

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 27

I. Exposition of Chapter Ten.

A. Israel's rejection of the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ.

1. Verses 1-5 - Self-Righteousness doesn't Work.

- a. **Verse 1** – “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.” - Paul expresses his heart, once again, regarding his fellow Jews. Paul does not rejoice that they have “...stumbled at that stumbling stone.” - (9:32).
- b. “...heart's desire” - Picirilli states that in the literal Greek the phrase could be translated as, “the delight of my heart”¹. The delight of Paul's heart prompted him to take action. Paul didn't just “care,” he prayed!
- c. **Note:** Even though in chapter 9 Paul basically shows that the Jews, as a nation, had hardened their hearts like Pharaoh, he still saw there was great value in prayer! This wasn't just an expression, when Paul said he was praying for them, he was really praying for them! The word “prayer” here means “that which is asked with urgency based on presumed need”² Of course if Calvinistic theology is true, what's the point in praying at all!! (cf. Luke 10:2).

“The picture presented is certainly one that involved frequent and regular agonizing prayer to God on behalf of Israel's salvation.”³

- d. “...that they may be saved.” – The word “saved” is “safety, deliverance, preservation from danger or destruction.”⁴ The idea of salvation is that the power of God rescues people from the penalty of sin, which is spiritual death which is followed by eternal separation from the presence of God.
- e. **Verse 2** – “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.”
 - 1) “...bear them witness...” - “to bear witness, to testify, to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something.”⁵ Paul could certainly bear witness of this because at one time he, as a Pharisee, had a great zeal for God. (cf. Acts 8:1-3; Philippians 3:4-6).
 - 2) The word “zeal” here means; “excitement of mind, ardour, fervour of spirit.”⁶ It basically means to be filled with intense enthusiasm.
 - 3) “...but not according to knowledge.” – This shows that a person can have a lot of zeal for something but that doesn't make what they're zealous about right. We know that Muslims, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Hindus, and a whole lot of others can have a great deal of passion and zeal for their belief and still be totally WRONG!!
- f. **Verse 3** – “For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”
 - 1) We see here that Paul is saying that their lack of knowledge has to do with their ignorance of God's righteousness.
 - 2) Remembering that righteousness means “right-standing with God”; “being right with God”; “to be declared innocent” or, “acquitted”. This means that the Jews were ignorant as to how to be right with God. (cf. Romans 3:19-26).
 - 3) Israel sought “...to establish their own righteousness...” – This is a description of “self-righteousness.” The word “establish” means; “to cause to stand”; “to set or place.”⁷

“To establish” is *histēmi* (ἵστημι), ‘to set up,’ Vincent says, ‘indicating their pride in their endeavor. They would erect a righteousness of their own as a monument to their own glory and not to God's.’⁸

¹Robert E. Picirilli, *Romans*. (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 199.

²Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 407.

³Picirilli, *Romans*. 199.

⁴Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*. (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

⁵Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 172.

⁶Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

⁷Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*

⁸Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 2, 173.

4) Christians can also fall into this trap of works in order to feel like they're more acceptable to God. (**Galatians 3:1-5**).

5) **"...have not submitted to the righteousness of God."** – Israel's ignorance and pride based on works, kept them from being able to submit to God's way to **righteousness**. The word **"submitted"** means; **"to yield"**; **"to arrange under"** and **"to obey."** **Dr. Robert Utley** adds; **"...is a military term for a chain of command."**

g. **Verse 4** – **"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."** -

1) **"...Christ is the end of the law..."** – The word **"end"** means; **"purpose"** or **"goal"**. In other words, Paul is saying that the purpose or final goal of the law is to bring someone to Christ. This was brought out in **3:31** and we saw the same idea in **Galatians 3:23-25**. Jesus said He didn't come to destroy the law and prophets but to fulfil them (**Matthew 5:17**).

"For Christ is the end of the Law [the limit at which it ceases to be, for the Law leads up to Him Who is the fulfillment of its types, and in Him the purpose which it was designed to accomplish is fulfilled. That is, the purpose of the Law is fulfilled in Him] as the means of righteousness (right relationship to God) for everyone who trusts in and adheres to and relies on Him." – **Romans 10:4** – **Amplified Bible**

h. **Verse 5** – **"For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, 'The man who does those things shall live by them.'"** – Paul quotes from **Leviticus 18:5** (Moses) which is the same Scripture quoted in **Galatians 3:12**. He is basically saying that if you want to be righteous by the law, you can do it but you have to be able to keep every single point of the law! (cf. **Galatians 3:10**; **James 2:10**).

2. Verses 6-11 – Salvation: The Way of Faith.

a. **Verses 6-7** – **This is an allusion to Deuteronomy 30:11-13 in the Septuagint.** This is not a direct quote but Paul borrows some of the same language, adjusts it and expands it to refer to Christ's redemptive work.

"In other words, 'Let not the man who sighs for deliverance from his own sinfulness suppose that the accomplishment of some impossible task is required of him in order to enjoy the blessings of the gospel. Let him not think that the personal presence of the Messiah is necessary to ensure his salvation. Christ needs not to be brought down from heaven, or up from the abyss, to impart to him forgiveness and holiness. No. Our Christian message contains no impossibilities.'"¹⁰

b. **Verse 8** – **Paul continues to allude to Deuteronomy 30, now adding and expanding on verse 14.**

1) **"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):"**

a) The question is: **"What does the righteousness of faith say?"**

b) The answer: **"It is as near as the words you speak and your heart of conviction."**

c) Paul is saying that righteousness by faith is not difficult. It is readily available.

d) What **"word"** is near? The word (or, message) of faith which Paul was preaching.

c. **Verses 9-10** – **These verses show us the method by which salvation is applied to the individual.**

1) **Verse 9** – **"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus..."**

a) The word **"confess"** means, **"to say the same thing as another"** and **"to agree with."** Utley adds the idea of **"to agree publically"**.

b) The use of the word **"Lord"** affirms Jesus' Deity. (**Joel 2:32; Acts 2:32-33, 36; 10:36; I Corinthians 12:3; II Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11; Colossians 2:6**)

c) The use of the name **"Jesus"** affirms His Humanity. (**John 1:1-2, 14; I John 4:1-3.**)

2) **Verse 10** – So, salvation comes through confession and faith of the heart in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

¹⁰Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 2, 176.