

ROMANS

In our last lesson, we observed the differences that Paul called out between the new-believer Gentiles and the Law-focused Jews, his own people. He wanted them to see that the Law does not save anyone, and that there is nothing anyone can do to earn their salvation. Only through God's great grace and the shed blood of Christ can we hope to find salvation.

In this lesson, Paul continues the above dialogue to show the Jews that the Gospel is meant for all—anyone can be saved.

Read Romans Chapter 10 from the Contemporary English Version (CEV) below, or from your favorite version.

Romans 10

¹Dear friends, my greatest wish and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. ²I know they love God, but they don't understand ³what makes people acceptable to him. So they refuse to trust God, and they try to be acceptable by obeying the Law. ⁴But Christ makes the Law no longer necessary for those who become acceptable to God by faith.

Anyone Can Be Saved

⁵Moses said that a person could become acceptable to God by obeying the Law. He did this when he wrote, "If you want to live, you must do all that the Law commands."

⁶But people whose faith makes them acceptable to God will never ask, "Who will go up to heaven to bring Christ down?" ⁷Neither will they ask, "Who will go down into the world of the dead to raise him to life?"

⁸All who are acceptable because of their faith simply say, "The message is as near as your mouth or your heart." And this is the same message we preach about faith. ⁹So you will be saved, if you honestly say, "Jesus is Lord," and if you believe with all your heart that God raised him from death. ¹⁰God will accept you and save you, if you truly believe this and tell it to others.

¹¹The Scriptures say that no one who has faith will be disappointed, ¹²no matter if that person is a Jew or a Gentile. There is only one Lord, and he is generous to everyone who asks for his help. ¹³All who call out to the Lord will be saved.

¹⁴How can people have faith in the Lord and ask him to save them, if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear, unless someone tells them?¹⁵And how can anyone tell them without being sent by the Lord? The Scriptures say it is a beautiful sight to see even the feet of someone coming to preach the good news. ¹⁶Yet not everyone has believed the message. For example, the prophet Isaiah asked, "Lord, has anyone believed what we said?"

¹⁷No one can have faith without hearing the message about Christ. ¹⁸But am I saying that the people of Israel did not hear? No, I am not! The Scriptures say,

"The message was told
everywhere on earth.
It was announced
all over the world."

¹⁹Did the people of Israel understand or not? Moses answered this question when he told that the Lord had said,

"I will make Israel jealous
of people
who are a nation
of nobodies."

*I will make them angry
at people
who don't understand
a thing."*

²⁰Isaiah was fearless enough to tell that the Lord had said,

*"I was found by people
who were not looking
for me.
I appeared to the ones
who were not asking
about me."*

²¹And Isaiah said about the people of Israel,

*"All day long the Lord
has reached out
to people who are stubborn
and refuse to obey."*

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Consider the questions below regarding Paul's comments in Romans Chapter 10:

1. What is discussed in the opening verses of Romans Chapter 10 that Paul states the people of Israel don't understand? (see verses 1-4)
 - a. ANSWER: Paul's fellow Jews don't understand that the Law that God gave them will not bring righteousness. Rather, they believe that strictly following the Law will make them acceptable to God. This is something that Paul had experienced himself as a Pharisee. But now that he has the Holy Spirit living in him, he can see that Israel is unable to understand it.
2. In Romans 10:5, Paul addresses the Jews' focus on obeying the Law in order to be acceptable. See also Leviticus 18:5 and James 2:10. What is Paul's conclusion?
 - a. ANSWER: Paul asserts that the only way that an obeying-the-law approach would work is if a person lived a perfect life—which is not possible. Even if they could live a near-perfect life, that would simply be an act of human achievement—but salvation is not about human achievement.
3. What does Paul then tell us is the message from all who are acceptable because of their faith? (see Romans 10:6-10)
 - a. ANSWER: "So you will be saved, if you honestly say, 'Jesus is Lord,' and if you believe with all your heart that God raised him from death. God will accept you and save you, if you truly believe this and tell it to others."
4. In Romans 10:11-13, who does Paul say can be saved, and what are the associated qualifications or limitations?
 - a. ANSWER: Paul states that all who put their faith in Christ will be saved. There are no qualifications or limitations—Jew or Gentile, good person or bad—"All who call out to the Lord will be saved."
5. Paul asks three important questions in Romans 10:14-15. What are they?
 - a. ANSWER 1: How can people have faith in the Lord if they have not heard about him?
 - b. ANSWER 2: How can people hear about Christ unless someone tells them?
 - c. ANSWER 3: How can anyone tell them without being sent by the Lord?

6. If we consider the above three questions for a moment, what do the answers to these three questions tell us about our own salvation, and about our responsibilities after we have been saved?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Clearly we are saved through faith, but we learned about that faith from others and their witness to us. Since we know that it is God who chooses us, and God who calls us; then the people that God put in our path that led to our salvation were sent by God.
 - b. ANSWER 2: This means that, as followers of Christ, we are to be ready to share the Gospel as God send us out. Through God's Holy Word, we can share the Gospel with others and pray for a great harvest that only God can provide. We are saved with a purpose and not just to sit on the sidelines.
 7. Paul then points out in the closing verses of Romans 10 that the Jews are without excuse. God made this known to them, and they rejected Him. Read the scriptures below and summarize what they tell us. Paul certainly would have understood the passages from Psalms as a result of all of his studies and his knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures. Specifically, what do each of these passages tell us about God's revelation to the Jews and their knowledge of the coming Messiah, the coming Christ.
 - a. Psalm 19:1-4 and Romans 1:18-20
 - i. ANSWER: God's creation reveals Himself to everyone, both Jew and Gentile—all are without excuse.
 - b. Psalm 19:7-11
 - i. ANSWER: The Jews specifically knew God, and that his teachings were to keep them from sinning, but they ignored them.
 8. Paul closes the chapter by posing one last question. He acknowledges that Israel has previously heard the Gospel message, i.e., that salvation comes only from God. But now he asks one final question: Did the Jews always understand what God was trying to tell them, or was it only after the resurrection of Christ that they could reasonably be expected to understand? Read Isaiah 65:1-2, which was written hundreds of years before Christ. What did God say about the Jews and their relationship with God? Do you think they understood that God was the way of salvation, but chose to go their own way?
 - a. ANSWER: God makes it clear in these two verses that the Jews were intentionally turning their back on Him, choosing not to worship Him. Indeed, they *did* know what they were doing; there is no excuse, whether Jew or Gentile, God has made it plain—there is no salvation apart from Him.
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So we leave Paul's dialogue here for this lesson. In our next lesson (Chapter 11), he will be asking the question, "Am I saying that God has turned his back on his people?"

For us, we need to see that salvation is available to anyone who believes and is not limited to a specific type of person or specific act of human achievement. It is based solely on our faith in Christ; and no matter how far short we fall, God is faithful and will save us if we put our faith in Christ.

Let's look for, and be mindful of, opportunities to pass the Gospel message to someone that God places in our path. Showing them that nothing they have done will keep them from Jesus, nor will it draw them closer—we are saved by God's great grace through our faith in His Only Son, Jesus.

May He richly bless you as you study with us this week.

In Christ,

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