

## CHAPTER XII

### ROMANS 10:1-21 - THE GOSPEL AND ISRAEL'S DEFECTION

THE conclusion of 9:30-33, having focused on the significance of absent *sola fide* with regard to unbelieving Israel in contrast with the Gentiles, now leads to ongoing concern about this lack of saving faith in the nation as a whole. Such heartfelt anxiety is introduced with restated passion being reminiscent of 9:1-5. While Paul acknowledges that “they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel,” v. 6, and that presently there is “a remnant according to God’s gracious choice” (11:5; cf. 9:27), yet we notice that a wider national hope is here envisaged that finds climactic exposition in 11:1-36.

#### A. Israel needs salvation from self-righteousness, vs. 1-13.

Not unlike the flow of ch. 9 where the particular concern of God for “vessels of mercy” within Israel as distinct from “vessels of wrath,” vs. 22-23, gives way to the universal principle of “the righteousness which is by faith,” vs. 30 concerning “he who believes in Him,” v. 33, so here Paul’s particular concern for unbelieving Israel, vs. 1-3, again gives way to that same universal principle with regard to “everyone who believes,” v. 4. “the word of faith,” v. 8, “whoever believes in Him,” v. 11, and “whoever will call on the name of the LORD will be saved,” v. 13.

#### 1. Salvation by God’s righteousness, vs. 1-3.

The key term here which identifies the essential void in religious Israel is also that which is the key term for the gospel in Romans, namely “the righteousness of God,” v. 3, (cf. 1:17; 3:5, 21-22), which is also closely related to “the righteousness which is by faith,” (3:22; 9:30; 10:6; Phil. 3:9).

#### a. From divine alienation, v. 1.

“Brethren [in Christ in Rome], the goodwill [εὐδοκία, eudokia] of my heart, in entreating [δέομαι, deomai] God on behalf of them [national Israel], is for their salvation.” Clearly Paul is concerned here for the larger unbelieving segment within Israel rather than the believing remnant. Further, at this point he does not believe that God has given up on the nation as a whole otherwise his prayer would be senseless. Bengel makes a frequently cited comment: “Paul would not have prayed if they [Israel] had been absolutely reprobate.”<sup>1</sup> Lenski makes the startling comment that this prayer was not in vain since it “won the forty years of

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, IV, p. 387. Bengel was a highly esteemed Lutheran scholar of the eighteenth century whose exegesis of the New Testament, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, remains a classic. Shedd, though accepting a national conversion in 11:26, attempts to explain here that, “the Apostle’s prayer would have been natural and proper, even though it were a fact in the divine mind that the subjects of the prayer were reprobated.” *Romans*, p. 311. Given that this is so, it still makes Paul’s inspired prayer to have been a vain exercise.

grace for Israel, and many were saved.”<sup>2</sup> Assuming he is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and Romans was written c. 55 AD,<sup>3</sup> then in fact this period of grace would only be for 15 years, according to the perspective of Paul! However, this comment illustrates the poverty of such a suggestion that Israel's existence forever ceased at 70 AD. To begin with, there is simply no statement in Scripture that following this second major destruction of the temple, the church would become the permanent replacement for Israel. After Christ wept over the bankrupt leadership of Jerusalem, he declared, “Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!” However he continues: “For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’” (Matt. 23:38-39). Even the promise, “the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it” (Matt. 21:43) follows the quotation of Ps. 118:22 where v. 26 declares, “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord” (cf. Matt. 23:38-39). Further consider Luke 21:24, “Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled,” also the compelling argument of 11:1-32.

Again we encounter an attitude toward unbelieving Jews, still retaining a covenant relationship with God while dispersed in unbelief (Hos. 3:4-5), that ought to be a model for all Christians, in much the same way as we ought to lovingly act toward unbelieving relatives.

b. From ignorant zeal, v. 2.

Zeal is the dynamic of sincerity, yet both characteristics lead to running adrift amidst dangerous shoals of error when there is no direction by means of the rudder of substantial knowledge (Prov. 19:2). So from personal experience Paul testifies, “I bear witness about them [national Israel] that they are ceaselessly zealous for the God of Abraham; however such enthusiasm is void of direction by means of comprehensive knowledge about this gospel of the righteousness by faith which I desire for them.” “Zeal” itself is neutral, so that it is a quality of the Lord Jesus (John 2:17), the pagan populace of Ephesus (Acts 19:34), and particularly unconverted Paul (Acts 22:3; 26:5, 9; Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:6). Here he describes that religious mania which lacks discrimination. As John Stott writes: “The proper word for zeal without knowledge, commitment without reflection, or enthusiasm without understanding, is fanaticism. And fanaticism is a horrid and dangerous state to be in.”<sup>4</sup> In fact it is a close cousin of bigotry!

Rather the validation of zeal is “knowledge” or ἐπίγνωσις, epignōsis, an intensive form of γνώσις, gnōsis, meaning a more mature, profound comprehension of the saving grace of God rather than that which is merely superficial and basic (cf. 1:28; 3:20). The absence of such spiritual discernment results in “learning” while “never [being] able to come to the knowledge [ἐπίγνωσις, epignōsis] of the truth” (II Tim. 3:7). Naked zeal in religious pursuits will be counterproductive; the only

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<sup>2</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *Romans*, p. 646.

<sup>3</sup> According to Barrett, Morris, though 57-58 A.D. is commonly held.

<sup>4</sup> John Stott, *Romans*, p. 280.

zeal that counts is the zeal of faith and the zeal that faith produces. As Toplady has written:

Could my zeal no respite know,  
 Could my tears for ever flow,  
 All for sin could not atone;  
 Thou must save, and Thou alone.

c. From human righteousness, v. 3.

“For not knowing [ἀγνοέω, agnoeō] about God’s [saving, faith] righteousness” while retaining comprehensive Bible knowledge, v. 2, means that Israel was willfully “agnostic” due to a monumental misconception in the light of revealed, inscripturated truth. Certainly the Jews were aware of God’s essential moral righteousness, but they had blinded themselves to “the righteousness of faith,” 9:31-32; 10:6, the faith of Abraham and David, 4:3-8. As a consequence, Israel set about “to establish [lay a foundation of] their own [righteousness],” a whole system whereby faith and works were amalgamated, and the sacrifice of Christ rendered unnecessary. Thus, when confronted with “the [saving/faith] righteousness of God,” or when “faith [righteousness] has come, . . . when the fulness of time came, [and] God sent forth His son” (Gal. 3:25; 4:4), then “they [Israel] did not subject themselves [aorist of ὑποτάσσω, hupotassō, “to rank under,”] to the righteousness of God.” That is, they would not “submit themselves [with the obedience of faith]” to their saving Messiah. Rather, in “stumbling over a rock of offense,” 9:32-33, the Jews repudiated Christ (Luke 19:14; John 19:15), God’s incarnate revelation of pure saving grace, and clung to their own man-centered scheme of religion, the error of Galatianism, a broken reed that would pierce them through with many a sorrow (Is. 36:6-7).

2. Salvation by Christ’s righteousness, vs. 4-5.

The conclusion of v. 3 injects the *historic* fact of “the righteousness of God,” an event preceded by a dispensation whereby “we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed” (Gal. 3:23). However, now that Christ has come, “the righteousness of God [faith] has been revealed,” 1:17, that is, “now that faith [the righteousness of faith] has come, we are no longer under a tutor [the law]” (Gal. 3:25). Therefore, and this is the point now to be emphasized, in the course of God’s salvation plan in history, Moses has come to a point of concluding fulfillment whereby, to allude to John the Baptist’s humble confession, “He [Christ] must increase, but I [as representative of the passing Old Testament economy] must decrease” (John 3:30).

a. Culmination in Christ’s fulfilling righteousness through faith alone, v. 4.

We expand in translation this definitive statement<sup>5</sup> concerning Christ and the law as follows: “For Christ is the culminating end [τέλος, telos, of the law

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<sup>5</sup> Cranfield describes it as “clearly one of the fundamental theses of Pauline theology as a whole, since, in whatever way it is taken, it is obviously a decisive statement concerning the relation of Christ and the law.” *Romans*, II, p. 515. Likewise Moo.

administration of Moses, that is for those who in believing embrace the gospel administration of the righteousness of faith alone in Christ.”<sup>6</sup> An alternative expanded translation would be: “For Christ is the culminating end of the corrupt abuse of the law by the Jews<sup>7</sup> that more correctly leads to justification, that is for those who in believing embrace the righteousness that is solely through faith and as a result continue to submit to the moral administration and law of Moses.”<sup>8</sup> The significant difference here concerns whether the law of Moses has ongoing usefulness in the sanctification of the Christian. There are three key issues to be considered here.

The meaning of “law,” which for most commentators is the law of Moses, is more specifically the Mosaic administration or institution that includes the moral law or ten commandments, as the context of 9:31, 10:5 seems to plainly indicate. The meaning of “end” or τέλος, *telos*, in an emphatic position, could be, (i) “termination/end in time” (I Cor. 15:24) being most predominant, or (ii) “goal/end completion” (I Tim. 1:5), or (iii) “fulfillment/result” (Rom. 6:21), and in combination. Hence, most likely Christ’s coming has brought about the end of the Mosaic administration, both its right and wrong use, yet not in a detached sense since the Son of God has instituted a new era for which Moses was both preparatory and a stimulus (Gal. 3:23-26). So Moo well states: “Paul is implying that Christ is the ‘end’ of the law (he brings its era to a close) and its ‘goal’ (he is what the law anticipated and pointed toward). The English word ‘end’ perfectly captures the nuance; but if it is thought that it implies too temporal a meaning, we might also use the words ‘culmination,’ ‘consummation,’ or ‘climax.’”<sup>9</sup> So Matthew 5:17 closely parallels this understanding of “the end of the law”: which in 7:12 is described as “holy and righteous and good.” Christ did not come “to abolish [the law] but to fulfill,” not “to disannul but to bring full realization”<sup>10</sup> through the supplanting of “the ministry of death and condemnation” by means of the transcendently more glorious “ministry of the Spirit and righteousness” (II Cor. 3:7-9).

Thus the new administration has become inaugurated through “the righteousness of faith” superceding circumcision through which entrance was made into the whole of the old administration of Moses (Acts 15:5, 11). However, we hasten to

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<sup>6</sup> For detailed grammatical support of this rendering, refer to Moo who translates, “Christ is the *telos* of the law, with the result that there is (or with the purpose that there might be) righteousness for everyone who believes,” rather than as the NASB, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” *Romans*, 636-8, also Cranfield.

<sup>7</sup> This is the language of Calvin, *Romans*, pp. 284-5. However, Murray comments here: “Paul is speaking of ‘law’ as commandment, not of the Mosaic law in any specific sense but of law as demanding obedience, and therefore in the most general sense of law-righteousness as opposed to faith-righteousness.” *Romans*, II, p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> As Walter Chantry describes this point of view, “the New Testament binds the Ten Commandments upon Christian consciences.” *God’s Righteous Kingdom*, p. 114, being directly contradicted by John Bunyan who writes, “I may not, will not, cannot, dare not make it [the law of God] my savior and judge, nor suffer it to set up its government in my conscience; for by so doing I fall from grace, and Christ Jesus doth profit me nothing (Gal. 5:1-5).” *Works*, II, p. 388.

<sup>9</sup> Moo, *Romans*, p. 641.

<sup>10</sup> This is Gary Long’s excellent translation. *Biblical Law and Ethics: Absolute and Covenantal. An Exegetical and Theological Study of Matthew 5:17-20*. p. 25.

be reminded that the “righteousness” which faith looks to is exclusively that of Christ. This must be kept in mind as “faith” predominates through to v. 13. While righteousness has ever been the requirement of God for His personal creation, it has ever been provided only through faith. It was available to the pre-Israel generation through faith alone (4:9-11; Heb. 11:4-7), likewise to Israel throughout its history even though it added a works principle to faith, and beyond to the Gentiles who more readily grasped the principle (9:30-31). The principle of “righteousness by faith” or free grace nullifies the supposed instrumentality of law in the transformation of the unholy to the holy, yet the law according to its most comprehensive meaning, retains its rightful place. “[T]he Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane” (I Tim. 1:8-9). For this reason, the Law “was added because of transgressions” (Gal. 3:19).

To sum up, Moo explains that,

[Paul] is picturing the Mosaic law as the center of an epoch in God’s dealings with human beings that has now come to an end. The believer’s relationship to God is mediated in and through Christ, and the Mosaic law is no longer basic to that relationship. But Paul is *not* saying that Christ has ended all ‘law’; the believer remains bound to God’s law as it now is mediated in and through Christ (Gal. 6:2; I Cor. 9:19-21). Nor is he saying that the Mosaic law is no longer part of God’s revelation or of no more use to the believer. The Mosaic law, like all of Scripture, is ‘profitable’ for the believer (II Tim. 3:16) and must continue to be read, pondered, and responded to by the faithful believer.<sup>11</sup>

b. Exclusion of Moses’ righteousness requiring legal obedience, v. 5.

Here is explanation of v. 4, and specifically how “Christ is the end of the law.”<sup>12</sup> The free quotation of Leviticus 18:5 is intended to describe the *modus operandi* of the Mosaic administration that Christ has supplanted. That is, under the Law, “you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD” (Lev. 18:5). While Murray declares this to be, “an adequate and watertight definition of the principle of legalism,” nevertheless he then proceeds to assert that these words, “do not find their place in a legalistic framework but in that of the grace which the [Mosaic] covenant bespoke.”<sup>13</sup> This understanding rests heavily on a strict understanding of Leviticus 18:5. However the apparent sense is akin to the contrast of 9:30-31; 10:3, while the use again of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12 seems to conclusively indicate that Paul is describing a legal as distinct from a faith proposition. The key here is the expression concerning the man who, “*practices* [aorist of ποιέω, ποιεῶ] the

<sup>11</sup> Moo, *Romans*, p. 642.

<sup>12</sup> Cranfield succinctly states that, “without much fear of contradiction: (i) the γάρ indicates that either v. 5 by itself or the whole of vv. 5-8 is thought of as being in some way explanatory of v. 4; (ii) there is a contrast between v. 5 and vv. 6-8 (hence the δ̄ in v. 6); (iii) the verse contains a quotation from Leviticus 18:5.

<sup>13</sup> Murray, *Romans*, II, p. 51-52. Refer to his Appendix B, pp. 249-51 for an extended defense of this interpretation, which upholds the concept of “grace in law.” Barth and Cranfield have a similar perspective. Morris sits on the fence, while Calvin, Lenski, Luther, Moo, Stott, assert that Paul describes a legal rather than a faith righteousness.

righteousness which is based on law," which is so obviously antithetical to Paul's repeated emphasis on "the righteousness based on *faith*," v. 6. Such zeal for legal living through which the righteousness of God might be attained, by means of bold human initiative, will be described with the use of hyperbole in vs. 6-7.

Here again, Paul is contrasting the administration of Christ, v. 4, with that of Moses, v. 5. So in vs. 6-7, the zealous faith and works administration will be contrasted with that of faith alone righteousness in vs. 8-13. Here we are faced with two opposing world views, not merely a slight gospel variation. Luther comments:

Nothing but faith can accomplish this [salvation], for it puts out the eyes of all wisdom of the flesh, causing men to know nothing, to be prepared to be taught and led and to hear promptly and to give in. For God does not require a magnitude of good works but the mortification of the old man. And he is not mortified except through faith, which humbles our own feeling of self-importance and makes a person subject to that of another. For the whole life of the old man is concentrated in the feelings, mind, or wisdom and prudence of the flesh, just as the life of a serpent is in its head. And so when the head is crushed, the entire old man is dead. As I have said, what causes this is faith in the Word of God.<sup>14</sup>

### 3. Salvation by faith righteousness, v. 6-13.

The forgoing understanding of v. 5 accentuates the dominant thrust of vs. 6-13, namely justification by faith alone, "for all those who believe, for there is no distinction" (3:22). The contrast between "the one who works" and "the one who does not work, but believes" (4:4-5) receives further prominence. While Paul's concern for faithless Israel will be regathered at v. 14, for the moment his passion for the essence of gospel purity finds yet another carefully reasoned eruption. The repeated emphasis here on "faith" all the more nullifies the error of both Galatianism and Roman Catholicism.

#### a. It is *accessible* to all, vs. 6-10.

While for Paul "faith" presupposes its glorious saving object because he is so intent on upholding the unalloyed character of saving grace, there are periodic reminders of the specific focus of faith in Christ. Here we are exposed to the wondrous truth that a man does not have to labor to reach out to God, wherever He may be; rather "the Son of Man has *come* to seek and to save that which was lost" (Matt. 19:10), with the result that "He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). Therefore, human exertion in a religious quest, the scaling of heaven or searching of the depths, is not necessary; the sole requirement is faith in the "publicly portrayed" Christ (Gal. 3:1), "the Man whom He [God] has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 18:31).

#### (1) As negatively illustrated by Moses, vs. 6-7.

There is an intended contrast here between "Moses" who "writes" in v. 5 and "faith" who "speaks" in v. 6. Here are two opposite revelations, the former concerning human salvation activity that is feverish and zealous, the

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<sup>14</sup> Luther, *Romans*, 25, p. 407.

latter concerning salvation rest through faith in the accomplished activity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole analogy of “ascent” and “descent” is reminiscent of Ephesians 4:7-10; it is also possible that Paul may have in mind Moses’ ascent and descent on Mt. Sinai when he received from God the tables of the law covenant.

(a) Not by ascending to heaven, v. 6.

An expanded translation reads: “But the righteousness of God that proceeds from and is grounded solely upon faith in Christ speaks quite differently from the tenor of Moses as represented by the allusion to Leviticus 18:5 just quoted. Therefore, according to the grace orientation of Deuteronomy 9:4-6,<sup>15</sup> do not respond in your heart toward salvation with the works/activist orientation reflected in Deuteronomy 30:12 where Moses describes the difficulty of ascending to heaven (cf. Prov. 30:3-4; Isa. 14:12-13). That is, don’t think of salvation as a task that you have to initiate by scaling heaven so as to bring Christ down upon earth to die for you!” Such human endeavor is not only impossible, but also unnecessary since God declared to Israel, “But the word is very near you” (Deut. 30:14); so now the revelation of the gospel of Christ is likewise accessible to Jew and Gentile without the contribution of human righteousness. When man contemplates, “What must I do, what effort must I expend to be saved?” he needs to hear God’s gospel message, “I have already done it all. Believe and be saved.”

(b) Not by descending to the abyss, v. 7.

Further in expanded translation, “Do not respond in your heart toward salvation with the works/activist orientation reflected in Deuteronomy 30:13 where Moses describes the difficulty of crossing the ocean, which is analogous to descending into the abyss of death. That is, don’t think of salvation as a task that you have to initiate by personal descent through the portals of death so that you might call upon Christ to rise from the dead so as to save you!” Why? Because Christ has already risen from the dead. Again, sovereign and gracious initiative has accomplished a complete saving work. In vs. 6-7 we have the natural man’s religious efforts exemplified. He must not only seek God, wherever He may be found, but also be energetic in his religious efforts to a spectacular degree; his quest for God must be impressive. Whereas God declares: “Listen to Me, you stubborn-minded, who are far from righteousness. I bring near My righteousness, it is not far off” (Isa. 46:13).

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<sup>15</sup> Moo rightly draws attention to the fragment of Deuteronomy 9:4, “Do not say in your heart,” cf. 8:17, which, in the larger context of vs. 4-6, describes God’s gracious covenant faithfulness, and supports the contrasting legal righteousness view of Romans 10:5. *Romans*, pp. 650-51.

- (2) As positively applied from Moses, vs. 8-10.

In each of these three verses “mouth” and “heart” are prominent due to the stimulation of Moses in Deuteronomy 30:14. The “heart” is the vital organ, representing a man’s personal/mental/moral core, where salvation is rooted, while the “mouth” is the expressive instrument of the converted “heart.” It is significant that the state of the heart must inevitably express itself. If every action has an equal and opposite reaction, then every truly converted child of God will manifestly respond when the heart is renewed, even as ignition leads to radiation, as germination leads to the sprouting forth of shoots, buds and flowers. As Paul writes in II Corinthians 4:14, quoting Psalm 116:10, “But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, ‘I believed, therefore I spoke,’ we also believe, therefore we also speak.”

- (a) The *preached* word of faith is near for mouth and heart, v. 8.

The personification of “the righteousness of faith” is identical with v. 6, and again in contrast with v. 5. The quotation here of Deuteronomy 30:14 follows on from vs. 12-13 just cited, concerning which v. 11 has declared, “this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach.” Hence Paul concludes with the same point here, namely that right now “the word” τὸ ῥῆμα, to rēma, which more specifically is “the word of the faith,” τὸ ῥῆμα αὐτῆς πίστεως, to rēma tēs pisteōs, is readily accessible and plain. As the Word from God via Moses had been taught to the Hebrews at Sinai and consequently had lodged in their souls, so Paul infers that the saints at Rome, both Jew and Gentile, have likewise received the preached word. “Word” or ῥῆμα, rēma, here, also vs. 17-18, is infrequently used by Paul, and it is distinguished from λόγος, logos, or “the objective record,” as “the proclaimed gospel message.” Such preaching, that Paul and his companions have been occupied with in Rome, is of “the word that calls for faith.”<sup>16</sup> Israel longed for life in the carnality of Egypt, whereas life from God was immediately available through faith; the prodigal son sought life in the far country, whereas life from his father was immediately available through faith. Barrett adds: “Faith, as a divine possibility, is an immediate possibility. That which man might seek in heaven or hell in vain is at his side. Faith alone is what God seeks, and that he himself provides.”<sup>17</sup>

- (b) The *offered* word of faith is near for mouth and heart, v. 9.

The assumption is, according to v. 8, that faithful preaching has resulted in the truth of the gospel lodging in the soul; yet there has been no embrace of faith. For some this received message is “foolishness” (I Cor. 2:14), while for others it is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16). The conditional offer here is,

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 657.

<sup>17</sup> Barrett, *Romans*, p. 199.

according to A. T. Robertson, third class, or “undetermined, but with the prospect of determination.”<sup>18</sup> The order concerns confession that results from the renewed heart, whereas v. 10 deals with the renewed heart that results in confession. To “confess,” ὁμολογέω, *homologeō*, means to say the same thing, that is to express agreement with, to declare, avow, (cf. I Tim. 6:12-13; I John 1:9). Specifically, the voiced agreement from the heart is that “Jesus [is] LORD,” that is deity (I Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:9-11), as opposed to saying that “Caesar is LORD.” Such confession results, at the same time, in submission to the sovereign authority that this understanding of Christ’s deity demands. However, implicit here is the body of doctrine that leads to this conclusion that “Jesus [is] LORD,” namely the whole gospel whereby Jesus Christ, “was delivered over [to death] because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification,” 4:25. Paul is not describing a two-tier mode of conversion, but rather the expectation that faith in the heart will bloom; faith incognito is not a soft option. Haldane comments: “Confession of Christ is as necessary as faith in Him, but necessary for a different purpose. Faith is necessary to obtain the gift of righteousness. Confession is necessary to prove that this gift is received. If a man does not confess Christ at the hazard of life, character, property, liberty, and everything dear to him, he has not the faith of Christ.”<sup>19</sup>

- (c) The *operative* word of faith is near for heart and mouth, v. 10.

Whereas in v. 9 the witness to the word lodged in the heart is emphasized, here the process that incorporates faith and confession is explained. As if to offer clarification, Paul returns to the fundamental centrality of faith alone (present tense) that results in righteousness, 4:13; 5:17; 9:30; 10:6. Again, the resultant effect of faith is confession (present tense) that results in future, fulfilled salvation. 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). Again, true faith will inevitably manifest itself.

- b. It is *universal* to all, vs. 11-13.

From v.6 on, in contrast with a legal righteousness, faith alone in the accessible, imminent word of the gospel results in free justifying righteousness. But whereas faith alone is the sole operative principle for the guilty sinner, that is all that he has to do, there is at the same time an inherent universal principle that excludes human distinctions. If faith *alone* justifies, then *all* who have the faculty for faith are accountable for it *alone* being solicited. The issue here is not personal ability,

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<sup>18</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar Of The Greek New testament*, p. 1016; also *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, IV, p. 389.

<sup>19</sup> Haldane, *Romans*, p. 516.

or the reception of the gift of faith, or identification of vessels fitted either for mercy or destruction. The sole concern of Paul is the ready availability of the gospel for mankind without distinction. Therefore a universal solicitation of faith from all of mankind is plainly implicit, though as vs. 14-15 indicate, this call to believe presupposes the preaching of the gospel to begin with.

(1) The Scripture invites whoever believes, vs. 11.

Isaiah 28:16 was more fully quoted in 9:33, whereas here a partial quote assumes the object of faith to be “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” The emphatic thrust concerns, “whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.” The addition by Paul of “whoever” or “everyone” *πᾶς*, *pas*, is legitimate extrapolation, supported by Joel 2:32 quoted in v. 13, that prepares the way for v. 12. Barrett adds: “In the back of his [Paul’s] mind, the dominant question is still, Why have the Jews been rejected? And a major part of the answer to this question is (see ch. 11), In order that the gospel may be preached to *all*, Gentiles as well as Jews. Paul proceeds to emphasize this.”<sup>20</sup> The Apostle’s heritage of narrow, bigoted Judaism must have heightened his subsequent wonder at the universality of the gospel.

(2) The Lord is rich toward Jew and Greek, v. 12.

“For there is no distinction” positively refers to both Jew and Gentile being equally recipients of the riches of grace through Christ, that is according to the sole requirement of earnest faith. Romans 3:22b uses the identical expression except that negatively both Jew and Gentile are equally sinners in the sight of God. Thus God is the one God of both Jews and Gentiles, “who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith” (3:29-30). Here the operative term is “faith,” or “calling on Him,” where *ἐπικαλέω*, *epikaleō*, means “calling on the Name of the Lord,” as v. 13 confirms. This is the exclusive name of Jehovah/Yahweh which is here identified with Jesus. Implicit here is the readiness of God, specifically God the Son who in v. 9 is designated as Lord, to mercifully heed the cry of either Jewish sinners or Gentile sinners. Such willingness is amply demonstrated in Jesus Christ’s kind reception of the Roman Centurion (Matt. 8:5-13), the Syrophenician woman (Matt. 15:21-28), as well as his appreciation of the mercy that the widow of Zarephath and Naman the Syrian received (Luke 4:25-27). Here the wealth of divine compassion is demonstrated in terms of depth, not simply universal breadth.

(3) The Scripture invites whoever calls, v. 13.

The quotation here of Joel 2:32 recalls Peter’s use of this same text at Pentecost when he addressed “men of Israel” (Acts 2:21-22). Of course Joel’s exhortation to “call on the name of the LORD” was with reference to Jehovah/Yahweh, while here, as with Acts 2:21-22, it clearly means to “call [believe] on the name of the Lord [Jesus Christ]” (cf. Acts 4:12) who is, as

<sup>20</sup> Barrett, *Romans*, p. 202.

God the Son, that same LORD. Here is universal availability that brings universal accountability without the assumption of universal ability. The “whoever” or “anyone/any person” relates to the “all” of v. 12. The particularity of 9:16, 18 ought not to cloud the universal offer that is plainly indicated here.

So Spurgeon, fully convinced of particular election and redemption, preached concerning this verse:

Do you say, ‘I am excluded. Surely, you cannot mean that he would save me?’ Hark you; it says, ‘Whosoever’ — ‘whosoever’ is a great wide door, and lets in big sinners. Oh, surely, if it says, ‘whosoever,’ you are not excluded if you call — there is the point. . . . Oh! I would to God I might know that some soul could lay hold on this promise! Where are you? Are you standing away among the crowd there, or sitting here in the body of the hall or in the topmost gallery? Are you feeling your sins? Do you shed tears in secret on account of them? Do you lament your iniquities? Oh! take his promise — ‘Whosoever (sweet whosoever!) — whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ Say thus. The devil says it is of no use for you to call; you have been a drunkard. Tell him it says, ‘Whosoever,’ ‘Nay,’ says the evil spirit, ‘it is of no use for you, you have never been to hear a sermon, or been in the house of God these last ten years.’ Tell him it says, ‘Whosoever.’ ‘No,’ says Satan, ‘remember the sins of last night, and how you have come up to the MUSIC HALL stained with lust.’ Tell the devil it says, ‘Whosoever,’ and that it is a foul falsehood of his, that you can call on God and yet be lost.<sup>21</sup>

#### B. Israel needs salvation from obstinacy, vs. 14-21.

In line with vs. 2-3, 16, 19, “they” brings the focus back to national Israel. The accessibility of the word being “near you, in your heart and mouth,” and thus this availability for “calling on the name of the Lord,” vs. 11-13, has brought accountability. However, a further aspect of the nearness of the gospel message concerning “the word of faith” is that it requires “preaching” v. 8, even as Paul’s ministry epitomized. Indeed in the history of Israel the inscripturated word was to be proclaimed, whether by parent in the home (Deut. 6:6-7), or prophet and priest in the temple and synagogue. The context of Deuteronomy 30:11-14 previously considered is that of Moses making proclamation to the Israelites as distinct from mere recommended reading. In other words, God reveals that mere literary availability is not enough. There must be preaching, as Paul now makes clear. Dare we suggest then that, in these more recent centuries of the abounding printed page, and with ready acknowledgment of the great blessings that literature distribution has brought through missionary outreach, yet preaching of that printed word must have the greater prominence.

##### 1. Israel has need of the preached gospel, vs. 14-15.

The logical sequence here of four questions is not what might be expected; an evangelistic perspective would suggest that sending leads to preaching, then hearing, then faith, then calling on the Lord. Instead Paul provides the opposite order so that the focus is upon the sent preacher.

<sup>21</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, “Seeking Souls,” III, Sermon 140, pp. 454, 6.

- a. The necessity of *faith*, v. 14a.

From the assertion of v. 13 comes the necessity of faith, which probably means agreement with propositional, biblical, gospel truth. In other words, there must be genuine agreement with the truth that Jesus Christ is the Savior, that there is an invitation for the sinner to call on this Savior for salvation. But more than believing this, there must be the smitten lamb's cry or call for mercy to the Good Shepherd. There is a vast distinction between knowledge of the gospel and casting your soul upon it, even as there is a difference between going to hell or heaven.

- b. The necessity of *hearing*, v. 14b.

However, before faith lays hold of the truth with agreement, it must first be heard with understanding. There must be the broadcast of gospel truth on the same waveband as the receiver. There must be distinct communication in a "known tongue [language]" since "if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for the battle?" (I Cor. 14:8-9). There will be recognition and reception of a coherent message about biblical reality.

- c. The necessity of *preaching*, v. 14c.

However hearing is vain if there is nothing to hear. Hence there must be "heralding," κηρύσσω, *kērussō*, that is proclamation, preaching, but specifically the message of Christ that is preached. In Paul's day there were few books, no video, audio media; personal declaration was everything. But is the personal element so vital today? History would indicate that there has been no revival without the primacy of personal preaching. Other means are useful, but all have a degree of remoteness about them. Whereas the preacher is an ambassador speaking on behalf of his King, not simply a truth mediator.

- d. The necessity of *sending*, v. 15.

Here is what distinguishes the authentic Christian preacher from the false (Jer. 14:14; 23:21; 27:15), that is his authoritative commissioning, his being *sent* by divine appointment, ἀποστέλλω, *apostellō*, cf. 1:1, 5. Lloyd-Jones explains that,

preaching is never something that a man decides to do. What happens rather is that he becomes conscious of a 'call.'" He goes on to give five elements of this "call" being, 1. a consciousness within the human spirit, 2. encouragement from others, 3. a concern for others, 4. a constraint or compulsion, 5. a sense of unworthiness. He further adds: "[A] man who feels he is competent, that he can do this easily, . . . has never been 'called.' . . . The man who is called by God . . . so realizes the awfulness of the task that he shrinks from it."<sup>22</sup>

So Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7 as support for the preaching office. With an *a fortiori* sense, as captive Judah in Babylon was to rejoice at the messengers announcing the good news of deliverance, so New Testament gospel messengers are even more delightful. Thus allusion may also be made to Paul and his associates as

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<sup>22</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, pp. 104-7.

preachers, v. 8, for the word of the gospel is not only near, but also preached to the Jew as was always his custom in a new region, as well as the Gentile. However, he was all too aware of the rejection in general that he experienced, and so he responds in vs. 16-21.

2. Israel has shunned the preaching of Isaiah, vs. 16-17.

Remember that Paul the preacher, v. 8, in upholding the primacy of preaching, is very much recalling his own experience of being called to proclaim (Acts 9:15). At the same time, like every faithful herald, he appreciates the divide that separates him from his congregation which only Spirit wrought faith can bridge. How often he would pour out his heart to the Jews with an expectant passion only to receive a scornful rejection. Many a time he pondered, with a sorrowing and incredulous heart, the riddle of such stark unbelief that God's covenant people so resolutely maintained; such contemplation inevitably led him to the recollection of Israel's scandalous past according to Scripture.

a. Faith then was to be in the preacher's report, v. 16.

There is a strong contrast here with the significant role of the preacher described in v. 15. "However, Israel as a whole did not respond with obedient faith [ὕπακούω, *hupakouō*, cf. 1:5; 16:26] in the preached gospel," even though a remnant did. There has been preaching and hearing, even as Isaiah rhetorically lamented, literally, "who has believed that which is to be heard" (Isa. 53:1); but there has been no faith, and thus no revelation of the saving arm of the Lord (John 12:36-38). Thus the course of Israel's history has been marked with unbelief until Pentecost. Even then the response was relatively small when compared with the overall population.

b. Faith today is to be in the word of Christ, v. 17.

So the missing yet vital element is faith, and Paul is anxious to analyze the question of responsibility in this regard. Hence, in parallel with v. 14, faith is predicated upon hearing, while hearing is predicated upon exposure to "the word of Christ [ῥήματος Χριστοῦ, *rhēματος Christou*]," which is the content of the preaching of v. 14. Therefore, in the light of Israel's entrenched unbelief, the implied question might be put colloquially, "Did Israel really hear what God was proclaiming? Their endemic unbelief might lead one to believe otherwise."

3. Israel has heard the word and is accountable, v. 18.

Like v. 16, Paul uses another strong adversative; his question using a double negative is in fact an emphatic denial: "But surely, in no way could it possibly be said that they [Israel]<sup>23</sup> did not hear [the word of Christ]?" Such a thought is emphatically rejected. Proof of Israel's accountability is the use of Psalm 19:4 by way of logical extension rather than exact interpretation. This verse, being representative of vs. 1-6, describes

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<sup>23</sup> Calvin and Haldane believe that the Gentiles are described here, especially in view of the quotation of Psalm 19:4, though the broad context as well as most commentators, including Alford, Barrett, Cranfield, Lenski, Moo, Morris, Murray, Stott, would seem to be against this.

the universal testimony of natural revelation to the glory of God, specifically the extensive “loud” witness of the “silent” heavens. Therefore the witness of the gospel is similarly universal. That is, Israel has heard the gospel since “their voice,” that is of preachers, “has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” Murray writes: “Since the gospel proclamation is now to all without distinction, it is proper to see the parallel between the universality of general revelation and the universalism of the gospel.”<sup>24</sup> Even by the time of c. 55-8 AD as Paul writes, the gospel has spread throughout the universe of Judaism (Acts 1:8; 2:8-11; 19:10).

4. Israel has known the word and is accountable, vs. 19-21.

As with v. 18, a similarly structured question is asked that, using a double negative, indicates an emphatic denial. Thus, by way of expansion, “Although Israel heard the facts of the word of Christ, that is the gospel inclusive of both Jew and Gentile, did they actually know [comprehend] about that which their ears received?” Again, this suggestion is definitely rejected, and proof follows from the words of Moses and Isaiah that focus on the inclusion of the Gentiles in God’s saving purposes. Thus Israel is fully accountable for its strident opposition to the saving righteousness of God which is through faith alone for Jew or Gentile, cf. vs. 12-13.

a. The Law revealed God’s provocation of Israel to jealousy, v. 19.

The quotation of Deuteronomy 32:21 draws upon the preceding context of vs. 15-20 where Israel “forsook God who made him, and scorned the Rock of his salvation. . . . [Israel] neglected the Rock who begot you, and forgot the God who gave you birth. . . . [Israel] provoked Me to anger with their idols.” Consequently, God incorporates the Gentiles, “which is not a nation” alluding to Hosea quoted in 9:25-26, in His gospel intentions so as to provoke Israel to jealousy, cf. 11:11, 14. This provision of grace to the Gentiles that stimulates a jealous response from the Jews is well illustrated in the parables of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16), and the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). Such riling of the Jew nevertheless has his salvation as God’s ultimate intent, 11:28-31. The point is that Israel is not ignorant of the gospel of free grace; it is accountable for its blatant unbelief.

b. The Prophets revealed God’s seeking of the Gentiles for salvation, v. 20.

The quotation of Isaiah 65:1 is said to be “very bold,” that is forthright in its declaration of God’s graciousness toward the Gentiles when compared with the stubborn rebellion of His covenant people described in v. 2.<sup>25</sup> The thought is similar to 9:30 where the Gentiles “who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness.” So here the Gentiles who “did not seek Me, . . . did not ask for Me,” yet were confronted with God freely presenting Himself to them. Stott rightly describes this as “dramatic imagery for grace, God taking the initiative to

<sup>24</sup> Murray, *Romans*, II, p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> Clearly Paul contrasts the Gentiles in Isaiah 65:1 with the Jews in v. 2. However, many scholars, including Delitzsch, consider Isaiah 65:1, in context with ch. 64, as a reference to Israel, which Moo describes as the majority view. Contra are Alford, Lenski, Stier, Young.

make himself known.”<sup>26</sup> To recall the thought of vs. 6-8, God does not have to be sought either in the heights of heaven or the depths of hell; rather He is “near” because He has determined to make Himself near, to “come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

c. The Prophets revealed God’s endurance of recalcitrant Israel, v. 21.

Here, as with v. 19, “Israel” clearly means the nation as a whole, but particularly that greater unbelieving proportion. There is intentional contrast with the preceding thought, namely that “the word of Christ,” so graciously presented to unclean and relatively responsive Gentiles, yet is so vigorously rejected by “kosher” Jews. The quotation of Isaiah 65:2 portrays an exceedingly forbearing God with arms outstretched, and, from a human perspective, intolerable contempt from the redeemed of the Lord. Having “heard” and “known” concerning the extensive grace of God, the Jews are utterly without excuse. Thus in terms of failure, Israel’s qualification is total. Murray adds: “The perversity of Israel, on the one hand, and the constancy and intensity of God’s lovingkindness, on the other, are accentuated by the fact that the one derives its character from the other. It is to a disobedient and contradicting people that the outstretched hands of entreaty are extended. The gravity of the sin springs from the contradiction offered to the overtures of mercy.”<sup>27</sup>

So the vital question now concerns God’s ultimate response. Does He break or keep covenant with Israel? If God saves a people, is it possible for them to be finally lost? Romans 11 provides an unequivocal answer.

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<sup>26</sup> Stott, *Romans*, p. 289.

<sup>27</sup> Murray, *Romans*, II, p. 63.