

Romans 9:30-10:21 Israel's Unbelief and God's Righteousness

Text

³⁰What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; ³¹but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.

³²Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³just as it is written,

“Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense,
And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

¹Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. ²For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. ³For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. ⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

⁵For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. ⁶But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down), ⁷or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” ⁸But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ⁹that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.” ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; ¹³for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

¹⁴How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!”

¹⁶However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” ¹⁷So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

¹⁸But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have;

“Their voice has gone out into all the earth,
And their words to the ends of the world.”

¹⁹But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says,

“I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation,
By a nation without understanding will I anger you.”

²⁰And Isaiah is very bold and says,

“I was found by those who did not seek Me,
I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me.”

²¹But as for Israel He says, “All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.”

Key Points in the text

- Righteousness comes by faith, not by works.
- God always planned to bring the gentiles into His family.
- Israel does not have a complaint against God.

Text Study

Verses 30 - 33, A reminder that man cannot achieve righteousness under the law.

³⁰What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; ³¹but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. ³²Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³just as it is written, “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

The end of chapter 9 is a call back to the idea that we being under the Law cannot achieve righteousness no matter how hard we try. Our only hope is the obedience of faith.

Verses 1 - 3, Why the wrong way to righteousness fails.

¹Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. ²For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. ³For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

They did not see that Jesus was the plan all along and had fallen into the trap that they had to earn righteousness, they did not trust God.

Verses 4 - 13, Why the right way to righteousness succeeds.

⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. ⁵For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. ⁶But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down), ⁷or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” ⁸But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ⁹that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.” ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; ¹³for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

- Paul begins saying there has been a change, the old way is gone and never was what you thought, and the new way is here, and it works 100% of the time.
- It works because it is not based on our works but on faith, which we already know is given to us and strengthened by the Holy Spirit in us.
- Verses 6-8 tells us that the word of faith is being preached and spread throughout the world.
- Verse 9 is a pretty well known verse, but once again we must put it into context to fully understand what it is saying.
- What it is not: These are not code words or magic words which if you or get someone else to say they are forgiven.
- What it is: In verse 8 Paul quoted from Deuteronomy saying that the word is near you, in your mouth and in your mouth. This is Paul quoting Moses saying God has already put this in the mouth and heart of His children. Therefore when you believe and speak these things you are once again agreeing with what God has already put in you by His word.
- And the same is true for the rest of this section.

- The reason why, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.", is because that faith is from God and He will not take it away.
- The reason why, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.", is because those words and the conviction of the heart of them being truthful is also from God.

Verses 14 - 21, The right way comes by believing in the preached word of Christ.

¹⁴How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!"

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"Lord, who has believed our report?"**

¹⁷So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

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- Paul says two things:
 - He explains why it is so important to spread and preach the word of God, as it is the only way for one to know.
 - He again answers the objection of, how can you blame them, they did not know.
- 14 - 15 he answers how the word is spread, God sends preachers out to His children. Some He sends the gospel call to via a preach, some He then calls to go and do the same for others.
- 16 - 19 he shows that these things were told to them long ago.
 - Isaiah 53:1 tells us that the good news Isaiah was sent to give was not received.
 - Psalm 19:4 tells us that the word of salvation was sent out to all the world, to the ends of the earth.
 - Deuteronomy 32:21, Paul goes on to remind the reader that Moses himself told them that God would raise up a people to make them jealous.
- 20 - 21 he sites Isaiah again to show that God's plan all along was to include the gentiles in His glorification.
 - Isaiah 65:1 tells us that He seeks the lost.
 - Isaiah 65:2 again indicates that He has over and over sent His servants to Israel and they have not listened.

Application

- Pray for God to send preachers to His lost children.
- Pray for those who have been sent to His lost children.
- Pray and Thank God for your preacher who brings the word of faith.

Next Week's Lesson Prep/Preview

Text: Romans 11:1-36

Focus: God's Mercy on Both Jews and Gentiles

Devotional: Isaiah 40

Preparation: John Cries in the Wilderness

John Cries in the Wilderness Matthew 3:1–3

Following Christ's move to Galilee, Matthew does not give any further details of Jesus' childhood. Instead, he picks up the story of his gospel three decades after Jesus returns from Egypt, as we learn elsewhere that He is about thirty when He begins His ministry (Luke 3:23). The events of Matthew 3 take place around a.d. 27, and Joseph has probably already passed on, as none of the other gospels mention him during Jesus' adult life. In all likelihood, Joseph has been gone for awhile, with the responsibility to support the family resting on Jesus and His brothers, that is, until His itinerant preaching begins.

Today's passage depicts John the Baptist's ministry in the "wilderness of Judea" (v. 1), a region covering the Jordan valley just north and west of the Dead Sea. His message is well-received by the Jews in Palestine, and crowds from all of Judea receive his baptism (vv. 5–6). Importantly, in John's day the voice of prophecy has been silent for 400 years according to various extra-canonical writings. When John ministers in the wilderness wearing camel's hair, the people associate him with Elijah, who acted similarly (1 Kings 19; 2 Kings 1:7–8), and consider John a prophet (Matt. 21:23–27). Through John the people realize that God is speaking to them again.

In 3:3, Matthew again says prophecy is fulfilled at the coming of Jesus and cites Isaiah 40:3. The meaning of this passage for Isaiah's original audience shows us how John fulfills it. Isaiah 40 is about the restoration promised to the exiled Israelites after they repent. A highway for God will be built, and the people will travel back to their land in glory (v. 3). The exiles longed for this day, but the promise of glory did not occur when they returned to Palestine, for the nation as a whole did not repent. In a real sense, life in exile away from the Lord's blessing continued even though many of the people had returned. John is the ultimate realization of Isaiah 40:3 because he sets the stage for the Lord's favor to come to the exiles. Jesus is the way through which God's blessing comes to His people (John 14:6), and in heralding His coming, John is the road that leads the nation to blessing and thus to God in Christ.

Coram Deo

John the Baptist was the primary herald of Christ in his day, but the task of bearing witness to the Savior was not laid solely upon him. Jesus Himself commissioned first the apostles, and secondly, the entire church to testify to the grace of God manifest in His life, death, and resurrection. Our witness will only be effective if, as with John, the surrounding culture sees that the church is different. Is your manner of life different than that of an unbeliever's?