

Romans

PART 17

JESUS IS LORD!
ROMANS 10:1-21

The Elephant In The Room

If the long awaited Messiah was the culmination of the entire law of God and faith in whom is the entrance into the righteousness of God, why is this Jewish Messiah, Jesus, rejected by the very people he came to save? In chapter 9 we saw that God took this rejection and turned it on its head by choosing to offer salvation to a new kind of Israel, ones called to believe on Jesus, the Messiah as Lord of all.

WE SEE IN CHAPTER 10, THERE ARE TWO WAYS THAT PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN GOD'S CHOOSING AND PURPOSES IN CHRIST JESUS:

ONE

What many of Israel did, which was to harden their hearts

TWO

What we are invited to do, which is to believe in our hearts that Jesus is Lord and that God has raised him from the dead.

We see that it is human participation that is the wheels to this message of salvation: that all people need to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. For those who believe and call on the name of Jesus, their lives are forever changed. They join the continuing work of God's purpose for the ages; being sent to preach the gospel so that all those who hear and believe in their hearts may call upon the name of the Lord, and be saved.

Setting The Stage For Paul's Prayer

Paul prays in verse 1 for Israel, that they might be saved. To understand Paul's turmoil is to grasp the true tragedy that is unbelieving Israel. God had chosen Israel as his vehicle for redemptive blessing to all of creation, that through Israel would come Messiah, and through Messiah, God would bless all humanity. But the people closest to God became furthest away from His heart. Though they had the promises, and the Word of God, and the covenants, and the Messiah himself, yet they stumbled over the rock which is Christ. Because they did not have the eyes of faith, they refused to submit to the righteousness of God. Knowing that all must call upon the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved, Paul so prays...

Chapter 10 Highlights

VS 1-4

Paul prays for Israel, that they might be saved because he carries the salvation of Israel as a burden. His heart is stirred up because he has eyes to see their deepest need, which is Christ.

Do we pray so earnestly for those in our life that have rejected Christ?

Do our hearts carry the burden of evangelism, knowing that every man, woman and child's deepest need is Christ?

Zeal was not Israel's problem, for they earnestly sought and served God, but not according to the truth of His righteousness. Their rejection of God's character in reaching the lost, broken and sinful of the world paints a picture of the heartbreak of self-righteousness: that one may be so close to God and yet so far away from Him. In stubbornly seeking their own righteousness, they missed the whole point of their existence as a people, which was to be God's vehicle to bring the Messiah into the world.

Do we allow our self-righteousness to keep us from admitting that we truly need help, that we need a Savior, that we need Jesus?

But God's righteousness says that salvation is available through faith, because Jesus is the fulfillment and culmination of the law of Moses. Having paid it all, fulfilled it all, he is the end of our striving before God to be complete and accepted on our own works.

Do we still have a zeal for God but totally miss the point?

Do we have stubborn areas of our life where we resist the will of God?

Do we still strive to feel accepted before God on our own basis?

VS 5-8

Paul pleads with Israel, as did Moses in Deuteronomy, that God's words are not difficult to find. Israel didn't need to dive the depths of the oceans or soar to the heavens to find God's will. He had given it to them, it was in their mouth and in their heart. Applying this to the true law, Christ himself, Paul says, "Christ is not far from you." No man needs to go to the death that Christ died to find him, nor ascend to the heavens where he sits. He's reachable simply through faith – faith in the message that's being preached right here, right now: Christ has come, and conquered, and died, and rose, he's reigning and he's returning!

This gospel message requires that we lay down our pride and our self-righteousness. It requires that we humbly accept that which is given for us to believe in the heart and confess with our mouths: that Jesus is Lord. This is the main point, people of Israel and Gentile alike, **that Jesus is Lord.**

VS 9-13

These verses give us an “elevator pitch” of the gospel – that Jesus is Lord and God raised him from the dead – and the way to that salvation – confessing with our mouth and believing in our heart. By confessing with our mouth, we show allegiance and loyalty to Christ; what we believe in our heart being publicly expressed. In confessing Jesus as Lord, there’s an acknowledgement and admission that “I need to be saved,” from sin, and death, and evil. Merely confessing sins does not grant salvation. It is the repentance of sin in confessing Christ’s lordship that brings salvation. This public confession affirms our personal trust in Jesus as Lord, that he lived a life for me that I could not live, that he died a death I did not die, and that he rose from the dead to give a life I could never secure by myself. We place our eternal destiny in Jesus Christ, the one who lives.

These verses seem to provide a quick fix and easy path to heaven. But to truly confess Jesus as Lord, requires our hearts to be stirred such that our lives are forever changed. We cannot be the people we were when we confess Christ as Lord, for he has changed our destiny. We have wholly given ourselves, our lives, our purposes, our desires, our everything to him and said, “I cannot do anything except by you, with you, for you.” These verses are not a quick fix for sin, they are intended for obedience and transformation.

But what does it mean for Christ to be Lord? Simply put, our lives no longer belong to us, they belong to him. We put them into the gracious, loving, sacrificial, pastoral hands of the one who lives eternally. Christ died and rose again, and bids us to feast at the table with him. When we confess him as Lord, Jesus, as Lord rules our lives thoroughly and completely.

Whoever calls upon the name of Jesus makes an appeal to the Almighty on the basis of Christ’s name: that he has paid it all, that he died and rose again for salvation. When anyone does this, there is no difference between Jew or Greek, rich or poor, special or common, there is only “us.” There’s now only one: one people, one body, one church, the redeemed family.

VS 14-21

This remarkable truth is not meant to be hidden, it’s meant to be heard and believed. The way this message spreads is by those who have heard and believed it being sent out to preach, so that others may hear, so that they may believe and call on the name of the Lord, Jesus. This vital message for humanity was not entrusted to angels, but rather to those who it was meant to save.

*When was the last time we shared with someone the name of Christ, the only name that has the power to save a life?
If it’s been a long time, what’s stopping us from sharing it with someone today?*

VS 14-21 CONT.

Not all people will believe, but the only way they will is if they hear the word of God, the truth about Jesus Christ. So, coming back to Israel ... is the reason they haven't believed that they haven't heard about Jesus? No, they have surely heard, it's not far from them. Did they not know? Have they not understood? No, he was found of them and made manifest to them. God even tried to provoke Israel to jealousy in the Gentiles finding faith in Christ. The reason for their unbelief, and the reason for Paul's ardent prayer, was not that they hadn't heard and not that they didn't understand, but the stubbornness of their pride.

Conclusion

Paul prays so earnestly for Israel because of the burden he carries for his people. They carried the promises of God for millennia, were the vehicle by which the Messiah came. Yet when he finally arrived, they rejected him. Part of Paul's agony is no doubt the fact that salvation is so accessible! It requires no one to ascend Everest or delve the abyss; it is near, and yet the hard-hearted and prideful soul is so very far away. Christ is Lord! How easy to say, yet believing it requires something truly difficult for man; humility. His lordship requires complete sacrifice of self, acknowledgement of the complete inability to rule our own lives or to save ourselves from our sin. But what we lose from a life of self-rule pales to what we gain: Christ. In confessing him as Lord, Christ changes our destiny from the grave, meaningless and emptiness to the presence of God and the lamb for eternity. As this new, united, redeemed family of God, it's now our chance to participate again with this beautiful message. First we believed, now, we urgently and ardently proclaim it to a dying world. Knowing our own journey from death to life, we know that the rest of the world too is destined for oblivion. Just as we were stirred in our hearts to confess Christ as Lord, are we stirred for the salvation of those we see around us?

Take a moment to pray today, as Paul did for Israel. Pray for those in our families, our companions, our communities who are lost and without Christ: that they might push past the stubbornness of pride to find him, hear of him and call upon his name.

Romans

VIEW OUR ROMANS SERIES ON YOUTUBE

