

The Book of Romans Study Guide

Chapter 10

In the previous chapter, Paul showed that within national or physical Israel, a subset of a faithful Jews known as the remnant has continued throughout the generations. That remnant has kept the Abrahamic Covenant intact without wavering. And all along the way, that remnant is the result of God having mercy and compassion on people in accordance with His sovereign will.

10:1-8

- v 1 Paul begins this chapter with similar words to the beginning of chapter 9, in which he expressed sorrow and grief for his fellow kinsmen in the flesh. When he says that his heart's desire and prayer to God is for their salvation, we can rightly ask – who is the subject? Who is the “their.” Any time you have a pronoun, the subject is the antecedent (the previous noun). In this case, that is stated in 9:31, where it is Israel.

If you believe in replacement theology and that references to Israel in the New Testament are actually about the Church, you have a real problem, because the Church is made up of people who are saved. Yet, in this verse, the subject needs salvation.

So the only conclusion that can be made is that Paul has a great burden for the salvation of the people of national Israel who are not part of the remnant. Yet, he is still calling them Israel, which is consistent with his statement in 9:6 that “they are not all Israel who are (descended) from Israel.” In other words, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are still Israel, but they are not all saved, and thus part of the remnant.

And Paul desires to see all of them being completed in their calling by God to be part of His everlasting kingdom, not just an earthly one. And in chapter 11, Paul will show that He had prophetic insights into that future reality. This, then, becomes an important question for all of us – like the Apostle Paul, can you say: “my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation”?

- v 2-3 He shows that the unbelieving part of Israel may have a zeal for God, but it lacks the full knowledge of God's revelation, both in the Scriptures and in regard to the Messiah. And that results in relying on personal righteousness instead of submitting to God's righteousness, and that kind of failure is never a good thing.
- v 4 Most English versions render this verse with words to the effect: “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” The translators' choice of the English word “end” for the Greek *telos* in this verse lacks clarity, for it is skewed by the predominate modern understanding of “end” conveying termination. But, even in English, an end can convey a goal or purpose, as in “the end justifies the means.” In Koine Greek, that meaning is much more definitive because the grammar specifically indicates purpose or outcome, not termination

The greater context of the New Testament helps us to understand the actual meaning of this word. For example, in 1 Timothy 1:5, which reads, “the goal (*telos*) of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Another example is in 1 Peter 1:

- 9, the apostle talks about “obtaining as the outcome (KJV end, *telos*) of your faith the salvation of your souls.” Clearly, he is not saying that “your faith ends with the salvation of your soul.” So, just as Peter was showing that “the goal of our faith is salvation,” Paul is showing in Romans 10:4 that “Messiah is the goal of the Law,” not “the end of the Law.”
- v 5 Having this understanding, then, transforms this passage from a story of the Gospel replacing the Law into a story of how the Gospel fulfills the Law’s intended purpose. Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5, stating that “the person who performs [the commandments] will live by them”. Rather than dismissing this as a failed system, the “goal” view sees it as the Law establishing the standard of righteousness that points to our need for a Savior. The Law identifies what righteousness looks like, even if it cannot empower us to achieve it on our own.
- v 6-8 Paul applies Deuteronomy 30:11-14—originally written about the Law—to Messiah. Just as Moses said the Law wasn’t “too hard” or “far off,” Paul argues that the righteousness of faith doesn’t require us to “ascend to heaven” or “descend into the abyss.” And since Messiah is the goal of the Law, then the “word” that was “near” the Israelites in their mouths and hearts was always intended to lead them to Him.

10:9-13

- v 9-10 Paul now describes the specific way of obtaining true righteousness, which he calls righteousness by faith in verse 6. Instead of by works, we gain it by confessing Yeshua as Lord and by believing in our heart regarding His resurrection. Three points are relevant here:
- The Greek word translated as “confess” is *homologeō*, which literally means “same word.” So, confession means stating your agreement with something, which in this case, is agreeing with what God declared in Scripture and what Yeshua said about Himself.
 - Specifically, he is calling upon us to confess that Yeshua is Lord. The Greek word here is *Kurios*, which is same word used in the Septuagint to translated God’s divine name, YHWH, into Greek. So, that is a call to agree that Yeshua is God Himself. And that means declaring that He is the Sovereign Lord over our lives. That is more than just saying that Jesus is your savior or that you completed certain religious rituals at some point in your life. As Paul showed earlier, when Yeshua is Lord over your life, you become His slave or servant, and He is your Master, and that will have significant implications for how you live your life.
 - Our salvation also is contingent on believing in our heart (place of consciousness) that God (the Father) raised Him from the dead. This necessity connects two ways to the goal (*telos*) of the Law in verse 4. As part of the prophecy of the New Covenant, God declared that He would write His Law on the hearts of people. And that happens only when we believe in Yeshua. The second connection is the way that the resurrection validates Messiah as the goal of the Law. Here is how that is true:

The penalty of the Law is death. Yeshua paid that penalty, thus fulfilling the requirements of the Law. But, because He was sinless, His resurrection proves that He was the righteous one the Law described. Thus, believing in His resurrection confirms our acceptance of everything that God requires for righteousness.

- v 11-13 Paul shows that the criteria of salvation in verse 9 applies to all people, no matter who you are. That is consistent with the message he has been stating throughout the book of Romans that salvation is always a result of faith and nothing more. Sometimes, people pull verse 12 out of context by saying that there is no longer any particular calling by God upon the Jewish people. But, the context shows that he is specifically speaking about the way of salvation.

10:14-21

- v 14-15 Paul shifts the focus to the practical necessity of communicating God's way of salvation to a world that wants to create and practice its own way. In verse 15, he employs a Hebraic method of communication called a *remez*, meaning a hint. In this technique, a speaker like Yeshua or a writer quotes the first part of a verse, but leaves the remainder to his audience, knowing that they will be familiar with it. In that way, the audience takes personally ownership of completing the thought.

Here, he quotes the first part of Isaiah 52:7, but leaves out the rest. In the way of background, in the Ancient Near East, the success of armies was thought to be dependent on the power of the particular God of that nation. So, if a nation was victorious in battle, it would be joyfully reported to the people, not only that they had won, but their deity was still ruling with power. In verse 7, Isaiah used that real-world situation as a metaphor to describe prophetically how Adonai would win the victory over sin and death and how it would be reported to the people:

“How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”

The key part that Paul left out in his *remez*, is the announcement of salvation and victory specifically to Zion, meaning the Jewish people. And, of course, this verse comes right before chapter 53, where the prophet clearly depicts the sinlessness, sacrificial death by piercing, and resurrection of the Messiah. The key content of this message of Good News is that salvation has come. That is what Paul wanted the Jewish portion of his Roman audience to take ownership for their spiritual lives. And it requires a messenger to bring that Good News to them.

In verses 16-21, Paul explores the relationship between hearing the Gospel, obtaining faith, and the responsibility of those who hear the message.

- v 16 Unfortunately, just as in Isaiah's day when the majority of the people disbelieved God's message and they ended up in captivity, not everyone among the Jewish people up until Paul's time believed the message regarding Yeshua.
- v 17 He establishes that saving faith is not self-generated; it is sparked and nurtured by hearing the “word about Messiah,” which underscores His emphasis on the need for people being sent to preach the Good News.
- v 18 But, quoting from Psalm 19, he also shows that the Jewish people have heard the message at this point (57 A.D.), because the words have reached into all the earth (*gē* – “land, soil,” including inhabitants who dwell on it) and to the ends of the world (*oikoumenē* – lit. “place

of occupation”).

- v 19-20 Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 32:21 and Isaiah 65:1 to show that God intended to provoke Israel to jealousy by revealing Himself to those who did not seek Him, meaning Gentiles. That also demonstrates how God’s grace is open to all who respond, regardless of national origin
- v 21 The passage concludes with a picture in Isaiah 65:2 of God patiently stretching out His hands to a people who remain disobedient and contrary. And that sets the stage for God’s plan for the complete restoration of the Jewish people, together with the many Gentiles who have benefited from the spread of the Gospel.