

THE EPISTLES TO THE ROMANS

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

INTRODUCTION

A. Outline of Romans

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B. Introductory notes on Romans 10

1. 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.*
2. Romans 10:14-21, answers a question concerning proclamation of the Gospel and response to that proclamation raised in verse 13.

ROMANS 10:14-21, REJECTING THE GOSPEL BRINGS ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Necessary steps for salvation (14-15), *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*

1. *How then*

- a. Paul looks back to verse 13 and will address Israel's (*they*) accountability concerning Messiah.
 - 1) C. E. B. Cranfield, *At this point Paul is concerned to show that the Jews have really had full opportunity to call upon the name of the Lord in the sense of vv. 12 and 13, and are therefore without excuse.*
 - 2) Warren Wiersbe, *This passage is often used as the basis for the church's missionary program, and rightly so, but its first application is to the nation of Israel. The only way unbelieving Jews can be saved is by calling on the Lord. But before they can call on Him, they must believe.*
- b. *How then* introduces rhetorical questions concerning evangelism.
 - 1) Each question is tied to the key word in the question preceding: *call, believe, hear, preach.*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *Paul presented the logical sequence in a lost person's coming to faith in Jesus Christ in reverse order here.*

2. Paul asks four rhetorical questions necessary for a person to call on the Lord (14-15a)

- a. *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?*
 - 1) *Calling* is an act of faith in someone or something which is tied to belief in the second question.
 - 2) Those facts include His death, resurrection and rightful Lordship based on His nature, fully God, fully man.
 - 3) John Stott, *...since saving faith is presented as 'calling on' Christ's name, the kind of 'belief' Paul has in mind must be the prior stage of believing the facts about Jesus which are included in his 'name.'*
 - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *For the Jew, this meant believing that Jesus Christ of Nazareth truly is the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel.*
 - 5) For the Jews, every condition but one, faith, was met as Paul will show in this passage.

- b. *And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?*
- 1) John 9:36, *He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?"*
 - 2) Ephesians 4:21, *assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,*
 - 3) Romans 10:17, *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*
 - 4) The relationship of hearing to believing.
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Faith depends on knowledge of facts. Someone has to proclaim these facts for others to know about them.*
 - b) John Stott, *Just as believing is logically prior to calling, so hearing is logically prior to believing.*
 - c) Grant Osborne, *We have not truly heard until we respond and begin living the truth of the message. This is especially the case with the gospel.*
- 5) The core truth that needs to be heard concerns Jesus, who He is and what He has done.
- c. *And how are they to hear without someone preaching?*
- 1) *Preaching means to herald.*
 - a) John Stott, *In ancient times, before the development of the mass media of communication, the role of the herald was vital. The major means of transmitting news was his public proclamations in the city square or the marketplace. There could be no hearers without heralds.*
 - b) John Witmer, *Carrying God's gracious offer involves human beings whom God has brought to Himself and then uses as His heralds. They share God's message of salvation because He will save everyone who calls on His name.*
 - 2) Preaching does not require *preachers* but believers following Jesus' Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20, *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*
 - 3) Proclaiming the Gospel was a priority for Paul.
 - a) 1 Thessalonians 2:9, *For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.*
 - b) 2 Corinthians 4:5, *For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.*
 - c) Colossians 1:23, *if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.*
 - d) 2 Timothy 4:2, *preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.*
- d. *And how are they to preach unless they are sent?*
- 1) Proclaiming the Gospel involves a mandate from God.
 - a) John 20:21, *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."*
 - b) Thomas Constable, *Being sent (v. 15) suggests that those heralding the gospel operate under orders from a higher authority. This description also implies that that authority has given them their message. God has sent every Christian to proclaim the gospel to the lost...*
 - c) C. E. B. Cranfield, *The point of the fourth question is that true Christian preaching, through which Christ Himself speaks, is not something which men can accomplish on their own initiative: it can only take place where men are authorized and commissioned by God.*
 - d) Grant Osborne, *A person can preach a sermon without a calling from God, but the message will not be infused with power by the Spirit. The words will carry truth only by chance, for the Lord will not be behind the message. This does not mean that only an ordained minister can preach; it means God must be behind the message.*
 - e) Warren Wiersbe quotes Dr. E. Meyers Harrison, veteran missionary and professor of missions, *... 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 Cor. 5:14).*

- 2) The Gospel delivered by God's heralds for those who hear and receive it is good news.
 - a) Paul quotes from Isaiah 52:7, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."*
 - b) The context of Isaiah was the restoration of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity.
 - c) John Witmer, *But Paul applied Isaiah 52:7 to the Jews of his day to whom the gospel was being given.*
 - d) Thomas Constable, *"How beautiful are the feet" is a figurative way of expressing gratitude for the obedience of the messengers who have brought good news.*
 - e) John Stott, *If those who proclaimed the good news of release from Babylonian exile were thus celebrated, how much more welcome the heralds of the gospel of Christ should be!*
 - f) Grant Osborne, *In too many churches the proclaimed word is de-emphasized, and the pastor is considered more a CEO or an entertainer than a shepherd of the flock and a messianic herald of truth. This is exactly the opposite of Jesus and the disciples, for throughout Acts and the Epistles of the New Testament they gave the message they proclaimed the highest priority.*

3. Concerning Paul's sequence of verbs in verse 14-15a, John Stott, *The essence of Paul's argument is seen if we put his six verbs in the opposite order: Christ sends heralds; heralds preach; people hear; hearers believe; believers call; and those who call are saved. And the relentless logic of Paul's case for evangelism is felt most forcibly when the stages are stated negatively and each is seen to be essential to the next. Thus, unless some people are commissioned for the task, there will be no gospel preachers; unless the gospel is preached, sinners will not hear Christ's message and voice; unless they hear him, they will not believe the truths of his death and resurrection; unless they believe these truths, they will not call on him; and unless they call on his name, they will not be saved.*

B. Rejection of the Gospel by Israel (16-21)

1. They heard the Gospel but did not respond by faith (16-17)

- a. Paul declares that not all Jews who heard the message of the Gospel obeyed it (16), ***But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"***

1) Obeyed

- a) It means to *obey on the basis of having paid attention to.*
- b) Paul's emphasis on Jewish lack of belief is emphasized by his quotation from Scripture.
 - 1) Isaiah 53:1, *Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*
 - 2) Grant Osborne, *God sent his proclamation of redemption to Israel, but they refused to accept it. Israel has done this throughout its history and is still following that pattern, refusing to heed the good news.*
 - 3) C. E. B. Cranfield, *Paul now declares that, as far as some of the Jews are concerned, the fourth and final condition (i.e. the one mentioned first in vv. 14-15a) has not been fulfilled. They have not believed in Christ...The obedience which God requires is faith. 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.*

2) Consider the importance of faith tied to fact.

- a) Romans 6:17, *But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,*
- b) Hebrews 4:2, *For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.*
- c) Grant Osborne, *There is no true belief without active obedience.*
- d) Warren Wiersbe, *True faith must touch the will and result in a changed life.*

- b. Paul's summarization of Romans 10:14-16 (17), ***So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.***

1) Faith comes from hearing.

- a) Galatians 3:2, *Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?*
- b) Galatians 3:5, *Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—*
- c) Douglas Moo, *...hearing, the kind of hearing that can lead to faith, can only happen if there is a definite salvific word from God that is proclaimed.*

- 2) The hearing that saves is tied to the message of the truth concerning Christ.
 - a) *the word of Christ*
 - 1] This could mean the word *from* Christ or the word *about* Christ.
 - 2] James D. G. Dunn, *...the word of which Christ is both content and author.*
 - 3] I believe it can mean both but the emphasize here is the content of the message being heard, *the word concerning Christ.*
 - b) One must place faith in Christ based on hearing about Who Jesus is and what Jesus did.
 - 1] Paul made the components concerning Christ very clear in Romans 10:9, *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.*
 - 2] 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,*
 - 3] Zane Hodges, *What faith really is, in biblical language, is receiving the testimony of God. It is the inward conviction that what God says to us in the gospel is true. That—and that alone—is saving faith.*
 - 4] Grant Osborne, *The gospel is a trinitarian message, with all three members involved. The Father sends it, the Spirit speaks it, and Christ is the content of the message.*
2. The results of their rejecting the Gospel (18-21)
- a. Paul affirms Jewish rejection of the Gospel through a rhetorical question and answer (18), ***But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”***
 - 1) *But I ask, have they not heard?*
 - a) Some might have asked whether the Jews had not had proper presentation of the message.
 - b) Grant Osborne, *Paul’s purpose is to clarify the statement in verses 16–17 that Israel refused to truly hear the gospel...they have heard and understood but would not believe.*
 - 2) Paul answers his question by declaring, *Indeed they have.*
 - a) He quotes an Old Testament verse confirming his assertion, Psalm 19:4, *Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world...*
 - b) Israel is guilty of not responding to the message concerning Christ.
 - 1] Thomas Constable, *Every human being hears the testimony of nature, and all Israel had heard the special revelation of God concerning His Son from the prophets. They could not plead ignorance as a nation.*
 - 2] Warren Wiersbe, *The “Book of Nature” and the “Book of Revelation” go together and proclaim the glory of God. Israel had the benefit of both books, for she saw God at work in nature and she received God’s written Word. Israel heard, but she would not heed.*
 - 3] John Stott, *If God wants the general revelation of his glory to be universal, how much more must he want the special revelation of his grace to be universal too!*
 - 4] John Witmer, *Paul’s obvious answer to his question is that Israel had ample opportunity by both general and special revelation to respond to God. Certainly she heard.*
 - b. The message was made available to Gentiles (19-20), ***But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, “I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry.” Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, “I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.”***
 - 1) Paul asks a second question as to why Israel rejected the Gospel - did they not understand?
 - 2) He answers the question with a citation from Moses in verse 19, Deuteronomy 32:21, *They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.*
 - a) This quotation from Moses is a criticism of the nation of Israel’s forsaking the Lord.
 - b) Thomas Constable, *God said that He would give Israel a desire to return to Himself (provoke her to jealousy) by blessing another people. This is what had happened since Jesus Christ had died. God had opened the door of the church to the Gentiles...As time went by, fewer and fewer Jews responded to the gospel whereas ever more Gentiles accepted it. This response was not due to ignorance but to deliberate rejection.*

- c) Douglas Moo, *Paul sees in the words a prophecy of the mission to the Gentiles: the inclusion of Gentiles in the new people of God stimulates the Jews to jealousy and causes Israel to respond in wrath against this movement in salvation history. From their own Scriptures, then, Israel should have recognized that God was at work in the gospel.*
 - d) John Stott, *God reveals his intention to make Israel both 'envious' of and 'angry' at the 'no-nation', 'no under-standing' Gentiles because of the blessings he would give them...If, then, Israel's rejection of the gospel cannot be attributed either to her not hearing it or to her not understanding it, she must be without excuse.*
- 3) He continues with a citation from Isaiah in verse 20, Isaiah 65:1, *I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here I am, here I am," to a nation that was not called by my name.*
- a) The emphasis Paul makes from Isaiah 65:1 is *I have been found by those who did not seek me.*
 - b) Not only did God reach out to Gentiles but they came to God. They not only heard but responded by placing faith in Christ alone.
 - c) Douglas Moo, *Paul's application of this text to the Gentiles could be based on the language of "those who did not seek me." The wording of the quotation therefore brings us back to where this whole passage began: Gentiles, who were not pursuing righteousness, have attained a right relationship with God (9:30).*
 - d) John Stott's comment concerning the Gentiles, *...although they did not ask or seek or offer themselves to his service, he allowed himself to be found by them, he revealed himself to them, and he even offered himself to them, saying humbly to them, 'Here am I.' This is dramatic imagery for grace, God taking the initiative to make himself known.*
- c. God continues to send His message to the Jews (21), ***But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."***
- 1. Paul cites Isaiah 65:2, *I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices;*
 - 2. God continues to call Israel to Himself despite open rebellion.
 - a. *Disobedient*
 - 1] The meaning of the word translated is *always toward God or His ordinances.*
 - 2] Thomas Constable, *The reason God has temporarily set them aside is their stubborn rebelliousness. Moses and the prophets warned Israel of this attitude repeatedly, but the Chosen People persisted in it even after God had provided their Messiah. It is a refusal to believe the Gospel.*
 - b. *Contrary*
 - 1] It means *to oppose, to refuse to believe, to speak against.*
 - 2] Acts 28:22, *But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.*
 - 3] Luke 20:27, *There came to him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection,*
 - c. God's remarkable grace
 - 1] John Witmer, *Israel's continuing rebellious and unbelieving disobedience was judged by God's turning to the Gentiles...At the same time God has not withheld salvation from Jews. He has held out His hands, imploring them to return to Him.*
 - 2] C. E. B. Cranfield, *The quotation points firmly to the fact that the last word is not with Israel's disobedience but with God's mercy and patience.*
 - 3] John Stott on God's grace to Israel, *He does not simply allow himself to be found; he actively holds out his hands to them. Like a parent inviting a child to come home, offering a hug and a kiss, and promising a welcome, so God has opened and stretched out his arms to his people, and has kept them continuously outstretched, all day long, pleading with them to return.*
 - d. Concerning Israel's consistent rebuff of God's grace, John Stott, *They do not even give him the neutral response of the Gentiles, who decline either to ask or to seek. No, their response is negative, resistant, recalcitrant, dismissive. They are determined to remain a disobedient and obstinate people.*

CONCLUSION

- Thomas Constable, *Chapter 10 deals with Israel's present rejection of Jesus Christ that has resulted in God's temporary rejection of her. Both rejections will change in the future as the next chapter explains.*
- Warren Wiersbe, *Will God's patience with Israel wear out? Is there any future for the nation? Yes, there is, as the next chapter will show.*