

Romans 9... 10... 11

Ingrowth causes many problems and much pain to the human body. I once had an ingrown toenail that was so painful I contemplated amputation!

Ingrowth causes many problems and much pain to the body of Jesus Christ! The solution to ingrowth is outreach.

A primary *function* of our Church is to teach the Word of God to believers. A primary *focus* of our Church must remain to reach out to unbelievers with the Word of God. We *edify* believers so they can *evangelize* unbelievers!

God's message of salvation is for "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord." It is a universal provision for the universal problem of the whole human race. Since it is God's message, originating in Him, it must somehow be revealed to the whole human race. The nation of Israel was God's messenger, but they rejected the message. A new messenger must be raised-up to replace Israel. That's what these next verses are about.

Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

Romans 10:15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Working backwards from the *message*, Paul shows you the necessity of a **messenger**. The messenger is sent; he or she in some way or another proclaims the Gospel; among those who hear the Gospel, some believe God and call upon Him to save them.

God is evangelistic. From the beginning He has been revealing His salvation to the human race. For a long time, Israel was His messenger. When they rejected their Messiah they rejected their position as messenger.

But God still uses a messenger: It is you and I, the Church of Jesus Christ.

As a messenger, you are "sent." God assigns you a particular audience.

As a messenger, you "preach..." Don't let this word "preach" hinder you. It doesn't just, or even primarily, mean formal preaching. It simply means to "proclaim." All Christians are God's messengers, called upon to proclaim the Gospel to their assigned audience.

As a messenger, you speak "the word of faith..." Paul called the Gospel "the word of faith." The Gospel is God's message of salvation by grace through faith, apart from works. It is the message that God justifies the ungodly, declaring them righteous when they trust Christ as Savior. If your audience is to hear, believe, and call upon the Lord, they must hear these things.

In a moment Paul will tell you that Gentiles have been raised-up to take Israel's place. First he deals with anticipated Jewish objections to what he has been teaching. The first objection to what Paul is teaching is here in verse sixteen:

Romans 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

After considering what Paul had taught, they would look at the results of his preaching among the Gentiles and observe that not all those who heard the Gospel were saved by it. They would conclude that the Gospel was ineffective since many remained unconverted by it.

By the way, one of the conclusions of Reformed Theology is that the atonement of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world is limited to only those God has previously elected to salvation in eternity past. Thus Jesus did not die for the sins of the whole world. They sometimes

argue that if Jesus died for anyone that refuses the Gospel His death was a failure.

Paul answered this kind of objection by quoting Isaiah. Even the prophets, ministering to the Jews, met with resistance and rejection. Just because the Gospel is a universal provision for all men does *not* mean that all men will be saved by it. It is not that the message has failed; the responsibility is upon the individual hearer. As Paul says next,

Romans 10:17 So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The word of God proclaimed must be heard *and* it must be believed. Those who hear it and believe are saved. This is similar to a saying of Jesus, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Auditory hearing is necessary, but it is hearing in the heart that makes the difference.

A second possible objection was that the Jew had not really been given the opportunity to hear the Gospel. Look at verse eighteen:

Romans 10:18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world."

Paul quotes from Psalm Nineteen, which actually speaks of the testimony of creation. He uses it to emphasize his point that the Jew **has** heard the Gospel. Just as the ignorant Gentile has the witness of creation all around him and is without excuse, so, too, the willfully ignorant Jew has the witness of the Gospel all around him and is without excuse.

If you are at all familiar with the four Gospels and with the Book of Acts, you know that the Gospel was indeed first proclaimed to the nation of Israel.

A third anticipated objection is the question of verse nineteen, "But I say, did Israel not know?" The objection seems to be that it was

wrong for God to use the Gentiles as messengers in the place of Israel since it was not clearly mentioned in the Old Testament. They would say, "We didn't know that this was God's plan; had we known, we would have responded differently." Paul shows them in the Old Testament that God had told them:

Romans 10:19 But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by *those who are* not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation."

Romans 10:20 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."

He quotes Moses to show them that God had said He would use a people who were not a nation. To be absolutely clear, he then quotes Isaiah. Isaiah shows that not only would God use a people who were not a nation, He would put Himself in a saving relationship to them.

Chapter Eleven will fully develop what Paul begins to describe in verse twenty-one:

Romans 10:21 But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people."

God was reaching out to those who He had once called upon to reach out to others! His rejection of Israel as His messenger was and is not a rejection of them as His covenant people.

Do you realize how painful it is to stretch out your hands for any length of time? God employs this word picture to describe in human terms something of the greatness and strength of His love for Israel. In His love for Israel, He is saving individual Jews during this Church Age. In His love for Israel, He will save the nation during the coming Great Tribulation.

You received God's message and were saved! Someone, somehow, was sent to you to proclaim the Gospel. You heard it, then you heard

it in your heart and believed it. You found that "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Now it is *you* that are sent!