



When in Romans Do as the Righteous Do

“One Salvation Fits All”

Romans 10:5-13

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase, “the law” with regards to the Bible?

1. You might immediately think of the first five books of the Bible - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Jesus referred to these books as the law of Moses in Luke 24:44 when He said, “all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me.”
2. Obviously those books contain lots more than laws. The ‘legal’ portions are the last half of Exodus, most of Leviticus, and portions of both Numbers and Deuteronomy. So that might be what you think of as “the law.”
3. You might think of the Ten Commandments as a kind of summary of the law. We know that the two tablets of the law contained, on one side, how and why we are to love God, while on the other side how we are to love our fellow man. Thus when Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment He replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”
4. We’re not done yet, however, describing the law. The Jews developed a tradition, handed down by rabbi’s, that the law consists of 613 commandments. This shows up in Jewish writings between the destruction of the Temple in 70AD and the third century. In the fourth century a rabbi named Simlai declared that there were 365 negative commandments and 248 positive ones, totaling 613.

While we might refer to the 10 commandments, *Jews would refer to the 613 commandments!* This may have, in fact, been the background of the question posed to Jesus about which was the greatest commandment.

Although there is nothing in writing prior to 70AD about the 613, this was probably already something the first century Jews were familiar with.

Regardless exactly what a Jew listening to Paul's letter being read might think the "law" meant, he was aware of verses in the Scriptures that said things like,

Romans 10:5 For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them."

On the surface it would seem God was encouraging you to keep the law and thus achieve a right standing with Him. It would seem there was a "righteousness which **is** of the law."

There is! The problem is that no one could ever hope to perfectly obey and keep the law. James put it like this:

James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

The law is unforgiving that way. I've often used the example of being pulled over by a cop for speeding. The fact I am keeping many other laws doesn't cancel out the fact I broke one law. I am a lawbreaker. I am guilty.

There had better be another way of getting right with God or we are all lost.

The other way, the only way, is the "righteousness of faith."

Romans 10:6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above)
Romans 10:7 or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

Quoted from Deuteronomy, these verses have a dual application:

1. First read them as you would find them in Deuteronomy without the mention of Jesus in parentheses. They indicate that the righteousness of the law is impossible. When he says, "Who will ascend into Heaven?" he is talking about those who seek to be right before God by living saintly lives that would be deserving of Heaven. It's an exaggeration - as if you could be so righteous that you would simply ascend into Heaven! On the other hand, you can't "descend into the abyss." In other words, no amount of suffering for your sin in the next life could ever atone for it sufficiently for you to earn the right to enter Heaven.
2. Secondly, Paul inserts the Person of Jesus Christ in these verses, applying them to Him. He both "descended" from Heaven and "ascended" back to Heaven. Jesus "descended" in His incarnation as God come in human flesh. He "ascended" after being raised from the dead.

The "righteousness of faith," then, is to reject any hope you could achieve righteousness by keeping the law and simply receive God's righteousness, to be declared righteous, because of the Person and work of Jesus Christ - the God-man in His incarnation Who was resurrected from the dead.

What is meant by "faith?"

Romans 10:8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

When Paul says "the word is near you," he means to link that with the phrase in parentheses, "that is, the word... which we preach." In other words, salvation is not hard to find! It is being proclaimed in numerous ways by God's servants.

The word was in their "mouth," that is, their language, their common conversation.

Likewise it was in their "heart," or we might say *mind*, meaning it could be understood.

The "word of faith" is the teaching of the righteousness of faith.

The message of righteousness by faith comes to you in a language you can understand. It pleads for a decision.

Romans 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

“Confess with your mouth” can be rendered *profess*. Paul has in mind a public profession of faith. In other words, you publicly acknowledge the truth about Jesus.

That can be tempered by circumstances, like in communist China or elsewhere you must go underground. The norm is for you to let others know you have come to an understanding of who Jesus really was and is.

You profess “the Lord Jesus.” There’s a lot packed in to that title!

Concerning “Jesus,” John 1:14 says,

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

“Flesh” doesn’t just mean a human body. It means He came in the fullness of humanity. He was fully God but simultaneously fully human in a union we can never totally comprehend. Jesus was and remains the unique God-man.

It’s not enough for someone to believe that a man, a historical figure, named Jesus once lived. It’s not enough to believe He was a great teacher or philosopher. You must believe in the biblical doctrine of the incarnation.

As to the title “Lord,” it is *Kurios* in the Greek. A.T. Robertson writes,

No Jew would do this who had not really trusted Christ, for *Kurios* in the [Septuagint] is used of God. No Gentile would do it who had not ceased worshipping the emperor as *Kurios*. The word *Kurios* was and is the touchstone of faith.

It is also essential that you “believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead.” This is more than just knowing that Jesus rose from the grave. You must believe that God raised Him from the dead just as He said and just as He described in the Bible, in a literal, physical body.

Romans 10:10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Believing this with the “heart” is more than intellectual knowledge. It implies a trusting in the knowledge.

“Confession” is not a condition but a consequence. “If on Jesus Christ you trust, speak of Him you surely must.”

Confessing and believing are not two separate or sequential steps to salvation. They are simultaneously true. We know that because Paul reversed the order as he wrote about them. Paul said in verse nine you confess and believe. Then in verse ten he says you believe and confess. He is showing you salvation from two perspectives - from God's and from man's.

- From man's perspective, you say that someone is saved based upon what they say.
- From God's perspective, He and He alone sees that someone is saved.

There was more going on behind this chapter than an explanation of the righteousness of faith. The righteousness of faith was being proclaimed widely to Gentiles.

- One of the big issues in the first century was whether or not a Gentile must also convert to Judaism in order to be saved. Certain teachers, called Judaizers, said “Yes!” The true answer, of course, was “No!”
- Another huge concern, and really the reason for chapters nine, ten and eleven, was the question of what God was doing with His chosen nation, Israel. If the Gospel was going out to Gentiles, was God through with Israel?

These next three verses - eleven, twelve and thirteen - establish that the righteousness of faith was God’s way of salvation for Gentile and Jew alike. The overall context of these chapters is that God has put His prophetic plan for Israel on hold while He calls out a people for Himself but that He will again turn His attention to Israel in the future.

For now, in this age in which we live, Jews get saved the same way Gentiles get saved.

Romans 10:11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

This is quoted from Isaiah 28:16 which reads,

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.

Jesus, of course, is the "stone." Notice in the Isaiah passage the words "act hastily" are used. This was a prophecy of Jesus Christ's coming and the Jews were being told to not be impatient for the fulfillment of this prophecy, but to patiently wait for it, knowing that it was for an appointed time.

That time had come!

There is a lot of stuff packed in to this idea of the "stone," the "foundation," the "precious cornerstone." For one thing, there was a prophecy that the builders would reject the chief cornerstone. It was a metaphor of how the leaders of the nation of Israel would reject Jesus as the promised Messiah. To confess Jesus as Messiah was to go against the religious leaders of Israel. It was to go against your family and, in many cases, to be disowned, dishonored.

So the Holy Spirit updated the words in Isaiah, made them applicable to the first century Jew, by saying, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." They might be disowned on earth, but in Heaven the angels were rejoicing.

Romans 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

When Paul says "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek" he means that there is no difference between them **regarding God's plan of salvation**. Salvation is available to both, and is received the same way by

both. He is not saying that there is no such thing anymore as a nation of Israel. He is talking here about how individuals from all nations receive salvation - **not** about God's dealings with individual nations! Chapter Eleven will make it clear that the literal nation of Israel, the literal physical descendants of Abraham, are still important in God's prophetic scheme.

Romans 10:13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

This is a quote from Joel 2:32. Proof after proof from the Old Testament is what Paul was offering these Jews. He was illuminating the Scriptures.

"Whoever" from among Jews and Gentiles who "calls on the name of the Lord," by faith, "shall be saved." One commentator said, "One could scarcely wish for a simpler statement of the way of salvation than is found in these words."

"All who call," and "whoever calls." The Gospel is a universal call to anyone, anywhere, at any time.

The apostle Peter, at the church council in Jerusalem, made a remarkable statement.

Acts 15:11 "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

The Judaizers were wrongly saying that Gentiles must be saved the same way Jews were - by the righteousness which is of the law. Peter's statement not only nullifies that, it establishes that Jews need to be saved the same way Gentiles are - by the righteousness of faith!

As a quick, final application: Don't be taken in by folks wanting you to take up some of the habits and rituals of the law. It's big right now; but it's a step away from the freedom you have in Christ.