had revealed God's plan to them.

Outline of Romans 10

- I. Righteousness is by Faith Alone - Romans 10:1-10
- II. Faith Comes by Hearing the Gospel - Romans 10:11-21

I. Righteousness is by Faith Alone - Romans 10:1-10

The people of Israel, as a whole, had rejected their Savior, pridefully preferring to cling to the law. Paul testifies to their futile zeal for the law, pointing out that righteousness is not achieved by man's efforts but by God's grace through faith.

A. Paul's desire and prayer - Romans 10:1-4

Even though Paul had been called by God as the apostle to the Gentiles, he still held his unsaved countrymen in his heart. He longed for their salvation and prayed for them. Paul explains why Israel had not come to salvation. They were zealous in their works, but lacked faith.

1. Israel had a *zeal for God* - 10:2

When Paul says, *I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God*, it means that he understood well the kind of zeal they possessed. He knew the zeal of the Jews because he had been like them, as zealous as any of them, if not more so. Paul's former zeal is evident in his letter to the Galatians, *I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers* (1:14). See also Acts 22:3 and Philipians 3:4-6.

2. Their zeal was *not according to knowledge* - 10:2-4

This was the fatal error of their zeal. It was not in accordance with true knowledge. They knew God, but did not comprehend His character or His expectations of them in relation to the requirements of His law. Martin Luther has called it "the arrogant zeal of good intentions" (Commentary on Romans, Kregel Classics).

a. They were *ignorant of God's righteousness* - 10:2

This explains why their zeal was not according to knowledge. They did not know God's righteousness. "With Israel, it was a matter of seeing indeed but not perceiving, of hearing indeed but not understanding (Mark 4:12). There is a perverse and obstinate ignorance at the very heart of their knowledge of God, and in the centre of their dedicated and meticulous obedience an obstinate disobedience" (Romans, A Shorter Commentary, C.E.B. Cranfield).

- b. They sought to *establish their own righteousness* - 10:3

They tried to work for their own righteousness, thinking it would make them acceptable to God. They failed to realize that "the accumulation of human righteousness, through avoiding evil and performing good deeds, can never add up to true, divine righteousness that God requires of us if we are to be saved from sin and have fellowship with Himself" (Romans, Volume 3, James Montgomery Boice).

- c. They did not submit to *the righteousness of God* - 10:3-4

Thinking they could gain righteousness by their own efforts, they did not submit to God's way. *The righteousness of God* refers to the right standing that comes from God, something they could never achieve on their own. Paul has already quoted from the Psalms that, *There is none righteous, no, not one* (Romans 3:10). With no righteousness of our own, the only way to obtain righteousness is submission to the righteousness of God!

- d. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes* - 10:4

When Paul writes that *Christ is the end of the law*, it implies that Christ is both the fulfillment and the goal of the law. Israel misunderstood the law and this statement corrects their misunderstanding. "Christ is the end of the law in the sense that He is its goal, aim, intention, real meaning and substance—apart from Him it (the law) cannot be properly understood at all" (Romans, A Shorter Commentary, C.E.B. Cranfield).

Furthermore, as the fulfillment of the law, Christ is the end of the feeble and futile attempts of human beings to attain righteousness on their own. Righteousness comes only through Christ. *For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain* (Galatians 2:21). Righteousness is by faith alone, to everyone who believes.

B. Moses speaks - Romans 10:5

Paul goes back to Scripture to show the futility of acquiring righteousness through the law.

In Leviticus 18:5, Moses wrote, *The man who does those things shall live by them*, meaning that those who sought righteousness by obeying the law were obligated to obey the whole law, not just some of it or most of it. If they didn't obey it all, they were not meeting the demands of the law. But no one has ever kept the law perfectly except Jesus Christ. Only Christ has ever lived up to

the righteousness which is of the law. The Jews were never able, and this should have driven them to God.

C. *The righteousness of faith speaks* - Romans 10:6-8

Paul quotes from a passage in Deuteronomy where Moses was encouraging the Jewish people to obey God. Paul presents it as righteousness speaking.

1. Righteousness by faith is not by works - 10:6-7

Salvation is not by human effort. Faith does not need to *ascend into heaven...to bring Christ down from above* nor must it *descend into the abyss....to bring Christ up from the dead*. Leon Morris writes, "The 'righteousness of faith' does not demand that we be supermen; it does not set some impossible task before us. God has done all that is necessary, and we receive His gift of righteousness by faith" (The Epistle to the Romans).

2. God has brought the word of salvation near, *in your mouth and in your heart* - 10:8

God had been gracious to Israel by giving them His word. In His word, He drew near to them. They could speak His word to one another and treasure it in their hearts. Beyond that, God's word pointed ahead to His precious gift of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, God's word is the word of salvation.

D. You speak - Romans 10:9-10

Paul presented Moses' words from Leviticus 18:5, which show the impossibility of living up to the law by one's own efforts. He then quoted a passage of Scripture presented as *the righteousness of faith* speaking, a passage from Deuteronomy which shows that salvation is not by human effort, but by God's grace. God has brought the word of faith near so that it is *in your mouth and in your heart* (10:8). Now Paul explains what this means: it means that those who receive the righteousness which is by faith will also speak. They will confess that Jesus is Lord. Heart belief and mouth confession go together for righteousness and salvation.

1. *Believe in your heart* - 10:9-10

It is *with the heart one believes unto righteousness* (10:10), and the truth which one must believe is that *God has raised Him (Christ) from the dead* (10:9). It is not just believing that is important; it is what you believe that counts. The righteousness of salvation comes from believing in the living Savior, Jesus Christ, who died for your sins and whom God raised from the dead so you may walk in newness of life. See Romans 6:4-11.

2. *Confess with your mouth* - 10:9-10

Both inward belief and outward confession are important. You cannot be saved by outward confession alone. But if you truly believe, you will *confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord* (10:9, NASB). To confess *Jesus as Lord* means to confess that He is deity and that He is master of your life.

Have you believed in your heart that Jesus Christ is your Savior; that He died for your sins and that God raised Him from the dead for your justification? Have you confessed with your mouth that He is Lord? Then you have a righteous standing before God, which means that you are saved. *For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* (10:10).

II. Faith Comes by Hearing the Gospel - Romans 10:11-21

Paul reiterates that faith in Christ is the way to salvation. It is the only way. He also teaches that faith comes through hearing the gospel. Israel's problem is that they had heard, but they did not believe.

A. *Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame* - Romans 10:11-13

Paul again quotes from Isaiah 28:16 (as he had in Romans 9:33), because it shows that faith has always been God's way for *whoever* to come to salvation. Salvation is available to *whoever* believes. And those who believe *will not be put to shame*. In the Bible, the word *shame* often expresses disappointment or betrayal. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will never be disappointed in Him. He will never betray those who have put their faith in Him!

1. *For there is no distinction...* - 10:12

God does not distinguish between *Jew and Greek* (Gentile). *For there is no partiality with God* (Romans 2:11). All are saved in the same way — by faith. All are sinners in need of salvation and all have the same Lord who saves. *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ* (1 Timothy 2:5). Furthermore, He is abounding in the riches of all the blessings of salvation for all who call upon Him. See Ephesians 1:3-14 to read about your wonderful spiritual blessings *in the heavenly places in Christ*.

2. *Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved* - 10:13

Paul quotes from Joel 2:32 to confirm that the Lord *is rich to all who call upon Him* (10:12). Joel's words confirm that salvation is open to *all who call upon the*

name of the Lord. To be saved, you must *call* upon the name of the Lord. But before you can call upon the Lord, you must first hear the gospel and believe.

B. Believing comes through hearing the word - Romans 10:14-15

Paul asks a series of questions which lead his readers to conclude that in order to call on the Lord, one must believe. Furthermore, in order to believe in Him, one must have heard the gospel. In order to hear, there must be a preacher--and the preacher must be sent.

1. *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?* - 10:14

Again, Paul emphasizes faith. In order to call on the Lord, you must believe in Him. As Paul said in 10:9, you must *believe that God has raised Him from the dead*.

2. *And how will they believe in Him whom they have not heard?* - 10:14 (NASB)

It is necessary to hear the gospel message in order to believe. The implication of the Greek wording, which is better expressed in the NASB, is that Christ Himself is speaking forth in the gospel message through the preacher. To hear the preacher is to hear Christ. This would be in agreement with Jesus' statement in John 10:16, *And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice*.

3. *And how shall they hear without a preacher?* - 10:14

In the first century, it was necessary to have a preacher because many people could not read and were dependent upon the spoken word. Written teaching was not available as it is today. There was no New Testament in Paul's day, although there were some letters from the apostles written to various churches, such as Paul's letter to the Romans. Today, people can also *hear* the gospel message through the written word. The Bible is readily available, as are scholarly books which aid in the understanding of the Scriptures. Bible study lessons such as the ones you are using can help you to *hear* the gospel. So can those whom you share with in your group. Your sharing in discussion can help others to *hear*.

4. *And how shall they preach unless they are sent?* - 10:15

The preacher is God's spokesman. He receives his message from God and is sent by God to preach it. The preachers Paul speaks of are clearly those who preach the gospel message of faith in Christ. A true *preacher* (10:14) will faithfully proclaim the gospel message.

5. *How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace* - 10:15

Paul confirms his point with a reference to Isaiah 52:7 which pictures a swift-footed messenger coming over the mountains with good news of peace and salvation. In the days when Isaiah wrote, messengers travelled by foot, so the feet were singled out as beautiful. Certainly this was not because of their physical beauty. A messenger's feet would be sweaty, calloused, and perhaps blistered, cut, and bruised from a long journey. The feet were beautiful because of what they were doing—delivering the message of *the gospel of peace, the glad tidings of good things*.

C. *They have not all obeyed the gospel* - Romans 10:16-17

God has sent preachers and the gospel has been preached, but not all have obeyed.

1. The gospel is a call to obedience - 10:16

Paul is specifically speaking of the Jews here, but what he says certainly applies on a broader scale to all people. The gospel is a call to obedience. Those who do not respond are disobedient to God.

2. *Lord, who has believed our report?* - 10:16

Paul shows that Israel's failure to believe was foretold by Isaiah (53:1). They did not believe in Him whom they heard (10:14). They failed to believe in Christ. "To obey the gospel is to believe it and to believe in Him who is its content; and to believe the gospel and believe in Christ involves obeying it, obeying Him" (Romans, A Shorter Commentary, C.E.B. Cranfield).

3. *Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God* - 10:17

This is the summary conclusion of Paul's argument up to this point. In order to believe, one must hear the gospel. *The word of God* refers to the gospel message, the message about Christ. The NASB has the preferable translation, *the word of Christ*.

Romans 10:17 is also an introduction to the final verses of Chapter 10 where Paul demonstrates that Israel has heard God's word, but has not believed.

D. The message of God has gone out to the ends of the world - Romans 10:18-21

Paul shows that Israel had no excuse. God's message had been proclaimed, they had heard, they knew, but they were disobedient.

1. *Have they not heard? Yes indeed* - 10:18

Paul quotes Psalm 19:4 to prove that Israel had heard the message. Verses 1-6 of Psalm 19 proclaim the revelation of God in nature; the *heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork*. Verses 7-11 proclaim the revelation of God in Scripture. Both the works and the word of God proclaim His message.

2. *Did Israel not know?* - 10:19-20

Paul has established that Israel had heard, now he asks, *did Israel not know?* The word *know* here means "to understand". Perhaps they didn't understand what they had heard. But God had told them that He would extend grace to the Gentiles and that they would be made jealous and angry because of it. If the *foolish* (9:21) Gentiles who did not even seek God were able to understand, then Israel certainly should have understood. Paul quotes from both the law and the prophets to prove his case.

a. The words of the law — Moses - 10:19

In the quotation from Deuteronomy 32:21, Moses hinted at the calling of the Gentiles, saying that God would use *those who are not a nation...a foolish nation*, (the Gentiles) to provoke Israel to jealousy. God would use the foolish Gentiles to make the Jews angry.

b. The words of the prophet Isaiah - 10:20

Isaiah 65:1 plainly foretold the calling of the Gentiles. The Gentiles did not seek God as the Jews did, but they found Him because God revealed Himself to them. If Gentiles who neither sought after God nor asked for Him actually came to know Him, then Israel, His chosen people, the privileged nation must have known. They were without excuse.

3. Israel has been disobedient - 10:21

Paul continues his quotation from Isaiah 65. He used verse 1 to show God's grace to the Gentiles. Now he uses verse 2 to contrast the disobedience of Israel. *All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people*. Israel refused God's gracious invitation. They did not respond to God's call even though He continually reached out to them *all day long*. Israel was disobedient and contrary. They did not believe and call upon the name of the Lord.

Applications

1. The desire of Paul's heart was for his fellow Israelites to be saved and he prayed for them. Who is on your heart? Who will you pray for faithfully?

2. Isaiah spoke of the beautiful feet of those who preach the good news (Romans 10:15, Isaiah 52:7). These lesson notes mentioned that the reference was not to the physical beauty of the feet, but to the beauty of what they were doing; the message they were bearing. Physical beauty fades with the years and dies, but the beauty which comes from the spread of the gospel message will grow and last forever. Are you more concerned with physical and material beauty or with the eternal beauty of spreading the gospel? How can you help to spread the gospel to those who may not have heard?

3. Have you believed the gospel message and called upon the name of the Lord? If you have any doubts about your salvation, please speak to your discussion leader or class teacher and ask for a copy of the Disciplers' Confidence Letter.

QUESTIONS

All questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

Day One: Read all notes and references.

- Why was it that Israel, who was zealous for God, was not saved?
 - What lesson do you learn from this?
- If someone asked you, “How can I be sure that I’m saved?” what would your answer be?
- What did you learn that was new to you concerning faith and salvation?

Since Romans 9 through 11 go together and Paul's teachings in these chapters present an argument which builds upon itself, we will briefly review Romans 9 and 10 before beginning Chapter 11.

Day Two: Read Romans 9:1-16.

4. What great privileges belonged to the people of Israel?
5. a. Had God's promises to them failed? Give verse and tell why or why not?

b. What two examples does Paul use to back up his answer?
6. What did you learn from this passage about God's sovereignty and the way He works out His purpose?

Day Three: Read Romans 9:17-33.

- a. For what purpose does Paul use the example of Pharaoh?
 - b. How does the example of Pharaoh demonstrate God's sovereignty?
- a. What kind of a *vessel* was Pharaoh?
 - b. What other kind of *vessel* does Paul mention?
 - c. What are each of the above vessels prepared for?
 - d. Do either of the above vessels come exclusively from the Jews or Gentiles? Give verse to back up your answer.

9. a. For what purpose does Paul quote the prophet Hosea?
- b. How is God's mercy toward Israel seen in the passages Paul quotes from Isaiah?
10. What contrasts does Paul make between Jews and Gentiles in verses 30-33?

Day Four: Read Romans 10:1-21.

11. How was Israel seeking to be saved?
12. Give some statements which show that salvation is by faith and not works. Give verses.
13. a. In verses 14 and 15, Paul lists four things that are necessary before a person can *call upon the name of the Lord*. What are those four things?
- b. From your answer above, did Israel have all that was necessary in order to *call on the name of the Lord*? Give some proofs from Romans 10 to back up your answer.
14. According to God, why did Israel fail to *call upon the name of the Lord*? Give verse.

Day Five: Read Romans 11:1-4.

15. a. What question does Paul ask at the beginning of Romans 11?
- b. How does he answer the question in verse 1?
- c. ? (Thought Question) How would Paul himself be an answer to the question?
- d. How are both Romans 9:6 and 9:27 an answer to the question in 11:1?
16. What definitive answer to his question in 11:1 does Paul give in Romans 11:2?

17. a. From what passage of Scripture does Paul quote to back up his answer?
- b. How does this passage show that God has not rejected His people?

Day Six: Read Romans 11:5-10.

18. a. What words in Romans 11:5 describe the seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal?
- b. In what way were Isaac and Jacob (Romans 9:7-8 and 11-13) like the seven thousand?
- c. How was Paul also like Isaac and Jacob and like the seven thousand?
19. a. In Romans 11:5-6, how many times does Paul use the word *grace*?
- b. What is the point Paul is making?
- c. How does Romans 4:4 help explain what Paul is saying about works and grace?
20. a. What two kinds of people does Paul designate in 11:7?
- b. How were the *elect* (chosen) selected? See verse 6.
- c. Using the Old Testament Scriptures from which Paul quotes, how were the rest *blinded* (or hardened)?
- d. Give some statements, with verses, from Romans 10 which explain why the rest were blinded or hardened.
- e. What warning do you see here?