

## ROMANS 10 AND ISRAEL

There is a beautiful balance interwoven in Romans 9-11. In chapter 9, the emphasis is on God's sovereignty. In chapter 10, the emphasis is on human responsibility. Both are true, but it is beyond what we can completely comprehend, as Paul states in chapter 11 (11:33).

Chapter 9 emphasized Israel's ELECTION in the past. Everything builds on and rests on this. However, as we move into chapter 10, Paul puts the emphasis squarely on human responsibility. In spite of the doctrine of ELECTION spelled out at great length in chapter 9, Paul is still praying for Israel's salvation as noted at the beginning of chapter 10.

The truth of ELECTION does not diminish Paul's fervency in prayer for Israel's salvation. Paul does not operate on the basis of "fatalistic determinism". In 10:2, he explains that Israel's problem is that they **"have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge"**. And what is it that they have failed to see?

### Romans 10:4 (NKJV)

**4** For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

This verse is key! It gives the bottom line in this whole discussion. Faith in Christ results in the end of all attempts to be righteous by law-keeping. The nature of true, saving faith depends on Christ alone for righteousness! This is the knowledge that Israel has failed to see.

Paul then, in Romans 10:5-13, explains the NATURE of a saving faith. Faith is a matter of believing in the heart, and what we believe in the heart we confess with the mouth. The mouth tells on the heart. But the critical issue is that **"with the heart one believes unto righteousness"** (cf. Rom. 10:10).

### Romans 10:11-13 (NKJV)

**11** For the Scripture says, "**Whoever believes** on Him will not be put to shame."

**12** For there is **no distinction** between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to **all who call** upon Him.

**13** For "**whoever calls** on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

All that is necessary for salvation is true FAITH. The promise is to **"Whoever believes"**. God does not demand pilgrimage, altar call, ritual, good works, or even baptism. Paul boils it all down to **"the word of faith"**

***which we preach***”, as he says in 10:8. Paul simply preached **“the word of faith”** – that is, the gospel message that must be responded to by faith!

In spite of the fact that all that God requires is simple faith, Israel has not responded accordingly. Instead, Israel’s pattern has been one of rebellion to God’s invitation. They have rebelled against the principle of FAITH!

### **Romans 10:16–17 (NKJV)**

**16** But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?”

**17** So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The quote in verse 16 is from Isaiah 53:1. To this very day, the Jews have an aversion to the Isaiah 53 report. Thus, the Jews’ rejection of Jesus was prophesied by Isaiah 700 years before the time of Christ.

The **“hearing”** of verse 17 assumes a positive response from a receptive heart (cf. Mt. 11:15, 13:9, 43). Faith happens when people hear the Word of God! It doesn’t happen through intuition, speculation, mystical experiences, meditation, philosophy, or psychology, etc. It happens when people hear the message of Christ (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15). Faith has content and it embraces an object; namely, the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 10:43, Rom. 1:16, 1 Cor. 1:21, 2:2-4, Heb. 4:12, 1 Pet. 1:23).

Faith and the Word of God go together. Faith is always based on the Word. True faith is taking God at His Word (cf. 1 Jn. 5:9-11). Faith happens in conjunction with the ministry of the Word and in conjunction with the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit Who makes it real in the heart.

### **Romans 10:20–21 (NKJV)**

**20** But Isaiah is very bold and says: “I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.”

**21** But to Israel he says: “All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people.”

Quoting from Isaiah 65:1, Paul indicates that it was foretold that the Gentiles would find God. But it was also foretold that Israel would consistently be rebellious to the truth.

Isaiah 65:2 shows that patiently, down through the centuries, God has reached out to the Jews; but they have rejected Him. Note that God is not to be blamed for Israel’s condition. The blame rests squarely on their shoulders. Through the years, God has reached out to Israel – but they have consistently spurned and rebuffed Him.

Romans 10 is a prolonged explanation of WHY Israel has not attained to righteousness as summarized in Romans 9:32.

**Romans 9:32 (NKJV)**

**32** Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

The stumbling stone of course is the LORD Jesus Christ. Israel has not attained because they failed to place their faith in Jesus!

From the side of human responsibility this is WHY Israel has not attained to righteousness – because they failed to understand that righteousness is acquired on the basis of FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE!