

Romans 10:1-10
Israel's Blindness Explained

Introduction: Belief in the sovereignty of God regarding salvation does not eliminate the need to pray or the desire to pray. Israel stands guilty before God.

1) Israel stumbles because of their self-oriented mindset—10:1-4

- Paul prays for Israel in light of the truths in Romans 9.
- a) Paul expresses his love for Israel—10:1-3 ¹ *Brothers, my heart's desire* [euvdoki,a] (emphatic) *and prayer* [de,hsij] *to God for* [u`pe,r] *them is that they may be saved* [eivj swthri,a].
 - i) Israel's ignorant enthusiasm for God: ² *For* [ga,r] *I bear them witness that they have a zeal* [zhloj] *for God, but not according to knowledge* [evpi,gnwsij].
 - (1) Paul can bear witness because he himself was once like that (Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:2-12). He knows experientially the truths he is writing about.
 - ii) Israel's deliberate refusal to yield to God: ³ *For* [ga,r], ... *they did not submit* [u`pota,ssw] *to God's righteousness.*
 - (1) Refusal is rooted in ignorance: *being ignorant* [avgnoe,w] *of the righteousness of God,*
 - (2) Refusal is rooted in a self-centered zeal: *and seeking* [zhte,w] *to establish* [i[sthmi] *their own,*
 - iii) Consider Nehemiah's record of the Levites' own evaluation of Israel (9:29).
 - (1) Israel needs salvation from self-righteousness. (Horner)
 - iv) Many Covenant Theologians believe this prayer to be a vain exercise since the church replaces Israel.
- b) Paul explains the significance of the person and work of Christ—10:4 ⁴ *For* [ga,r] *Christ is the end* [te,loj] (emphatic; termination of the Law) *of the law for* [eivj] *righteousness to everyone who believes* [pres. act. ptc. pisteu,w].
 - i) Cf. Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:13-14
- c) THE POINT: no amount of religious enthusiasm can make amends for a deliberate refusal to submit to God's revelation of how people can be brought into a right relationship with Him. Ignorance is no excuse.
 - i) Christ is the only way to salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

2) Israel stumbles because of their spiritual ignorance—10:5-10

- Note the use of the Law itself to prove Paul's point
- a) The contrast stated
 - i) Paul explains the two kinds of righteousness—10:5-6a
 - (1) Law-based righteous demands perfect obedience: ⁵ *For* [ga,r] *Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on* [evk] *the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.* (cf. Lev. 18:5)
 - (2) Faith-based righteousness: ⁶ *But the righteousness based on* [evk] *faith says,*

- ii) **Negative**; what faith-based righteousness does not say: “*Do not say in your heart*, (cf. Deut. 9:4)—10:6b-7
- In the context of Deuteronomy, Moses is setting forth details of the Palestinian covenant, a covenant that regulated Israel’s enjoyment of the land that had been promised to her by the Abrahamic covenant.
- (1) Work # 1: ‘*Who will ascend into heaven?*’” (that is, to bring Christ down) (from Deut. 30:12)
- (a) Focuses on the **Incarnation**.
- (2) Work # 2: ⁷ “or ‘*Who will descend into the abyss?*’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).
- (a) Focuses on the **Resurrection**.
- (3) THE POINT: Works righteousness is inaccessible and unnecessary. Don’t try to reproduce what has already been accomplished by Christ. His work is complete!
- iii) **Positive**; what faith-based righteousness does say: ⁸ *But what does it say? “The word [r’hma] is near [evggu,j] you, in your mouth and in your heart”* (from Deut. 30:14) (that is, the word [r’hma] of faith that we proclaim [khru,ssw]); ⁹ because [o[ti],
- The way to righteousness is accessible because God has revealed it.
 - As in Moses’ day when God graciously took the initiative to make the law readily available to the Jewish people so they could obey it, so also in Paul’s day He made the gospel accessible as well. (Moody)
- (1) Outward expression of inward trust: *if* (3rd class condition) *you confess* [aor. act. subj. o`mologe,w] *with your mouth that Jesus is Lord*
- (a) We can’t make Jesus Lord; God has already done that. (see Acts 2:36) This is an objective truth, whether anyone on earth ever believed it or not.
- (b) No Jew would do this unless they had embraced the deity of Jesus Christ. No Gentile would do it who had not ceased worshiping the emperor as Lord.
- (2) Inward trust in the work of God: *and believe* [aor. act. subj. pisteu,w] *in your heart that God raised him from the dead*,
- (3) God’s promise: *you will be saved* [fut. pass. ind. sw,zw].
- (a) ¹⁰ *For* [ga,r] *with the heart one believes and is justified*,
- (i) Lit. “for it (the word of faith) is believed [pres. pass. ind. pisteu,w] *with the heart* unto [eivj] righteousness”
- (b) *and with the mouth one confesses and is saved*.
- (i) Lit. “and it (the word of faith) is confessed [pres. pass. ind. o`mologe,w] *with the mouth* unto [eivj] salvation.”
- (c) The gospel requires only what our mouth and heart are enabled to do by God’s grace.
- b) THE POINT: God alone has revealed how humanity can be brought into a right relationship with Him by faith alone.

3) Things we need to remember:

- a) The gospel is not good works to perform but good news to be believed.
 - i) (Salvation) is not something attained but something obtained through faith. What is needed is not a new start in the attempt to provide ourselves with a robe of righteousness but a new heart by regeneration. (SLJ)
- b) Sincerity is no substitute for truth.
- c) Thus faith, in all of its focused simplicity, in all of its renunciation of self and works of any kind, in all of its singular apprehension of Christ's substitutionary righteousness, in all of its acknowledgment that salvation is wholly of the Lord, yet must be distinguished from the counterfeit and validated by its fruit (Jas. 2:26). (Horner)

Romans 10:11-21
Everyone is Responsible to Believe the Gospel

Introduction:

1) Salvation is available to everyone who trusts Christ—10:11-17

- Note the four-fold emphasis on “all”, universal in nature
- a) The promise—10:11 ¹¹ *For [ga,r] the Scripture says, “**Everyone** [pa/j] (Paul insert) *who believes* [pres. act. ptc. pisteu,w] *in* [evpi,] *him will not be put to shame.*” (cf. Is. 28:16; used before in 9:33)
 - i) Perhaps the thought of public confession (10:10) arouses a fear of shame. (MacDonald)*
- b) Why is this true?—10:12-13 Because God is impartial.
 - i) ¹² *For [ga,r] there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for [ga,r] the same Lord (God the Son) is Lord of **all** [pa/j], bestowing his riches on **all** [pa/j] who call on [evpikale,w] him.*
 - (1) All are equally poor, but God is equally generous to both groups.
 - (2) Jesus is Lord, emphasizing both His authority and His graciousness.
 - ii) ¹³ *For [ga,r] “**everyone** [pa/j] who calls (worship in prayer) on [evpikale,w] the name of the Lord (Jesus) will be saved.” (cf. Joel 2:32; cp. with Acts 3:16)*
- c) A legitimate question of the process of calling in faith—10:14-16
 - i) The God-ordained sequence—10:14-15a ¹⁴ *How then will they call [evpikale,w] on him in whom they have not believed [pisteu,w]? And how are they to believe [pisteu,w] in him of whom they have never heard [avkou,w]? And how are they to hear [avkou,w] without someone preaching [khru,ssw]?* ¹⁵ *And how are they to preach [khru,ssw] unless they are sent [avposte,llw]?*
 - (1) The process: send > preach > hear > believe > call = saved
 - (2) Israel’s problem was the 4th link in the chain: trust
 - ii) The God-revealed support—10:15b-16
 - (1) The importance of SPREADING the Gospel: *As it is written, “How beautiful [w`rai/oj] are the feet of those who preach [euvaggeli,zw] the good news!” (cf. Is. 52:7)*
 - (a) A reference to them being attractive because they are timely.
 - (2) The importance of SUBMITTING TO the Gospel: ¹⁶ *But they have not all obeyed [u`pakou,w] (only a few voluntarily submitted to) the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed [pisteu,w] what he has heard [avkoh,] from us?” (cf. Is. 53:1)*
- d) Summary of the truth from God’s Word—10:17
 - i) ¹⁷ *So faith comes from [evk] hearing [avkoh,], and hearing [avkoh,] through the word [r`hma] of Christ. (of His death and resurrection)*
 - ii) Faith in the hearer comes in response to a report about Christ, and this report comes through a message proclaimed by one sent. By this faith, we call upon Him and are saved. This is God’s way, not works of the Law. (MaGill)

**2) Those who do not believe are responsible for their guilt before God—
10:18-21**

- a) A rhetorical question—10:18 ¹⁸ *But I ask, have they not heard [avkou,w]?*
(assumed No answer) (this is being written 25 years after Pentecost)
- i) The Biblical answer: **Indeed they have** (emphatic), for *“Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words [r`hma] to the ends of the world.”*
(cf. Ps. 19:4)
- b) A rhetorical question—10:19a ¹⁹ *But I ask, did Israel not understand [ginw,skw]?* (assumed No answer)
- i) “So I see that they heard, but maybe they didn’t understand what they heard?”
- c) A three-fold answer—10:19b-21
- i) From the LAW: *First Moses says*, (see Deut. 32:21)
- (1) Jealousy: **“I** (emphatic) *will make you jealous [parazhlo,w] of those who are not a nation [ouv e;qnoj];*
(a) Used later in 11:11, 14
- (2) Anger: *with a foolish [avsu,netoj] nation I will make you angry [parorgi,zw].”*
(a) Other nations don’t have all the spiritual privileges that Israel possesses.
- ii) From the PROPHETS: (see Isaiah 65:1-2)
- (1) Concerning Gentiles: ²⁰ *Then Isaiah is so bold as to say,*
(a) **Passive voice:** *“I have been found [eu`ri,skw] by those who did not seek [zhte,w] me;*
(b) **Middle voice:** *I have shown myself* (lit. “I have made myself evident) [evmfanh,j] *to those who did not ask for [evperwta,w] me.”*
- (2) Concerning Israel: **Active voice:** ²¹ *But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands (imploring, begging) to a disobedient [avpeiqe,w] (refuses to be persuaded) and contrary [avntile,gw] people.”*
(a) The idea is, “Here, take my hand! Let me help you!”

3) Things we need to remember:

- a) Israel’s temporary rejection had nothing to do with any lack of opportunity to hear or ability to understand. It rested solely upon the nation’s willful disobedience. **All** who believe will be saved, but **only** those who believe will be saved.
- b) Consider a prayer similar to the following: Heavenly Father, thank you for not pulling back your outstretched hands until I responded to your gospel of salvation. Thank you that your grace and forgiveness were sufficient to include me in your kingdom. My prayer is to echo Paul’s, that Israel might be saved. Pour out your Spirit and your mercy upon your chosen people, that they may begin turning to you. Make me a messenger of the gospel to them, and to all who have yet to believe. Amen. (Boa)