

# The Epistle of Paul to the *Romans*

## **Restoration: Israel's Reception of God's Righteousness** (9:1 - 11:36)

**10:1-4** Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. Paul had a specific calling as "the apostle to the Gentiles" <sup>Romans 11:13</sup>, but God also gave him a responsibility to witness to "the people of Israel" <sup>Acts 9:15</sup> and to pray for "everyone" <sup>1 Timothy 2:1-4</sup>. The "zeal" of the Jews was "based on" an alleged legalistic conformity to the law, which Paul, in considering his past, could relate to <sup>Acts 22:3-5, Philippians 3:4b-6</sup>. In saying the Jews "did not know...righteousness", Paul was indicating that instead of thinking they could become righteous by the law (and their traditions <sup>Mark 7:1-13</sup>), the Jews should have recognized the law was clearly proclaiming their (and everyone's) inability to "establish their own" salvation righteousness, and so they must be dependent on God for genuine righteousness. In saying "Christ is the end of the law", Paul was declaring that the coming of Jesus Christ provided the definitive evidence to end the futile effort by Jews to gain righteousness by adhering to the law <sup>Isaiah 64:6, Romans 3:19-20</sup>.

The Greek word translated "end" (*telos*) can not only mean "end", but also "fulfillment". Jesus fulfilled the law through His teaching <sup>Matthew 5:17-18</sup> and His perfect life <sup>2 Corinthians 5:21</sup>.

The issues of absolute vs relative righteousness and zeal (emotion-based experience) without knowledge continue to be a major problem today, both in general society and in the church.

For the remainder of this chapter <sup>v.5-21</sup>, Paul chose to give his readers an Old Testament tutorial on faith-based salvation by quoting a dozen verses the Jews should have understood.

**10:5-7** Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that is by 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 deep?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). Paul quoted the teaching of Moses that for righteousness to be obtained by the law, a person must "live by them" <sup>Leviticus 18:5</sup>.

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The point Moses made was that righteousness by law is dependent on perfect obedience to every aspect of the law <sup>Galatians 3:10, James 2:10</sup>, which is impossible <sup>Deuteronomy 27:26, Romans 3:23</sup>. He then used other verses from Moses <sup>Deuteronomy 30:12-13</sup> to illustrate that a “righteousness [from] faith” results from a trust in the Messiah who is close to everyone (i.e., a person does not need to think a universal search for Christ is necessary, because He is always near <sup>v.8</sup>).

**10:8-10 But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.** Paul used the next verse from the Pentateuch <sup>Deuteronomy 30:14</sup> to drive home the fact that no search for salvation truth is required, because “the word [of faith] is near” <sup>v.8</sup>. Moses was saying that the Israelites of his time knew God’s Word and so it was close, because it was presented directly to them. Paul expanded on this by implying that the Jews of the 1<sup>st</sup> century not only had the testimony of Moses, they had the knowledge of the “Word” becoming flesh <sup>John 1:1,14</sup>. He then offered a confession of faith <sup>v.9</sup>, including an affirmation of Jesus as Lord, a trust in His salvation power and a reference to a repentant heart <sup>Psalms 28:6-9</sup>. True salvation results from a deep, intimate confession from the heart, expressed internally (“believe in your heart”) as well as externally (confess “with your mouth”) <sup>v.10</sup>.

A genuine belief in the Resurrection is essential to a saving faith, because it was the ultimate validation of Jesus’ ministry <sup>John 2:18-22</sup>, and without it there is no salvation <sup>1 Corinthians 15:12-19</sup>.

The Greek word translated “confess” (*homologeō*) essentially means agreement with someone. He who confesses Jesus as Lord <sup>v.9</sup> agrees with God’s declaration of that fact <sup>Psalms 110, Mark 9:7</sup>.

**10:11 As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”**

In this quote from Isaiah <sup>Isaiah 28:16b, 49:23b</sup>, Paul confirmed that salvation is by faith (“trust”, “relies” <sup>Isaiah 28:16b</sup>, “hopes” <sup>Isaiah 49:23b</sup>) and highlighted its inclusiveness <sup>Jonah 3:5, 2 Peter 3:9</sup>.

The Greek word translated “anyone” (*pas*) means “all” <sup>Romans 3:22, 6:10</sup> or “everyone” <sup>Romans 1:16</sup>. Paul added this word to the Isaiah quote apparently for emphasis (no limited atonement).

**10:12-13 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will**

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**be saved.**” Paul continued by emphasizing salvation is not just for the Jew, but the Lord and His salvation is available to all (i.e., “Jew and Gentile”) Acts 1:8, Ephesians 3:2-6, Hebrews 7:27. He stated this fact, and supported it with a quote from the Old Testament prophet Joel Joel 2:32a. There is not a difference in how anyone (Jew or Gentile) obtains salvation ⇒ faith Romans 1:17. However, the Lord certainly has a different plan for the “church” gone from Earth after Revelation 3 and the nation of Israel main focus in the events of the Tribulation, Revelation 7, 14, 21 during the End Times. The phrase “[calling] on the name of the Lord” was a common way the OT saints requested an intimate time of fellowship with God Genesis 13:3-4, 26:25, 1 Kings 18:24,36-37, Psalm 116:4, Zephaniah 3:9.

**10:14-15 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:**

**“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”** Paul posed a series of rhetorical questions to underscore the necessity of a clear presentation of the gospel (“good news”) from the Word of God in order for a person to be led to a saving faith v.17. Moreover, the gospel message can only be delivered by someone who has a genuine faith and who is “sent” by God. Paul’s quote Isaiah 52:7 illustrates how heavenly “beautiful” an obedient person is who has the responsibility and privilege to be called to present the salvation message.

The quote from Isaiah Isaiah 52:7 was proclaiming the end of the Babylonian exile Isaiah 40:9-11. Paul chose to apply this to the Jews who were then free from captivity to the law Romans 8:1-2.

The Isaiah quote is also mindful of one of the pieces in the Armor of God: “Stand firm then... with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.” Ephesians 6:14-15. This duty is not limited to pastors, but to all who call on the Name of the Lord Matthew 28:18-20.

**10:16-17 But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.** Paul reminded his readers that in spite of the beauty of the saving message from the Lord, many people will still willfully reject His gift of salvation. However, the gospel is not only a gracious offer from God, but it is also a command to believe and repent Mark 1:15 (a command for obedience John 14:15, Romans 2:8, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8, 2 John 1:6).

Paul’s next quote from Isaiah Isaiah 53:1 confirmed that the response to the Lord’s message is  
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not universally positive. However, Paul indicated the responsibility of believers <sup>Matthew 28:18-20</sup> is to present "the word of (the message about) Christ" <sup>Colossians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 1 Peter 4:11</sup> in order for people to "hear" (to understand a clear message in mind/heart) and have the greatest opportunity to receive and accept the truth leading to a saving faith <sup>2 Timothy 4:1-2</sup>.

The Greek word translated "accepted" (*hypakouō*) should be translated "were obedient to".

The "message" Isaiah referred to <sup>Isaiah 53:1</sup> was the substitutionary death of Christ <sup>Isaiah 53:3-6</sup>.

**10:18 But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."** Paul showed that even David understood <sup>Psalm 19:4</sup> God will be revealed everywhere ("to the ends of the world") <sup>Acts 1:8, Matthew 24:14, Colossians 1:3-6</sup>.

In this Psalm, David wrote eloquently about the *General Revelation of God's Creation* <sup>Psalm 19:1-6</sup> (readily available to all mankind), as well as the *Special Revelation of God's Word* <sup>Psalm 19:7-11</sup>.

**10:19-21 Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding." And Isaiah boldly says, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me." But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."** Repeating the essence of earlier questions <sup>v.16,18</sup>, Paul incredulously asked a question indicating his disgust for Israel's lack of faith, in spite of clear OT passages commanding great faith. In the last quote from Moses <sup>Deuteronomy 32:21</sup>, Paul reminded the Jews they will be "envious" and "angry" because God was/is offering saving faith to Gentiles <sup>Romans 11:14</sup>. The Israelites wrongly hated Gentiles, because (in their minds) they were not part of God's 'chosen nation' <sup>Deuteronomy 10:15</sup>. In fact, Isaiah asserted that God "revealed [Himself]" to the Gentiles even though they didn't "seek" or "ask for" Him <sup>Isaiah 65:1</sup>. Paul finished this section with another Isaiah quote <sup>Isaiah 65:2</sup> about the patient efforts of God to "hold out [His] hands" to the Jews, who responded as a "disobedient and obstinate people".

The Greek word for "disobedient" (*apeitheō*) describes someone who speaks against another.

Through this Scripture passage <sup>v.5-21</sup>, Paul illustrated Israel's rejection of many OT verses concerning the availability of God's offer of salvation faith to all mankind <sup>Psalm 22:27, Isaiah 49:6</sup>.

In addition, he was indicating the Jewish rejection of the NT gospel <sup>Matthew 21:33-41, Luke 14:16-24</sup>.