

THE EPISTLES TO THE ROMANS

ROMANS 9:1-11:36, VINDICATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

INTRODUCTION

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B. Introductory notes on Romans 10

1. A number of commentators have placed Romans 9:30-33 with Romans 10:1-4. I chose to leave it with Romans 9. It strongly ties the two chapters together by bridging Paul's addressing Israel's fault in rejecting the righteousness of God.
2. Thomas Constable, *The chapter division signals a shift in Paul's emphasis from God's dealings with Israel in the past, namely before Christ's death, to His dealings with them in the present...The reason for Israel's failure mentioned in 9:32-33, namely her rejection of Christ, led Paul to amplify that subject further in this section.*
3. John Stott, *With chapter 10 Paul turns from the past to the present, from his explanation of the Israelites' unbelief to his hope that they will yet hear and believe the gospel.*

ROMANS 10:1-13, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD COMES BY FAITH

A. Misunderstanding the righteousness of God (1-4)

1. Paul expressed his deep desire that fellow Jews would be saved (1), ***Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.***
 - a. *Brothers* may be translated *brothers and sisters*.
 - b. Paul's desire is that Jews (*them*) would be saved.
 - 1) He emphasizes his concern by use of a grammatical particle that can be translated, *verily, truly, surely*. Note Hebrews 6:14, *saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you."*
 - 2) Robert H. Mounce, *The reality of his love is seen in the fact that he prayed for them.*
 - 3) Paul's prayer was with heartfelt emotion.
 - c. Reasons for Paul's motivation to earnestly pray for the Jews.
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Mention of their deliberate rejection of Christ (9:32-33) evidently triggered this emotional expression.*
 - 2) Douglas Moo, *He wants his predominantly Gentile Christian readers to know that he takes no delight or satisfaction from Israel's fall...He is hurt by their animosity toward the Lord and wants them to join him in worshipping their Messiah...he weeps at the thought of his Jewish countrymen standing before God in everlasting shame and judgment.*
 - 3) Those chosen by God to be a testimony to the Gentiles still must respond personally to Messiah in order to be saved.
 - a) Warren Wiersbe, *Israel would have been happy for political salvation from Rome, but she did not feel she needed spiritual salvation from her own sin.*
 - b) As seen in Romans 9:32, they had *stumbled over the stumbling stone* (Jesus Christ).
 - c) C. E. B. Cranfield, *The fact that Paul continued to pray for the unbelieving Jews, who had 'stumbled against the stone of stumbling', is clear proof that he did not think of their present rejection as final and closed.*

2. Paul affirmed a Jewish zeal for God not based on truth (2-3), *For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.*
 - a. Paul makes a solemn statement confirming Israel's zeal for God.
 - 1) Their zeal for God focused on the Law and traditions.
 - a) It was and is a zeal for the true God.
 - b) John Witmer, *Israel was called "the God-intoxicated people."*
 - c) C. E. B. Cranfield, *Such zeal for God is the hall-mark of orthodox Judaism in every century...Their zeal is zeal for God. It is no heathen fanaticism of an empty ideology, but zeal for the true God. Israel is absolutely right in the object of its zeal. And it is undoubtedly zeal—fervent, strenuous, tenacious, concentrated zeal.*
 - d) Warren Wiersbe, *So zealous were the Jews that they even "improved upon God's Law" and added their own traditions, making them equal to the Law.*
 - e) The problem for Judaism is that it is not tied to the righteousness of God. Paul will detail this fatal mistake of not approaching God through Messiah, Jesus the Christ.
 - 2) This zeal was an attribute of Paul.
 - a) Acts 22:3, *"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.*
 - b) Galatians 1:14, *And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.*
 - c) John Stott, *He (Paul) can testify about them from his own experience that they are zealous for God. And he knows what he is talking about, because he himself in his pre-conversion life was 'extremely zealous' in his religion, as seen in his persecution of the church.*
 - b. Paul declares that Jewish zeal for God is not according to knowledge of the righteousness of God.
 - 1) Their zeal for God was *not according to knowledge.*
 - a) Romans 9:31, *but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law.*
 - b) Some translate *not according to knowledge* as *not in accordance with real (true) knowledge.*
 - c) C. E. B. Cranfield, *They do indeed know God, and yet they will not know Him as He really is. There is a lack of comprehension at the most vital point. It is a matter of seeing indeed but not perceiving, of hearing indeed but not understanding (cf. Mk 4:12).*
 - d) Paul will shortly state that the knowledge lacking was that Jesus is the Messiah.
 - 1] 1 Timothy 1:13-14, *though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*
 - 2] John Witmer, *The Jews obviously had knowledge of God but not full knowledge. Otherwise they would not have stumbled over Christ by seeking to gain righteousness on the basis of works.*
 - 2) They were *ignorant of the righteousness of God.*
 - a) *Ignorant* means *not to know, misunderstand* and possibly here, *disregard (the righteousness of God).*
 - b) C. E. B. Cranfield, *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.*
 - c) Douglas Moo, *The Jews' ignorance, therefore, involves their failing to understand that God has fulfilled his promise to reveal his saving activity in Jesus Christ.*
 - 3) Jews did not submit to God's righteousness because they sought to establish their own.
 - a) Douglas Moo, *Paul's use of the verb "submit" shows that the righteousness of God is an active force to which one must humbly and obediently subordinate oneself.*
 - b) Their lack of submission was tied to lack of faith, Romans 9:31-32, *but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone,*

- c) Jews as well as Gentiles seem to prefer righteousness of their own choosing, not letting God be God.
 - 1] John Witmer, *...the righteousness God requires for people to be accepted by Him, which is God's own infinite righteousness...The Jews did not really understand God's own infinite righteousness, which is why they were continuing to seek to establish their own (cf. Isa. 64:6).*
 - 2] C. E. B Cranfield, *It is indeed an ignorance of God's own character, a failure to know Him as He really is, and as He has revealed Himself, as the merciful God. And the act of disobedience resulting from this ignorance is their refusal to submit to God's righteousness, that is, their refusal to humble themselves to accept it as an undeserved gift. It is the refusal to let grace be grace, the refusal to give God alone the glory.*

3. Faith in Christ alone provides the righteousness of God (4), ***For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***

a. The law was fulfilled by Christ alone.

- 1) Matthew 5:17, *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*
- 2) Douglas Moo, *Paul is implying that Christ is the "end" of the law (he brings its era to a close) and its "goal" (he is what the law anticipated and pointed toward)...For he is its fulfillment and consummation and he cannot be understood or appreciated unless he is seen in light of the preparatory period of which the law was the center.*
- 3) David Lowery, *In the progress of salvation history the beginning of the end of the role of law is in the coming of Christ. Its end is based on the work he effected and applied to the church he established.*

b. The path to God's righteousness is faith.

- 1) The wrong path to the righteousness of God is the law.
 - a) Galatians 3:24, *So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.*
 - b) Douglas Moo, *The Jews failed to "submit" to God's righteousness not only because they did not recognize God's righteousness when it arrived but also because they were too narrowly focused on seeking a righteousness in connection with their obedience to the law.*
 - c) John Stott, *Christ and the law are both objective realities, both revelations and gifts of God. But now that Christ has accomplished our salvation by his death and resurrection, he has terminated the law in that role. 'Once we grasp the decisive nature of Christ's saving work', writes Dr Leon Morris, 'we see the irrelevance of all legalism.'*
 - d) Warren Wiersbe, *Their Law told them they were sinners in need of a Saviour. But instead of letting the Law bring them to Christ (Gal. 3:24), they worshiped their Law and rejected their Saviour. The Law 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.*

2) The right path is faith in Christ alone.

- T a) The Jewish perception of salvation was *national*. Now, salvation is available not only to Jews but Gentiles, as well, by faith.
- b) The righteousness of God is solely understood and accepted in Jesus Christ.
- c) Mankind would prefer creating its own method for attaining God's righteousness. Such lack of submission is not a Jewish thing but a human thing. Grace always needs to be substituted with works until God opens the hearts of people to receive grace.

B. Attaining the righteousness of God comes by faith in Christ alone (5-13)

- 1. Paul supports his declaration concerning the righteousness of God through Old Testament passages (5-8), ***For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);***

a. Moses wrote that righteousness based on the law demands full obedience.

- 1) Paul quoted Leviticus 18:5, *You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.*
- 2) The law only provides the righteousness of God to those who obey all of the law all of the time.

- 3) Therefore, law is not God's way of providing righteousness because only Jesus obeyed all of the law all of the time.
 - a) James 2:10, *For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.*
 - b) Romans 3:19-20, *Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*
 - c) John Witmer, *If a Jew were to receive righteousness by keeping the demands of the Law, that would be human achievement; it would not be from God.*

- b. The righteousness of God is based on faith not on works.
 - 1) Moses alluded to the priority of faith, note Deuteronomy 30:6, *And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *In the context of Moses' statement there is a strong emphasis on an attitude of loving obedience rather than a legalistic approach to earning righteousness...*

- c. Paul uses the Old Testament to show that true righteousness is based on faith.
 - 1) *But* in verse 6 contrasts a mistaken view of righteousness based on works to the true view based on faith as he noted in Romans 9:30, *What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith;*
 - 2) Paul opens with statements derived from Old Testament texts.
 - a) On Romans 10:6-7, Deuteronomy 30:12-13, *It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'*
 - b) On Romans 10:8, Deuteronomy 30:14, *But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.*
 - 3) The components of Paul's Old Testament declaration of righteousness based on faith.
 - a) The context of Moses' charge to the nation of Israel was the time they were about to enter the land of Canaan. The noted verses were Moses' concluding prophetic remarks concerning how God would deal with Israel, blessing for faith evidenced by obedience, and punishment for rejection evidenced by disobedience.
 - b) The two components are *heart* and *mouth*.
 - 1] Who can go to heaven or go beyond the sea to bring the true message to the people?
 - 2] The true message is *in your heart and mouth* in order to obey.
 - 3] Douglas Moo, *The gospel, then, is "near" to us because it requires only what our own hearts and mouths can do; and when we respond, it brings near to us God's salvation.*
 - 4) Conclusion for those in the day of Moses
 - a) The nation of Israel heard from Moses that faith would be the means by which the people could obey God's commands.
 - b) The people could not do it by their own works as declared in Deuteronomy 30:12-13.
 - c) The ability to obey was accessible by faith as noted in Deuteronomy 30:14.
 - 5) Conclusion for those in the day of Paul and today
 - a) There is no need to obtain God's righteousness by human effort (*ascend into heaven*) since the righteousness of God came down from heaven through the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
 - b) There is no need to obtain God's righteousness by human effort (*descend into the abyss*) since the righteousness of God came up through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - 6) Paul's affirmation that the righteousness of God in every age is by faith not works.
 - a) The word of faith is near (available) to everyone because of the coming Messiah before incarnation and for us after Messiah's incarnation.
 - b) *Word* means *spoken word*, specifically, the Gospel.
 - 1] Ephesians 6:17, *and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,*
 - 2] C. E. B. Cranfield, *The justification for Paul's bold identification of 'the word' in Deut 30:14 with the gospel preached by himself and other Christian preachers is the fact, as Paul sees it, that it is Christ who is the substance and innermost meaning of the law.*

- 3] Romans 3:27, *Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith.*
 - 4] Douglas Moo, *In Christ, the culmination of the law, God's word is near in a way that it has never been before. And all that is now required of human beings is the response of faith. For the gospel is the word of faith: a message that calls for faith.*
2. The righteousness of God is received in the heart and proclaimed with the mouth (9-10), ***because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.***
- a. Paul explains the Gospel by means of Deuteronomy 30:14, in verse 9.
 - 1) It involves confession with the mouth that Jesus is Lord.
 - a) Confession
 - 1] It is an acknowledgment of ones' faith in Christ because of Who He is, God the Son.
 - 2] It is an affirmation of the historical testimony of the church.
 - 3] Douglas Moo, *Confession is the outward manifestation of this critical inner response.*
 - b) *Jesus is Lord*
 - 1] Thomas Constable, *In the early church the phrase "Jesus is Lord" was one of the most common and simple expressions by which believers confessed their faith in Christ...*
 - 2] Acts 2:36, *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.*
 - 3] Philippians 2:11, *and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
 - 4] C. E. B. Cranfield, *We take it that, for Paul, the confession that Jesus is Lord meant the acknowledgment that Jesus shares the name and the nature, the holiness, the authority, power, majesty and eternity of the one and only true God...there is expressed in addition the sense of His ownership of those who acknowledge Him and of their consciousness of being His property; the sense of personal commitment and allegiance, of trust and confidence.*
 - 2) It involves belief in the heart that God raised Jesus from the dead.
 - a) C. E. B. Cranfield, *...His resurrection was no mere resuscitation of a corpse only for it to die again, but God's decisive and irrevocable sealing of Him who was crucified as the eternal Lord.*
 - b) Thomas Constable, *Jesus' resurrection was the proof that He really was the divine Messiah. Belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ meant belief that Jesus is Lord. Paul was speaking of belief in His resurrection as an evidence of saving faith, not as a condition for salvation.*
 - c) Grant Osborne, *The cross without the empty tomb was little more than the tragic death of an innocent Jewish rabbi.*
 - 3) Douglas Moo, *Both the presence of these two conditions and the order in which they occur are due to Paul's desire to show how his "word of faith" precisely matches the description of the word in Deut. 30:14, as being "in your mouth" and "in your heart."*
 - 4) Such a confession is salvific.
 - a) It is a matter of truth tied to faith, note Acts 11:24, *he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.*
 - b) Salvation is present and future as evidenced by changed lives.
 - 1] 2 Corinthians 4:10, *always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.*
 - 2] Matthew 5:10, *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*
 - b. Paul summarizes the steps in proper order in verse 10.
 - 1) Normal sequences concerning salvation
 - a) One believes in the heart and is justified.
 - 1] It involves justification by God by transferring the righteousness of Christ to the lives of those justified by the finished work of Christ.
 - 2] It is an act of faith.

- b) One confesses with the mouth and is saved.
 - 1] It is a verbal declaration of one's belief in Christ to be God.
 - 2] John Witmer, *Salvation comes through acknowledging to God that Christ is God and believing in Him.*
 - c) Thomas Constable, *Paul was describing the normal consequence of belief.*
- 2) Is Paul saying that confession is salvific?
- a) It is a declaration of salvation that has been received.
 - 1] *One confesses and is saved* is literally translated *one confesses to salvation.*
 - 2] Public confession is not a requirement for salvation but a testimony of what has taken place in one's life.
 - b) It is an act of obedience.
 - 1] Confession is an ongoing responsibility that shows dedication to Christ without shame, Matthew 10:32-33, *So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.*
 - 2] Public testimony to the Gospel can result in the salvation of others.
 - a] John 4:39, *Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony...*
 - b] John 17:20, *I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,*
 - c. Importance of Paul's grammatical structure in verse 9 and 10.
 - 1) Chiasm is when one places 2 or more sentences or words in a sentence in reverse order.
 - 2) In verse 9, Paul's order is *mouth* and *heart* but in verse 10, it is *heart* and *mouth*.
 - 3) In such a structure, the one in the middle, *heart* would be the word emphasized.
 - 4) Salvation takes place in the *heart* with a response of the *mouth*.
3. Paul summarizes the means of attaining the righteousness of God which is faith in Christ alone (11-13)
- a. Faith in Christ alone is certain (11), ***For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."***
 - 1) Paul affirms verses 9-10, by referring to Scripture.
 - a) Isaiah 28:16, *therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.'*
 - b) He will again refer to Isaiah 28:16 in Romans 9:33, *as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."*
 - 2) The Gospel is certain for everyone who places faith in Christ alone.
 - a) Paul uses *shame* to describe what will not happen to those who place faith in Christ alone.
 - 1] *Shame* means to *humiliate, disgrace.*
 - 2] Paul uses the word *shame* concerning God's dealing with those who reject the Gospel, 1 Corinthians 1:27, *But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;*
 - b) Certainty is based on God's promises.
 - 1] Romans 3:23-24, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*
 - 2] Those who place faith in Christ alone will never be ashamed of making a mistake because they sought God's righteousness by coming to Christ.
 - 3] Thomas Constable, *Belief in God, specifically in His promises, is the only condition for justification...*
 - 4] C. E. B. Cranfield, *This promise embracing all men without distinction was all along the inner meaning of the law which was placed in the mouths and in the hearts of the Jews. And, though they have to learn the humbling lesson that righteousness with God is not theirs by right of descent or merit, they also stand under the promise that they too may share that righteousness through faith.*

- b. Faith in Christ alone is universal(12), ***For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.***
- 1) The only way to attain the righteousness of God is placing faith in Christ alone.
 - a) Romans 3:21-22, *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:*
 - b) Romans 3:29, *Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,*
 - 2) *the same Lord is the Lord of all*
 - a) There is only one Lord because Jesus is fully God.
 - b) Thomas Constable, *This reference confirms the fact that “Lord” in verse 9 refers to Jesus as God rather than as personal master as does the next verse.*
 - c) Douglas Moo, *As Lord, Jesus not only demands allegiance from all; he graciously showers his “riches” on all who “call upon him.”*
 - d) John Stott, *Of course there is a fundamental distinction between those who seek righteousness by the law and those who seek it by faith. But between those who have been justified by faith and are now in Christ, all distinctions, not only of race, but also of sex and culture, are not so much abolished (since Jews are still Jews, Gentiles Gentiles, men men and women women) as rendered irrelevant.*
 - 3) The riches of Christ are for all who place faith in Him alone.
 - a) John Witmer, *Just as all who sin will be judged, so all who believe will be saved and richly blessed.*
 - b) Consider *richly blessed.*
 - 1) Romans 8:28-31, *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*
 - 2) Philippians 4:19, *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*
- c. Faith in Christ alone is affirmed by Paul from Scripture (13), ***For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”***
- 1) Paul cites from Joel 2:32, *And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved...*
 - a) He is underscoring his declaration that salvation through Christ alone is universal.
 - b) Already, he proved that condemnation is universal in Romans 3:20-23.
 - c) Thomas Witmer, *To call on the Lord means to pray in faith for salvation.*
 - d) John Stott, *...this appeal to Jesus for salvation became so characteristic of Christian people that Paul could describe the worldwide community as ‘those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2).’*
 - 2) *The Lord*
 - a) Thomas Constable, *The “Lord” of Joel 2:32 is the same as the “Lord Jesus Christ.” Peter also appealed to Joel 2:32 in his Pentecost sermon for the same reason Paul did here (Acts 2:21). Both apostles wanted to show that the door of salvation is open to everyone.*
 - b) Douglas Moo, *In the OT, of course, the one on whom people called for salvation was Yahweh; Paul reflects the high view of Christ common among the early church by identifying this one with Jesus Christ, the Lord.*

CONCLUSION

- Grant Osborne, *This salvation is available for “anyone” who is willing to believe (vv. 11–13). It is critical in our day to realize this means every human being ever born. No sinner is exempt, and salvation is open to thieves, prostitutes, murderers—any and every sinner who is willing to repent, turn to Christ in faith, and find forgiveness. But it must be received by faith in Christ; no human effort can ever earn salvation. It is a divine gift and cannot be bought, no matter how much fancy paper and ribbon we wrap it in!*
- John Stott, *What then, according to this section, is necessary to salvation? First the fact of the historic Jesus Christ, incarnate, crucified, risen, reigning as Lord, and accessible. Secondly, the apostolic gospel, the word of faith...which makes him known. Thirdly, simple trust on the part of the hearers, calling on the name of the Lord, combining faith in the heart and confession with the mouth. But still something is missing. There is, fourthly, the evangelist who proclaims Christ and urges people to put their trust in him. It is of Christian evangelists that Paul writes in the next paragraph.*