

Israel: A Case Study in How People Come to Christ

Romans 10:1-21

Introduction: At the end of Romans 8 Paul affirms that nothing can separate us from Jesus' loyal love, but the obvious question is, "What about Israel?" In Romans 9-11, Paul argues that God has not rejected her; in fact, God graciously chose her (ch. 9), and she will receive her Messiah in the future (ch. 11). But, Israel's present state of unbelief is due to her lack of acceptance of salvation by grace through faith. Romans chapter 10 offers us a case study in how all people (including Israel) might come to saving faith in Christ.

1. *OUR RESPONSIBILITY: PRAYER – We need to intelligently pray for our non-believing friends. Romans 10:1-4*

- A. Skillful prayer begins by understanding our friends' spiritual condition. 9:30—10:2-3
 - 1. 1st problem: The Jews pursued salvation by the wrong method. 9:30-33
 - 2. 2nd problem: The Jews were very sincere, but sincerity can be misguided. 10:2-3
- B. Understanding where our non-Christian friends are coming from is vital to wise prayer.
 - 1. Everyone has a worldview.
 - 2. Everyone feels they have found themselves in a story.
- C. We can't stop with mere understanding, we need aggressive prayer moved by love. 10:1
 - 1. Paul's heart's desire was their salvation. That comes through a close relationship.
 - 2. Paul's prayer was for their salvation. The nuance is that this is aggressive.
- D. Prayer for unsaved friends will be aggressive when our friendships are strong.

2. *THEIR RESPONSIBILITY: FAITH – Paul affirms that the salvation of all people comes through faith not works. Romans 10:5-13*

- A. Salvation by good works poses two huge problems. 10:5-7
 - 1. It requires you to hold to the entire law code for your entire life. 10:5
 - 2. It generally motivates a long and fruitless spiritual search. 10:6-7
- B. Salvation by grace through faith is extremely simple. 10:8-11
 - 1. It is a message about faith and not works. 10:8
 - 2. The message begins with an affirmation about who Jesus is. 10:9a
 - 3. The message continues with an affirmation about what Jesus did. 10:9b
 - 4. Believing in this message produces a tremendous result: salvation and life. 10:10-11
- C. Salvation by grace through faith applies to all humankind. 10:12-13
 - 1. All humanity stands in the same position before God. (Jew and Greek is a merism.) 10:12
 - 2. God promises a full and rich salvation. 10:12b-13 (v. 11)

3. *OUR RESPONSIBILITY: GOSPEL – Paul affirms that Christians must share the story of Christ's death and resurrection. Romans 10:14-15*

- A. Through an O.T. quote, Paul presents a picture of communication in the context of service. 10:15b
 - 1. He quotes Isa. 52:7: this is good news about release from captivity from Babylon.
 - 2. The verse pictures a lone but excited runner making a difficult journey over mountains.
 - 3. The verse is full of irony: beautiful feet.
 - 4. Note the connection with serving and saying.
- B. Through a series of questions, Paul presents a picture of the communication process. 10:14-15a
 - 1. Paul asks 4 questions using 6 verbs to lead us to a conclusion. Let's reverse the process.
 - 2. Jesus sends. We speak. They hear. They believe. They call. They're saved.

C. How did Paul typically do this? He told his story in the context of serving relationships!

4. *THEIR RESPONSIBILITY: DECISION* – Paul shows that salvation for all people is a choice that can be accepted or rejected. *Romans 10:16-21*

A. The principle – Some receive the word (v. 17); others refuse it. 10:16-17

B. 1st app. to Israel – Israel disbelieved because they refused to respond to revelation. 10:18
1. Paul quotes Ps. 19:4 to prove that God reveals himself to the world through natural law.
2. Moreover, the O.T. consistently speaks about the coming of Messiah.

C. 2nd app. to Israel – Israel disbelieved because of an obstinate heart. 10:19-21
1. They stumbled over Gentile salvation (Deut. 32:21 & Isa. 65:1). 10:19-20
2. They refused the loving outstretched hands of God (Isaiah 65:2). 10:21

Introduction:

In the middle 1970s Bill Bright wrote a small gospel tract called the Four Spiritual Laws. That booklet was perfect for the times. It spelled out in four simple concepts the essence of the gospel message. I was it was perfect because it was one of the last times in our culture in which people had a...

Bright would share this all the time.

Josh McDowell would do the same.

But times have changed.

Paul wants to drill deep into how people come into a relationship with Christ.

Now I'm not going to go through this in depth today. Rather, I want to cover the whole chapter and show you Paul's grand argument for how people come into a relationship with Jesus.