

Romans XIII

Introduction

Romans 9 the Apostle Paul confirmed that salvation is the work of God. Paul taught that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone! In Romans chapter 10 Paul talked mainly about Israel and to the Jewish people. His desire was to see his fellow countrymen saved. Romans 9 and 10 have more OT references, direct quotes from them or allusions to them than any other chapters on Romans and this is because the Jewish people would clearly be able to understand what Paul was referring to. Romans has 51 direct quotes, 15, paraphrased quotes, and 15 clear allusions from the OT.

Romans Chapter 10:1-4 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

At the start of this chapter Paul expressed his desire for his nation to embrace the gospel. Paul would have remembered his fellow students with whom he studied who were zealous for the God, but who pursued the wrong objectives in all sincerity. They were sincerely wrong. We all know of people who are sincerely wrong! Instead of embracing the Messiah they passionately pursued righteousness of their own making, thinking it was enough to please God.

Paul knew from his own personal experience the futility of sincere zeal without knowledge. He too had in the past failed to understand the character of God and the way to please Him. He thought he really was doing what was right by keeping the law. He thought he was pleasing God by murdering Christians. And many of his previous friends and colleagues believed the same. They choose not to submit to the righteousness of God and allow it to rule from within them. Consequently, they lost their way! And Paul had a real desire to see them saved.

I wonder sometimes if we have the same passion as Paul did to see our friends, neighbors, colleagues saved.

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It is easy for people to lose their way if they don't really know Scripture.

People can genuinely pursue good things in life and think that it will please God. If we don't know Scripture we can how can we understand basic Christian beliefs. Some Christians still don't know basic Christian beliefs and think all kinds of things please God and it couldn't be further from the truth.

Some Christians become stubborn, so set in their own ways they unconsciously serve their own traditions and fail to heed commands of Scripture. When they do not break out of the mold of their own custom, they begin to serve themselves rather than the Lord. Preservation becomes the top priority instead of advancing the kingdom of God.

The traditions of the Hebrews had long turned from its original purpose. The Law of Moses was never intended to become the means by which people obtain the righteousness of God. On the contrary verse 4 teaches us that *Christ is the end of the law*. Jesus brought an end to the law.

He fulfilled the Law. Today people no longer have to pursue the Law as an expression of the faith they place in God; because of what Jesus has done they can come directly to God in and through the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Romans Chapter 10:5 *For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them."* Paul clarified here that God revealed His Law as an expression of His Righteous character. It confronted mankind, saying in effect, **here is the standard of righteousness I require, for you to be declared righteous enough to escape the consequences of sin, you must keep every letter**. Now Salvation by works **is theoretically possible, but practically it is impossible**. No human being can achieve it. Jesus became the end of the Law, for those who put their faith in Him.

Jesus achieved the demands of the Law. He kept it perfectly. Jesus fulfilled the intent of the Law, in that he pleased the Father with His obedience.

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Jesus completed the purpose of the Law, in that He fulfilled all of its requirements. Jesus ended the Law, in that He became the Word of God to humanity. (John 1:1)

Romans Chapter 10:6-7 *But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down from above) ⁷ or, "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).* It is important for us to understand that God never expected perfection from the people of Israel. But He expected their devotion to Him. Deuteronomy 6:5 *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.* Perfection is not reasonable but devotion is a faith response that is very much within our reach. We are not expected to ascend to heaven to obtain anything. Christ has descended to bring us everything. Nor do we have to pay the penalty for our sin; Christ has paid the penalty for us and has risen again to give us life. The righteousness of God is received through faith, not our own merit. That should cause us to be devoted to Him.

Romans Chapter 10:8-10 *But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

In Deuteronomy 30 the people of Israel were about to enter the Promised Land. God set before them two choices: life and good, and death and evil, and He challenged them to choose. Their choice for obedience would bring blessing, the choice for disobedience would bring curses. More than 2000 years later, Jesus confronted Israel with a similar choices: either receive Jesus by faith and be declared righteous, or pursue righteousness by works and be condemned. Either grace or guilt! Through Paul's teaching Israel was confronted with a choice in the gospel message: believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved!

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The gospel message is available to all; it is free to all. If we confess Jesus is Lord and we believe in in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead we shall be saved.

Romans Chapter 10:11-15 *For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." ¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"* The gospel message is universal. The good news is intended for everyone. **Whoever** shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13). His grace overflows **to all** who call upon Him.

Unquestionably Christ died for all mankind, not just for some people. 1 John 2:2 *And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.* The gift of atonement is offered to all. It is available to everyone. Hebrews 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.* Therefore everyone is accountable for their response!

Romans Chapter 10:16-20 *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" ¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. ¹⁸ But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world." ¹⁹ But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation." ²⁰ But Isaiah is very bold and says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me."*

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Paul wrote specifically to the Jews who were in a unique position to hear the truth of God's Word. But hearing doesn't automatically result in believing. Paul quoted the prophet Isaiah and asked a rhetorical question. Who has believed our report? The answer implied by the question is **Israel**. So they have no excuse for not believing? But many of the Jews who heard the good news rejected it.

Romans Chapter 10:21 ***But to Israel he says: All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people.*** Our sovereign God does not change. He is immutable. His nature and character are the same today as always, and nothing in the future will make Him become anything different. The Lord Jesus continues to hold open the invitation to receive His grace through faith in Him.

Paul quoted Isaiah 65:1-2 ***I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was 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. ²I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way that is not good, According to their own thoughts.*** The Jewish people would have quickly understood Paul's point. Because of Israel's sin, the people repented and lamented. The Lord responded to their plea with a response that He would save a remnant of the people. The remnant would be the people who choose wisely because their destiny remained their responsibility. If we study Isaiah we see God's sovereignty and human responsibility exist in harmony with one another. People have to choose wisely.

Paul said to the Jewish people the time for choosing will come to an end. It could be at any time. When the Lord turns the page on the final chapter in history, judgement will begin and a time for choosing will come to an end. Each person is responsible to respond to God's offer of grace and are to blame if they refuse it. Those who suffer the penalty of eternal torment for sin do so without excuse. The gospel is in reach of all people. God is sovereign; people are responsible.

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Whilst you and I are not responsible for the salvation of others, we do have responsibilities. And those responsibilities are vital to the success of God's plan. While He does not need us, He has given us a genuine stake in His Redeeming the world.

We must care enough for the souls of others to go out of our way, to leave our comfort zones, to lay aside our desires in order to proclaim the gospel where it would otherwise not be heard.

We must share the good news faithfully, feely and often; and in the context of an obedient life. We offer the free gift of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone!

We must pray that the gospel will penetrate peoples minds and deaf souls will hear.

Care, share and prayer! The Holy Spirit is waiting to use you to carry a faithful proclamation of the good news to those who will hear it. Stay faithful.