

JESUS AND THE MODERN JEW

BY DR. JERRY VINES

By the Book™ A Chapter by Chapter Bible Study
Series from Jerry Vines Ministries
2295 Towne Lake Parkway
Suite 116 #249
Woodstock, GA 30189

Let's Begin

I once heard a T.V. preacher tell his listeners it was a complete waste of time to try and win Jews to Christ, indicating only Gentiles can come to God through the cross. He went on to say Jews who were living in light of the Torah (Law) have a right relationship to God and, therefore, are redeemed. This preacher was obviously confused. Even worse, he spread over the public airwaves his confusion to multitudes of listeners.

A simple but revealing question to those who think Jews come to God through the Law is this: if Jews could be saved by keeping the Law, why was Paul sent to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews? (Gal. 2:7). Furthermore, what sense can be made from Paul's grand assertions in Romans which we have already observed, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth: to the Jew first and also to the Greek...Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight..." (1:16; 3:20).

Paul expends energy writing three chapters concerning the Gospel and the Jews. Chapter 9 focused on Israel's past election, chapter 10 on their present rejection, and chapter 11 on their future conversion. The Jews need Jesus as much as anyone else and must personally receive Him to be saved (cp. Acts 4:12; John 14:6).

Thus, as we begin our study of Romans 10 concerning the Jews' present rejection, let's follow the outline below:

- I. Salvation for the Jew is Exceptionally Desirable (vv. 1-4)**
- II. Salvation for the Jew is Entirely Possible (vv. 5-15)**
- III. Salvation for the Jew is Especially Available (vv. 16-21)**

I. Salvation for the Jew is Exceptionally Desirable (vv. 1-4)

God's heart for the world He created cannot be missed. Even though the world lives in constant rebellion, God loves every rebel in it. His desire is for everyone to be saved. Paul reflects elsewhere, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). Hence, God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Salvation for all is why Jesus came (John 3:17).

Salvation is desirable for all men and women. Verses 1-4 reveal three indicators which point out this truth.

First, Paul's prayer points out God's desire to save them. Hear the apostle's passion for his kinsmen, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for

Reflection Connection

Take a moment and reflect upon your heart. Do you have people for whom your heart bleeds and aches because they do not know Christ? Do you think the church is easily tempted to become self-centered, focusing on their own needs rather than the salvation needs of the lost world? Why or why not?

Israel is, that they might be saved" (v. 1). Paul's heart merely reflects heaven's heart, God's heart to presently save those whom He long ago chose as His special people. Indeed God wants all people saved more than we realize. Every heartbeat coming from the Father reveals a sacrificial love for those whom He created.

Similarly, the closer we get to God, the more our hearts burn for people who do not know Him. This undeniable passion is what drives the Apostle Paul—*my heart's desire for Israel is that they might be saved.*



To be saved may sound old-fashioned to the world. Nevertheless, “salvation” is a great Biblical word and communicates the heart of God. He desires for all to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

Second, the Jews’ problem points out God’s desire to save them (vv. 2-3). Paul acknowledges the Jewish people have a “zeal of God,” a zeal indicative of a burning desire. However, while the intensity for God may be real, the experience of God is “not according to knowledge” (v. 2). Here the apostle exposes a sincere zeal some Jews had who thrived on imprecise and incorrect knowledge concerning God. No one should be faulted for zeal. Indeed the Bible affirms a zealous spirit (Gal. 4:18; Titus 2:14). However, zeal may easily be misplaced and consequently is dangerous to one’s spiritual health (cp. Acts 22:3; Phil. 4:4-7).

The fact remained, the Jewish people, according to Paul, were “ignorant of God’s righteousness...” “And, the primary reason for their ignorance rested in their obsession to gain favor with God based upon a righteousness of their own, “[they were] going about to establish their own righteousness...” (v. 3). Paul repeatedly denied the possibility of any person being accepted in God’s sight based upon a self-righteousness (3:20). No less do multitudes of people today attempt to establish a right standing with God based upon good works.

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Third, Christ’s provision points out God’s desire to save them. Listen to Paul’s words, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (v. 4). The term “end” literally means “goal,” or “purpose.” All God intended us to be is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the absolute perfection of humanity. Christ perfectly kept the law of God, fulfilling every last detail. For us, the law reflects Christ’s perfection, revealing to us our utter sinfulness and need before God. The law, therefore, is intended for one thing: to tutor us, bringing us to the Lord Jesus for salvation (cp. Gal. 3:12).

II. Salvation for the Jew is Entirely Possible (vv. 5-15)

We have the full confidence from God’s Word that no person stands outside the possibility of God’s amazing grace. Christ died for sinners and since Jews are sinners, His death is applicable to them. Paul demonstrates the possibility of salvation for Jewish people by affirming two undeniable truths.

First, he affirms the way of salvation (vv. 5-7). Salvation may best be seen as it is contrasted between the righteousness of law and the righteousness of faith. He writes, “For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them” (v. 5). Note first the *work of law*. The key word is “do,” a word of performance, a term denoting action. In the law, the focus is specifically on “doing” (cp. Ex. 20:3-17). The problem with this is, no one has ever has! Or, if they have kept the law in part, they surely have not kept the law in whole (James 2:10-11).



Paul also speaks of the *way of grace*, “But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?... Or, Who shall descend into the deep?...” (vv. 6-7). According to the way of grace, it is not “do” but “done”! Paul refers here to Christ’s incarnation and resurrection. Salvation depends on what Jesus has performed, not how we perform. The righteousness He procured through His birth, life, death, burial and resurrection remains the only righteousness acceptable to the Father. No act we perform could ever be equal to or surpass what Jesus did. Hence, our righteousness is an imputed righteousness, a righteousness given to us through our faith in Christ. And, make no mistake: the righteousness we obtain through our faith is exclusively offered by the absolute mercy and grace of God. By no stretch could we ever deserve to be saved.

Reflection Connection

Do you think as a general rule people have a tendency to believe God owes them salvation? Why or why not?

Second, Paul affirms the word of salvation (vv. 8-15). Paul continues to ask questions and then answers, “But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach: that 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” (vv. 9-10).

No place in the Bible is the way of salvation and the word of salvation made clearer than in this section. Paul clearly shows both the internal and external aspects of salvation, the internal being a *trusting heart* and the external being a *confessing mouth*. The external indicates the reality of the internal, giving it public visibility.

Furthermore, Paul is clear concerning a definitive commitment of heart, the seat of one’s being. Head knowledge is surely necessary to be saved. However, Scripture is emphatic that the heart is what moves one to genuine faith in Christ. Consequently, one’s verbal confession is the outward agreement of one’s inward commitment.

Note also, Paul assures us God accepts anyone and everyone who will, by faith, call upon His name: “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). There are no select few who may be saved. Christ did not die only for some. God did not offer to save one man less than the entire human race! “Whosoever” carries with it no special conditions and rejects no one who sincerely comes through faith. God saves any and all who place their trust in Him, calling on the name of the Lord.

Incidentally, another reason we know God wants all people to be saved is because He calls His church to global missions (vv. 14-15). God sends us to all people with the saving news of Jesus Christ. Does He send us to the Jewish people?

Salvation depends on what Jesus has performed, not how we perform.



Yes! Especially the Jewish people whom He loves with an undying love! Just as with Gentiles, “faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (v. 17), which brings us to our final affirmation we find in chapter 10: the salvation which is entirely possible for the Jews is also fully available.

III. Salvation for the Jew is Especially Available (vv. 16-21)

God desires the salvation of the Jews. He sincerely makes this salvation available through the death of His Son. Hear again the Apostle Paul, “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. But Esaias saith, Lord who hath believed our report?... But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world” (vv. 16, 18). In these closing words of chapter 10, Paul reveals God’s present work in evangelizing the Jews.

First, God’s *witness* toward all people. Often we think God’s witness in the world is exclusively based upon the church’s witness. How mistaken! God is actively witnessing. His word goes forth. Even in Isaiah’s day, the Gospel went out to the peoples of the land. God never leaves Himself without a witness (Acts 14:17). His witness of revelation is found in two particular areas. He especially reveals Himself through the Bible on the one hand and generally reveals Himself through creation on the other.

The simple truth is, God’s witness demonstrates the availability of salvation to be a fact.

Second, God’s *warning* to all people. Paul records these words, “But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that sought not after me” (vv. 19-20). Why did Israel turn not to the Lord? Did they not have the word of God through Moses? Did they not have the prophets God Himself sent? Instead, Israel refused to turn to God. Therefore, God turned to another people. Now is a special time for the Gentiles to come to Him.

If we refuse to hear God’s witness to us, His good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, God will not fail to turn to others. He will continue His march, spreading His salvation throughout the earth while those who refuse become hardened in their rebellion. God offers salvation to no one tomorrow; instead salvation comes only today. The Apostle spoke clearly in Hebrews, “Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Heb. 4:7). Even so, the Gentiles who were not even looking for God, found Him, though they “sought Him not” (v. 20). What more definitive way could salvation’s availability be affirmed?

Reflection Connection

When the Bible says, “the heavens declare the glory of God,” what do you think it means? Is there a people who exist now or ever have who have no witness of God whatsoever? Why or why not?

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Third, God is *waiting* for all people. Paul sums up, “But to Israel he saith, All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (v. 21). The picture Paul draws is of a patient, longsuffering God Who puts up with repeated acts of disobedience and rebellion. And, the only reason He does is sheer love for them. No other explanation suffices. As Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37), so the Father weeps for a sinful world, ignorantly begging for destruction rather than eternal life. God’s response is, salvation awaits the one who places his or her trust in Me.

Golden Greek Nugget

Paul quotes Isaiah’s lament at the end of chapter 10, speaking of God’s patience toward a disobedient and “gainsaying” people. The term “gainsaying” is the compound word, “*antilego*”, from two words meaning “against” and “words”— that is, speech which is against or contradicts, God’s words. Rebellious actions were made doubly sinful by words which contradicted God’s words.

Wrap Up

The Gospel is no less the power of God unto salvation for Jews than it is for Gentiles. And, we all come the same way: by grace through faith because of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. To the Jewish, God makes known His desire for them to be saved. It is both possible and available. Pray for all Jewish people to come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

