

# Romans 9... 10... 11

The Gospel is a universal provision for a universal problem:

- The universal problem is sin. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Every member of the human race has sin imputed to them, inherits a sin nature, and commits individual acts of sin. There is none righteous, not even one; all are lost.
- The universal provision is salvation in Jesus Christ. As surely as all are in need of salvation because of sin, just so surely Christ died for all. He gave Himself as a Substitute for every member of the lost human race.

Both the universal problem and the universal provision are indicated in Romans ten, especially in verses eleven and thirteen:

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

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

The universal problem is indicated by the words "shame" and "saved." *Shame* looks forward to your certain judgment before a holy God. Born as you are, you will stand shamed at the judgment of God - unless you have trusted Jesus to save you.

The universal provision is indicated by the word "whoever," repeated twice. Everyone ever born, from all time, from every nation, tribe, kindred, and tongue, is potentially included within that wonderful word.

These things seem obvious to us. What is remarkable here is that these verses in Romans ten are quotes from the Old Testament, from the prophecies of Isaiah and Joel. We don't usually think of Israel as the messenger bearing the message of salvation for "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord." Yet it was to the nation of Israel that God first revealed these truths. It was *to* the nation of Israel that God revealed these truths in order that *through* the nation of Israel all other nations of the world should be blessed with the knowledge of God's provision for their need.

Israel was to be God's messenger to the whole world, sharing the message of His salvation with other nations. God told Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, that through him and his offspring all the nations of the world would be blessed.<sup>1</sup> Part of that blessing was sharing the message of God's universal provision of salvation for their universal problem of sin.

A messenger ought to be faithful to the message entrusted to him or her. God's message is salvation by grace through faith alone. Since none can ever attain righteousness before God, God must Himself declare you righteous. This He does on the basis of your faith in His Son as your Savior.

Did the Jews look to Jesus as their Savior from sin? They did not. The Jews sought to keep God's law as a means of attaining righteousness before God. In the opening verses of chapter ten you learn that Israel rejected God's message of obtaining righteousness by faith in favor of attaining righteousness by the law.

Romans 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

Romans nine, ten, and eleven describe God's past, present, and prophetic dealings with the nation of Israel. While we speak of Israel having been rejected, we do not mean that God has permanently cast her off. As a nation Israel is still an important part of God's plan for saving men throughout human history. In fact, Israel is somewhat of a timepiece in God's prophetic history. Many of the prophetic passages involving the Last Days before the literal return of Jesus revolve around the Jews being regathered in their ancient promised land.

Paul did not rejoice that Israel had been stumbled by the Gospel. He was grieved by it and moved to prayer. We must maintain a compassion for the lost.

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<sup>1</sup>Genesis 18:18, 22:18, & 26:4

In verse one you see the mystery of prayer in its relation to evangelism. Does prayer, my prayer, save anyone? No - only God saves. Does lack of prayer, my lack of prayer, damn anyone? No - only their own decision to reject Jesus as their personal Savior damns anyone. Then why should I pray for anyone to be saved?

There are many reasons we could give. Paul, after all, prayed for the lost and we are told to follow his example. One important reason you pray for the lost is that it puts your heart in alignment with God's heart. Scripture reveals God as having a heart for the lost. He is "...longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."<sup>2</sup>

Churches have a tendency to become a stagnant pool rather than a life flowing stream. Prayer for the lost helps keep us focused on eternal issues.

Romans 10:2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

Paul was the perfect example of "zeal... but not according to knowledge." Before his conversion on the road to Damascus he thought he was serving God by persecuting the church. The Jews who persecuted him were still in that place.

Zeal and knowledge ought to match one another. A zeal to serve God that is not based upon His Word is harmful. It leads to burn-out and bitterness. People with zeal but without proper biblical knowledge can be combative, cruel, and legalistic. Those who seek knowledge for its own sake, apart from its value in ministering to others, are sterile and cold in their walk. They can become "puffed up" in their pride and look down upon those they are called to build up in love. You should be *both* a serious student of God's Word *and* a sincere servant to God's people.

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<sup>2</sup> Peter 3:9

Romans 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

God's righteousness can only be given to you; it cannot be earned, merited, or deserved. The Jews were "ignorant" in the sense that they were *ignoring* this. Previously in Romans Paul pointed out that even in the Old Testament you were declared righteous on the basis of faith, *not* through keeping the law. The Jew willfully ignored this and sought to become righteous by keeping God's law. They refused to submit to the righteousness of God. They refused to submit to the righteousness that God made available to them in Jesus Christ.

We cannot neglect the emphasis on *personal responsibility*. All Paul's teaching of God's election and right to sovereign choice has not diminished man's responsibility.

Romans 10:4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Jesus Christ is the "end of the law for righteousness." He is its end in two ways:

1. He is the end, or the goal, that the law pointed toward. The law was never intended to make anyone righteous; it only exposed indwelling sin, it only showed you how very unrighteous you really were before God. The law was intended to show you your need for a Savior.
2. Jesus is "the end of the law for righteousness" in the sense that the law is not to be looked at as a means for becoming more righteous after you are saved, either. Look to the Lord, *not* to the law.

This righteousness, both in position and in practice, comes by faith, "to everyone who believes." It cannot be achieved through law; it can only be received through the Lord.

The purpose of the law is to reveal sin, to convict and condemn sinners. It can never impart righteousness. The penalty of the broken law is death. In His death, Christ paid the penalty of the law which men had broken. When a sinner receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior the law has nothing more to say to him. Through the death of his Substitute, he has died to the law. He is through with the law and with the futile attempt to achieve righteousness through it.

If Paul could have such compassion on those who hated and mistreated him then so can and should we. Pray for them and let God change your heart.