

Romans 10:4-13
May 24, 2015

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Last week we began our journey to grow in our evangelistic skills by recognizing some principles that Paul used to reach his fellow Jews. At the tail end of Chp 9 and the first three verses of Chapter 10, we read Paul's strong desire to see the Israelites be saved. We observed that evangelism "starts with the heart."

Transition: So let's continue building on the proposition that *every Christian can grow to become effective evangelists by observing the PRINCIPLES Paul used to reach his lost audience.* Let's begin.

BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Rom 10:4-13]

V.4:

- Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

V.5:

- Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them."

V.6:

- 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)

V.7:

- "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

V.8:

- 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:

V.9:

- 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.

V.10:

- For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

V.11:

- As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

V.12:

- For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

V.13:

- for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Process Observations/Questions:

- Q 4-13: Paul explains why Israel rejected Jesus. What were some of the reasons?

- V.4-13 They misunderstood their own Law. [Everything about the Jewish religion pointed to the coming Messiah—their sacrifices, priesthood, temple services, religious festivals, and covenants. 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]
- Q 9-10: Does merely mouthing “Jesus is Lord” and proclaiming that Jesus rose from the dead secure salvation? [Presumably the devil (see James 2:19) and many people (Matt 7:21–23) could meet these requirements and not be true followers of Christ. A heartfelt confession of Jesus’ lordship designates a lifelong commitment that issues from the center of a person’s being, the heart. What matters is not saying Jesus is Lord but making Him Lord at the core of one’s existence. This is what Paul really meant by calling on the name of the Lord to be saved (10:13).]
- Q: What are some principles that you see in these verses that could help us be more effective evangelists? [Principles: **Know your audience**. Paul knew the Israelites very well because he is one! **Keep the message simple** (v.8-9)]

LOOK:

Q: After today’s study, do you know what your “next step” is to grow in the area of evangelism?

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 545–548). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

THE WRONG RIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans 10

The theme of this chapter is Israel's present rejection. Paul moved from divine sovereignty (Rom. 9) to human responsibility. He continued the theme of righteousness introduced at the end of the previous chapter (Rom. 9:30–33) and explains three aspects of Israel's rejection.

The Reasons for Their Rejection (Rom. 10:1–13)

You would think that Israel as a nation would have been eagerly expecting the arrival of their Messiah and been prepared to receive Him. For centuries they had known the Old Testament prophecies and had practiced the Law, which was “a schoolmaster” to lead them to Christ (Gal. 3:24). God had sought to prepare the nation, but when Jesus Christ came, they rejected Him. “He came unto His own [world] and His own [people] received Him not” (John 1:11). To be sure, there was a faithful remnant in the nation that looked for His arrival, such as Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25–38); but the majority of the people were not ready when He came.

How do we explain this tragic event? Paul gives several reasons why Israel rejected their Messiah.

They did not feel a need for salvation (v. 1). There was a time when Paul would have agreed with his people, for he himself opposed the Gospel and considered Jesus Christ an impostor. Israel considered the Gentiles in need of salvation, but certainly not the Jews. In several of His parables, Jesus pointed out this wrong attitude: the elder brother (Luke 15:11–32) and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9–14) are two examples. Israel would have been happy for political salvation from Rome, but she did not feel she needed spiritual salvation from her own sin.

They were zealous for God (v. 2). Ever since Israel returned to their land from Babylonian Captivity, the nation had been cured of idolatry. In the temple and the local synagogues, only the true God was worshiped and served, and only the true Law was taught. So zealous were the Jews that they even “improved upon God's Law” and added their own traditions, making them equal to the Law. Paul himself had been zealous for the Law and the traditions (Acts 26:1–11; Gal. 1:13–14).

But their zeal was not based on knowledge; it was heat without light. Sad to say, many religious people today are making the same mistake. They think that their good works and religious deeds will save them, when actually these practices are keeping them from being saved. Certainly many of them are sincere and devout, but sincerity and devotion will never save the soul. “Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight” (Rom. 3:20).

They were proud and self-righteous (v. 3). Israel was ignorant of God's righteousness, not because they had never been told, but because they refused to learn. There is an ignorance that comes from lack of opportunity, but Israel had had many opportunities to be saved. In their case, it was an ignorance that stemmed from willful, stubborn resistance to the truth. They would not submit to God. They were proud of their own good works and religious self-righteousness, and

would not admit their sins and trust the Saviour. Paul had made the same mistake before he met the Lord (Phil. 3:1–11).

The godly Presbyterian preacher, Robert Murray McCheyne, was passing out tracts one day and handed one to a well-dressed lady. She gave him a haughty look and said, “Sir, you must not know who I am!”

In his kind way, McCheyne replied, “Madam, there is coming a day of judgment, and on that day it will not make any difference who you are!”

They misunderstood their own Law (vv. 4–13). Everything about the Jewish religion pointed to the coming Messiah—their sacrifices, priesthood, temple services, religious festivals, and covenants. 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.

Christ is “the end of the Law” in the sense that through His death and resurrection, He has terminated the ministry of the Law for those who believe. The Law is ended as far as Christians are concerned. The righteousness of the Law is being fulfilled in the life of the believer through the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:4); but the reign of the Law has ended (see Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14). “For ye are not under the Law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14).

Paul quoted from the Old Testament to prove to his readers that they did not even understand their own Law. He began with Leviticus 18:5 which states the purpose of the Law: if you obey it, you live.

“But we did obey it!” they would argue.

“You may have obeyed it *outwardly*,” Paul would reply, “but you did not believe it from your heart.” He then quoted Deuteronomy 30:12–14 and gave the passage a deeper spiritual meaning. The theme of Moses’ message was “the commandment” (Deut. 30:11), referring to the Word of God. Moses argued that the Jews had no reason to disobey the Word of God because it had been clearly explained to them and it was not far from them. In fact, Moses urged them to receive the Word in their hearts (see Deut. 5:29; 6:5–12; 13:3; 30:6). The emphasis in Deuteronomy is on the heart, the inner spiritual condition and not mere outward acts of obedience.

Paul gave us the spiritual understanding of this admonition. He saw “the commandment” or “the Word” as meaning “Christ, God’s Word.” So, he substituted “Christ” for “the commandment.” He told us that God’s way of salvation was not difficult and complicated. We do not have to go to heaven to find Christ, or into the world of the dead. He is near to us. In other words, the Gospel of Christ—the Word of faith—is available and accessible. The sinner need not perform difficult works in order to be saved. All he has to do is trust Christ. The very Word on the lips of the religious Jews was the Word of faith. The very Law that they read and recited pointed to Christ.

At this point Paul quoted Isaiah 28:16 to show that salvation is *by faith*: “Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.” He quoted this verse before in Romans 9:33. He made it clear in Romans 10:9–10 that salvation is *by faith*—we believe in the heart, receive God’s righteousness, and then confess Christ openly and without shame.

Paul’s final quotation was from Joel 2:32, to prove that this salvation is open to everyone: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Paul had already proved that “there is no difference” in condemnation (Rom. 3:20–23); now he affirms that “there is no

difference” in salvation. Instead of the Jew having a special righteousness of his own through the Law, he was declared to be as much a sinner as the Gentile he condemned.

This entire section emphasizes the difference between “Law righteousness” and “faith righteousness.” The contrasts are seen in the following summary.

<i>Law of Righteousness</i>	<i>Faith Righteousness</i>
Only for the Jew	For “whosoever”
Based on works	Comes by faith alone
Self-righteousness	God’s righteousness
Cannot save	Brings salvation
Obey the Lord	Call on the Lord
Leads to pride	Glorifies God

Having explained the reasons for Israel’s rejection of God’s righteousness, Paul moves into the next aspect of the subject.

Witmer, J. A. (1985). Romans. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 479–482). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

B. God’s sovereign choice applied (9:30–10:13).

1. ISRAEL’S STUMBLING (10:1-4).

10:1–4. Having stated the fact of Israel’s stumbling in the preceding verses, Paul now explained the reason for that stumbling. But first, in words reminiscent of the opening verses of chapter 9, the apostle expressed his deep personal spiritual burden for the salvation of the people of Israel. Perhaps with his own experience in mind (cf. Acts 26:11; Gal. 1:13–14; Phil. 3:4–6) Paul affirmed, **For I can testify** (pres. tense, “I testify, bear witness”) **about them that they are zealous for God.** Israel was called “the God-intoxicated people.” Paul had to acknowledge, however, that **their zeal is not based on** (lit., “according to”) **knowledge** (*epignōsin*, “intensive, full knowledge”). 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.

Paul continued his explanation of Israel’s failure and their misguided zeal. **Since they did not know** (the participle *agnoountes* means “being ignorant,” here in the sense of not understanding) **the righteousness that comes from God.** The NIV implies that the people of Israel did not understand the God-provided righteousness expounded in this letter to the Christians in Rome (cf. Rom. 1:17). That may be true, even though they should have known from their own Scriptures (cf. Gen. 15:6; Ps. 32:1–2). But here preferably the righteousness in view is 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). Little wonder then that **they did not submit to** (“place themselves under”) **God’s righteousness**, that is, the righteousness God provides through Christ by faith. The Greek in Romans 10:4 includes the coordinating particle *gar*, “for” (not trans. in the NIV). It introduces a statement that is crucial to Paul’s explanation of Israel’s stumbling—**Christ is the end of the Law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes**. The word translated “end” (*telos*) stands in the emphatic first position in the Greek sentence. It means that Christ is the designed end (termination) or Purpose-Goal of the Law (cf. Gal. 3:24), the Object to which the Law pointed.

The Law did not and could not of itself provide righteousness before God for individuals (cf. Rom. 3:20; 7:7). But Christ fulfilled the Law (Matt. 5:17–18) by keeping it perfectly during His sinless life (cf. John 8:46) and then gave His life in payment for the penalty of sin and the broken Law (cf. Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:13–14). The Law then pointed to Him as the Source of the God-provided righteousness it could not supply (Gal. 3:24). A godly Jew who trusted Yahweh and followed the Levitical system, including the sin offering and the trespass offering, would most likely be inclined to respond to Christ by faith and would receive God’s righteousness (i.e., be justified; Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24; 4:3, 5). He then could meet the requirements of the Law by the indwelling Holy Spirit (8:4). Conversely, a Jew who sought by works to establish his own righteousness would not recognize Christ as “the end of the Law” and would stumble over Him.

2. GOD’S GRACIOUS OFFER (10:5–15).

10:5–8. In presenting God’s gracious offer of salvation in Christ and the provision of righteousness by faith, Paul first stated the contrast of the by-works approach to achieving righteousness. He wrote, **Moses describes** (lit., “writes”) **the righteousness that is by the Law**. Then Paul quoted Leviticus 18:5, **The man who does these things will live by them**. 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. However, a Jew would need to keep the entire Law perfectly all his life—an impossible task (James 2:10). But then Paul also quoted Moses in support of his righteousness-by-faith position centered in Christ as “the end of the Law” and the means by which righteousness is available for everyone who believes. It does not seem appropriate that Paul was merely borrowing Moses’ words and applying them to something foreign in Moses’ thought. This suggests, then, that **righteousness ... by faith** is not a new concept, but had been proclaimed to Israel by Moses.

The material Paul quoted in Romans 10:6–8 is taken somewhat freely from Deuteronomy 30:12–14 with clauses quoted here and there. The material in Deuteronomy was part of Moses’ charge to the generation of Israel about to enter the land of Canaan. This exhortation was the conclusion of Moses’ prophetic description of God’s dealing with Israel. Blessing was promised for faith and obedience, and chastisement would result from rejection and disobedience. If Israel forsook God, Moses said, she would face worldwide dispersion and affliction. When the people then finally do turn to God in faith, He will restore them to blessing, prosperity, and prominence among the nations (Deut. 30:1–10). The point of Moses’ exhortation (Deut. 30:11) is that the generation to whom he was speaking had the message (it was very **near you and in your mouth**, Deut. 30:14) and could respond by faith (**in your heart**, Deut. 30:14) and walk with God in obedience. Since the Israelites in Moses’ day had the message, they did not need to ask that it be brought down from heaven or that someone “cross the sea to get it” (Deut. 30:13). Instead, **the word** (Moses’ instructions) was “near” them (Deut. 30:14).

In effect, Paul indicated that the same truth applied to his generation, with the added fact that Christ had come in the flesh (John 1:14) and had been resurrected. Therefore there was no need for anyone to ask **to bring Christ down** (in His Incarnation) or **to bring Christ up from the dead**; He had already come and had been resurrected. The message of righteousness by faith in Paul's day was "near" his readers (available to them) and this was "the word" (*rhēma*, "saying") **of faith** he was **proclaiming** (*rhēma*, "the spoken word" is also used in Eph. 5:26; 6:17; 1 Peter 1:25). Thus the gospel, "the word of faith," is available and accessible.

10:9–13. In these verses Paul stated the content of that message concerning faith. Confessing **with the mouth that Jesus is Lord** is mentioned first to conform to the order of the quotation from Deuteronomy 30:14 in Romans 10:8. The confession is an acknowledgement that God has been incarnated in Jesus (cf. v. 6), that Jesus Christ is God. Also essential is **heart-faith that God raised Him from the dead** (cf. v. 7). The result is salvation. The true order is given in verse 10: **For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified** (lit., "it is believed unto righteousness"), **and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved** (lit., "it is confessed unto salvation"). Yet these are not two separate steps to salvation. They are chronologically together. Salvation comes through acknowledging to God that Christ is God and believing in Him.

Paul then (v. 11) supported his position by quoting part of Isaiah 28:16 (cf. Rom. 9:33), adding the Greek word translated **everyone**. God responds with the gift of provided righteousness to each individual who believes. Then Paul reminded his readers of God's impartiality, as he did when discussing human sinfulness (3:22). Just as all who sin will be judged, so all who believe will be saved and **richly** blessed. This conclusion also is supported by a quotation from Joel 2:32: **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved**. To **call on** the Lord means to pray in faith for salvation. (On the significance of the "name," see comments on Acts 3:16.)

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (pg. 1695). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

10:9–10 Merely mouthing "Jesus is Lord" and proclaiming that Jesus rose from the dead cannot secure salvation. Presumably the devil (see James 2:19) and many people (Matt 7:21–23) could meet these requirements and not be true followers of Christ. A heartfelt confession of Jesus' lordship designates a lifelong commitment that issues from the center of a person's being, the heart. What matters is not *saying* Jesus is Lord but *making* Him Lord at the core of one's existence. This is what Paul really meant by calling on the name of the Lord to be saved (10:13).