

ADDRESSES ON ROMANS

by

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CHAPTER NINE

RIGHTEOUSNESS REJECTED (Continued)

Romans 9:1-11:36

II. ISRAEL'S PRESENT, 10:1-21

AS WE enter upon the study of chapter ten, let us remember that chapters nine, ten, and eleven are one long parenthesis, and that they have to do with Israel's past, present, and future.

Let us remember that, as the first eight chapters of the epistle are doctrinal, so these three are dispensational. As the first eight show us how God has provided the gift of His righteousness for the guilty world, so these three show how Israel, as a nation, has rejected this gift of God's righteousness in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Now in our last chapter we saw that, because of Israel's rejection of her Messiah, God set her aside for a time, as a nation, and that during this church age He is offering salvation to the Gentiles.

Today we shall see from chapter ten that, although dispensationally Israel has been set aside, yet individual Jews are being saved during this age of grace. And in our next study, which will have to do with chapter eleven, we shall see that, when Christ comes again in glory, Israel, as a nation, will once more turn to God and accept the gift of His righteousness as revealed in the Lord Jesus. **"And so all Israel shall be saved."**

INDIVIDUALS IN ISRAEL ARE BEING SAVED DURING THIS CHURCH AGE

Before we begin to study chapter ten in detail, let us read it several times, in order to get the central thought presented by the apostle. It is found in verses 11-13:

"Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

In other words, Paul shows that the setting aside of the Jews nationally in no wise means the rejection of individuals in Israel. During the interval running its course between the setting aside of the Jews and God's dealing with them again as a nation, the Gospel is going forth into all the world to both Jew and Gentile. Through this preaching of the cross, the church is being formed. And let me say in passing that, although Israel's future is glorious, yet God's promises to the church are even more to be desired than those made to His chosen people, the Jews.

We must remember that in this present age God is calling out the Church, the Bride of Christ.

He is not dealing with nations, as such, but with individuals—both Jews and Gentiles. He sees them all as poor, lost sinners. He makes no distinction between them, but purifies the hearts of all who will go to Him by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, any Jew has the privilege of accepting Him as a personal Saviour and Lord. And when he does, he is baptized into the body of Christ, in which **“there is neither Greek nor Jew”** (Colossians 3:11). All are **“one in Christ Jesus”** (Galatians 3:28). God is dealing with Israel now as individual sinners needing a Saviour.

(1) Paul's Prayer for Israel, 10:1

“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”

With these words the chapter opens, much in the same way as does chapter nine. In our last lesson we dwelt at length upon Paul's concern and heart-heaviness for his **“kinsmen according to the flesh”**; and these words which we have just read bear out yet further his lifelong prayer for the salvation of his people. He knew that, in spite of their many privileges, they were lost because they rejected Christ.

Do you pray for Israel, my friend? We owe a great debt to her.

The Old and the New Testaments, with their sixty-six books, were all written by Jews, and Christ according to the flesh was born a Jew. How little prayer there is among Gentile Christians for the Jew! Do you love him, or do you call him some abusive name? Shame on you if you do! We cannot win him to the Lord in that way, but through love we can.

A person once said to me: “Do you expect me to love the Jews? Why, they are terrible people.”

And my answer was, “Yes; they are nearly as bad as the Gentiles.”

Just look at the way the Gentiles are acting the world over, fighting against one another, persecuting the Jews. But even if the Jews were worse than the Gentiles, what of it? We should pray for them anyway. Prayer does wonders. And God has promised blessing upon those nations and upon those individuals who love His ancient people; cursing upon those who hate them.

Hear His own Word upon this vital theme, when to Abraham He said, **“I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee”** (Genesis 12:3).

And again, His express command and promise is recorded by David in Psalm 122:6, **“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.”**

All history has borne witness to the fact that the nations which have persecuted God’s chosen people have fallen and have brought confusion upon themselves. I should be afraid to hate a Jew. But I am glad that the love which God puts into our hearts for Israel makes us kind to them—not for fear of the judgment of God, but for love of Him and His ancient people, to whom the Gentiles owe a debt of love.

I once heard an influential Jew tell of his conversion, and I want to pass his story on to you. He worked for a Gentile. One day as he was leaving the office to go home, his employer asked him to seal and mail thirty or forty letters. When he took them, he thought nothing of it; but as he started to seal them, he began to wonder why he had been given these letters to mail. He had never been asked to do such a thing before. His curiosity grew to such an extent that he opened one of the letters. After reading it, he opened several and found that every one was alike.

To his amazement, he discovered that his employer had written to some of his Christian friends concerning him, and this is what he read:

“I have a Jew working for me, and I want you to join me in prayer that he may be saved. I want to live the Christian life before him, that he may see the Lord Jesus in me and want Him as his Saviour too.”

The Jew read these words and said to himself, “They’ll never get me like that.” But he could not forget that thirty or forty people were praying for him. He thought of it by day and dreamed of it by night. Finally he began to read the New Testament and he accepted Christ as his personal Saviour.

Love and prayer and God working in his heart won a never-dying soul, a hitherto indifferent Jew, to the Lord. This is what Paul meant when he said that his **“heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel”** was **“that they might be saved.”**

(2) Israel’s “Zeal” Not According to Knowledge,” 10:2, 3

“For I bear them record,” Paul continues, **“that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God”** (vv. 2, 3).

In other words, the children of Israel were sincere but mistaken. There are many people like that today—those who are zealous in religion, but mistaken. Israel’s sincerity did not alter the fact that they were lost. There are whole nations in Christendom like that today.

When I was in Mexico, I saw there great cathedrals and throngs of people going in and out to worship, but it was all ritualism. They were sincere, **“but not according to knowledge.”**

Paul was like Israel in this respect when he was Saul of Tarsus. He was not an atheist; he believed in the one true God. He would compass land and sea to make one proselyte, so zealous was he. But he was lost until he met Christ on the road to Damascus. And so were the children of Israel lost who had **“a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.”** They did not know the Lord Jesus; therefore, they were without **“knowledge”** of the gift of His righteousness, which is the only way to God.

What a lesson this should be to people who say it is all right for one to believe what he wishes, as long as he is sincere. If a religion without Christ left Israel unsaved, we may rest assured that the cult of today which has ritualism without Christ will not save the soul. The only possible way to be saved is by faith in the shed blood of Jesus, the Son of God.

Because the Jews were ignorant of God’s righteousness given through faith in Christ, they tried to establish their own righteousness by the works of the law. They were like Adam and Eve, who tried to make themselves fit for the presence of God by sewing fig leaves together—the works of their own hands.

It is significant that the only thing Christ ever cursed was a fig tree.

It is a type of Israel, and the fig-leaf aprons were a type of self-righteousness. God made **“coats of skins”** and clothed Adam and Eve, made them fit to stand in His presence on the ground of the shed blood, the foreseen sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

And Israel, nationally or individually, can stand before God only on the same ground. **“Without shedding of blood is no remission”** of sin (Hebrews 9:22).

(3) *“The Righteousness of the Law” versus
“The Righteousness of Faith” 10:4-13*

The reference to the Jews’ **“going about to establish their own righteousness”** leads Paul to discuss once more the difference between **“the righteousness which is of the law”** and **“the righteousness which is of faith.”** This has been brought out all through the epistle. Let us read verses 4-13 carefully, noting how Paul enlarges further upon this topic, already presented in preceding chapters.

How did Israel try to establish their own righteousness? By keeping the law.

Consequently they rejected Christ, who is **“the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth”** (v.4). That is the condition of Israel today, and that is the tragic condition of thousands of Gentile church members who are trying to establish their own righteousness by the works of the law.

There are only two religions: One may be spelled, *“Do”*-the other, *“Done.”*

The Jews had taken up the religion of works, rejecting Him who on the cross proclaimed that His redemptive work was “finished.”

Since Paul is thinking here of Jews, he loves to go back to their own Scriptures. And this he does in a very striking way in the passage before us, proving that the Old Testament, which the Jews accepted, explains the difference between “**the righteousness which is of the law**” and “**the righteousness which is of faith.**”

In verse 5 he quotes Leviticus 18:5, in which Moses plainly states that “**the man which doeth those things** (written in the law) **shall live by them.**” But the fact is that no one except the sinless Son of God could do all those things.

Then in verses 6-8 Paul quotes Moses again, showing by way of contrast that “**the righteousness which is of faith**” is not obtained by the works of the law, but by grace through faith in Christ, who is “**the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**”

Again, after enlarging upon this free gift of salvation in verses 9 and 10, Paul quotes two other Old Testament prophets, who set forth the only way to eternal life—either in Old Testament times or since Calvary’s cross—by faith, and by faith alone.

In verse 11 he quotes Isaiah 28:16; 49:23, “**Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.**” And in verse 13 he tells us what Joel said hundreds of years before Christ came, “**Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved**” (Joel 2:32).

Do you see, my friend, how convincingly the inspired writer argues the case? There is nothing else that can be said to the orthodox Jew, for he claims to believe the Old Testament Scriptures, and they clearly teach “**righteousness which is by faith.**”

But let us go back now to look yet more closely at these words of Israel’s prophets. Let us read again verse 5, “**For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.**” Paul here reiterates what God had said through Moses hundreds of years previously, that one must keep the law, if he holds it up as his standard.

The Lord Jesus emphasized this when He was on earth.

You remember that the rich young ruler went to Him, asking, “**What shall I do to inherit eternal life?**” (Luke 18:18).

Christ told him what the law demanded, the keeping of the commandments. By this our Lord meant that, if he came on the ground of doing, he must do what the law commanded. The rich young ruler answered Christ, saying, “**All these have I kept from my youth up.**”

Then in order to prove to the young man how self-deceived he was, Christ told him to sell all that he had and give it to the poor. If the rich young ruler had loved God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself—which is the whole law—he would have willingly obeyed this injunction.

But he went away sorrowful, yet with the added conviction that the righteousness of the law was not his. In this, at least, he had fallen short of God's holy standard.

The quotations from Moses in verses 6-8 are very significant. I wonder if their full meaning has gripped us? Look at them again, and you will see how Moses, as well as Abraham, saw Christ's day, **"and was glad."**

By faith he saw that the Lord Jesus would come down from heaven, **"Immanuel," "God with us."**

By faith he saw that the Lord of glory would suffer and die and be buried and rise **"again from the dead."**

These words and scores like them can be explained only by the fact that every Old Testament saint is in heaven today because he believed in the promised Redeemer. And these prophecies marvelously show that they were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. No mere man could have shown **"beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"** (I Peter 1:11).

What Paul is saying here is that this message is not new, that sinners have ever been redeemed by **"the righteousness which is of faith,"** if they have been redeemed at all.

Paul is saying here that we must rest on what our Lord has already done. He finished the work of salvation. There is nothing to add to this finished work. As verses 6 and 7 tell us, faith does not say that Christ must come down or be raised from the dead. Faith knows that Christ has already come down from heaven and has been raised from the dead. Therefore it is not necessary that He do so again.

Faith sees righteousness through the death of Christ for our sins and through His resurrection for our justification. It is not something to look forward to; it is something at hand. It is not a difficult thing. Moses saw all this by faith, and contrasted the righteousness of the law with the righteousness of faith. He saw that the righteousness of faith was something which would be accomplished by Christ.

My friend, have you received this gift of God's righteousness?

Listen to His words of invitation:

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (vv. 9-11).

Note the word **"whosoever"** in verse 11. It is a wonderful word. **"Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed"**— or disappointed.

Then Paul emphasizes what we called attention to before that although Israel has been set aside nationally, yet the individual Jew may be saved.

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (vv. 12, 13).

“**Whosoever**” includes both Jew and Gentile.

(4) Our Responsibility To Israel, 10:14, 15

Since it is true that individual Jews can be saved, even though the nation is temporarily set aside, then it is our responsibility to give them the gospel. These are searching words:

“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? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (vv. 14, 15).

You may ask, “What is the use of preaching the gospel to the Jews? Is it possible to win a Jew?”

Yes, my friend, we are rapidly approaching a time when it will be easier to reach the Jews than it will be to reach the Gentiles. The Jews were once the hardest people to win to Christ, next to the Mohammedans. But the gospel is going to the uttermost parts of the earth, and many of the Jewish people are responding.

“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

Would you like to have beautiful feet, my Christian friend? Most people would; they go to shoe shops and try to get their feet into shoes much too small for them, all because they desire beautiful feet. Well, here is a way to have beautiful feet in God’s sight. **“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things”**— **“to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”** (Romans 9:15; 1:16).

Let me say again that if we ever expect to win the Jew, we must love him. When we think of the persecution he has suffered in the name of Christianity, it is no wonder he has long hated the name we bear. But no real Christian will ever hate one of God’s chosen people. Let us remember that!

Again, if we expect to win the Jew, we must know our Bibles. We must be able, like Paul, to use the Jewish Scriptures to point him to the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world. Such chapters as the fifty-third of Isaiah and the twenty-second Psalm are convincing portraits of our suffering Saviour and risen Lord.

And as we pray, the Holy Spirit will drive the message home.

Some day we shall be walking the streets of glory. I trust that then we shall meet some Jews whom we have led to Christ. I imagine many of us will meet Gentiles whom we have led to the Lord, but I want to lead at least a few of the Jews to my Saviour. Don't you?

(5) A Warning and an Exhortation to Israel, 10:16-21

In verses 16-21 Paul turns from the Christians, whose business it is to take the gospel to the Jews, and addresses those Israelites who are under the sound of the gospel. He issues a note of warning to them, telling them that Isaiah and David and Moses preached this same gospel of our crucified and risen Lord. Did Israel of old believe it? No! And Paul exhorts the Jews to whom he is writing to take warning from their fathers who lived in the days of these prophets, yet were **“a disobedient and gainsaying people.”**

Again, Paul's use of the Old Testament Scriptures fills our hearts with wonder—they so marvelously portray the sufferings and the glory of our Lord. Let us look at the five quotations with which this chapter closes.

Verse 16 is taken from Isaiah 53:1, that chapter which graphically pictures Calvary's cross. But did Israel believe God's prophet in Isaiah's day? No, Paul says; and therefore the warning to his **“kinsmen according to the flesh.”**

Then having referred to the fact that **“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,”** the apostle asks further, **“Have they not heard?”** And he answers his own question by quoting Psalm 19:4, **“Yes verily”**—yes, Israel of old did hear the gospel of a coming Redeemer—**“Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world”** (v. 18).

In verses 19 and 20 yet another question is raised, **“Did not Israel know?”** And again Paul's answer is a twofold quotation from Moses and Isaiah; for in Deuteronomy 32:21 and Isaiah 65:1 we read that God told His ancient people that He would provoke them to jealousy by bringing the Gentiles into the place of blessing. He told Israel that the Gentiles, whom He called **“no people”** and **“a foolish nation,”** them that **“sought”** Him not and **“asked not”** after Him, would be given the gospel. And at the same time God was, even in Isaiah's day, warning His people, Israel, of their disobedience and indifference to His call of love and blessing. **“All day long,”** He said through the prophet again, in Isaiah 65:2, **“have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”**

God was patient with His people—Oh, so patient! But they rejected the gift of His righteousness; and according to their own prophetic Word, He told them that He would set them aside for a time that He might visit the Gentiles, to take out from among them **“a people for his name.”**

He told them also that notice again He would take up His chosen people. In that day **“all Israel shall be saved.”**

And in the meantime, even while the nation is out of His will, individual Israelites may be saved—**“for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek . . . For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”**

This is God’s message to Israel; it is His message to us Gentiles, as set forth in the tenth chapter of Romans.

And let us not forget our responsibility to the Jews:

“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? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!”

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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