

p 67 WEEK 9: GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN HIS PLANS FOR JEWS AND GENTILES

Romans 10:1–11:36

The Place of the Passage

The message of the gospel is for all peoples: for the Jews who sought but did not believe and for the Gentiles who did not seek at all. Paul knows this is controversial, especially for Jews, and he seems to discern rising tensions in the Roman church between Jewish and Greek believers. As a result, he makes his painstaking case in Romans 10:1–11:36 for the universal proclamation of the gospel of Jesus and the Jewish people's rejection of it. But God is faithful! His promises will not fail. In Romans 11, Paul discusses the importance of the remnant of believers in Israel and how the incorporation of the Gentiles into their Christian community actually effects the salvation of "all Israel" (11:26).

p 68 The Big Picture

Romans 10:1–11:36 explains how the gospel is good news for people of all ethnicities and cultures, not just Jews, and then explores the implications of this point for the Jewish rejection of Jesus.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, Romans 10:1–11:36. Then review the shorter passages below and write your own notes on the following questions. (For further background, see the *ESV Study Bible*, pages 2174–2178; also available online at www.esvbible.org.)

1. The Gospel Heard and Unheard (10:1–11:10)

Paul's broken heart and love for his Jewish brothers and sisters is once again evident in Romans 10:1. But because he loves them, he must be honest with and about them. They have much passion, but this zeal is not according to knowledge. How does Paul explain in 10:3 what kind of "knowledge" he is referring to in 10:2?

If you recall it, describe your moment of conversion. What circumstances led to your salvation, and how was the gospel preached?

p 69 What does Paul mean by the phrase “obeyed the gospel” (10:16)?

God is not passive. Though he does delight to respond to the pleas of his people, he does not sit back and wait to be summoned. He is active, ruling, and engaged in this world. Reflect on Romans 10:20. What are some other biblical examples you can think of that show God revealing himself to people who were not seeking him at all? What examples of God’s own initiative do you see in your own life?

2. God’s Righteousness in His Plan for Jews and Gentiles (11:11–32)

How does salvation come to Gentiles through the trespass of the Jews (11:11)?

What extended metaphor does Paul use throughout 11:17–24, and how does he use it?

p 70 Why is justification by faith antithetical to pride (11:20)?

Read Romans 11:26 again. What is “the way” Paul is saying all Israel will be saved?

3. Concluding Doxology (11:33–36)

How would you describe Paul’s tone in these four verses? Why do you think he concludes in this way?

How would you define “glory” (11:36)?

p 71 Read through the following three sections on *Gospel Glimpses*, *Whole-Bible Connections*, and *Theological Soundings*. Then take time to reflect on the *Personal Implications* these sections have for your walk with the Lord.

Gospel Glimpses

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE GOSPEL. It is not easy to be saved. In fact, on our own steam, it’s impossible (Rom. 8:7). So Christ accomplishes the work for us. How do we receive this work? Again, the exercise of faith is impossible without the enabling power at the new birth (John 3:3; Rom. 12:3; Eph. 2:8). But we have no hoops to jump through, no levels to climb, no performance to achieve. In fact, while trusting Christ is not easy, it is quite simple. In Romans 10:9, Paul writes,

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” This is so simple, in fact, that Jesus implies that the kingdom is precisely for those of a childlike faith (Matt. 19:14)—trusting, vulnerable, unselfconscious. Even a mustard seed-sized amount of faith receives the mountain-moving power of the kingdom of God (Matt. 17:20). Every other religion and philosophy specifies steps and tips—*law*, in other words—to reach whatever they see as “salvation.” Only Christianity says that the work is accomplished, and it is ours to simply believe. What good news!

PURE GRACE. “But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace,” Paul writes in Romans 11:6. What is the ratio of grace to works needed to receive the justifying righteousness of Jesus Christ? One to zero. It is 100 percent grace that is needed. Otherwise grace would not be grace. The grace of God is not a down payment to get us started on an installment-plan salvation. It is not the push of a swing whose momentum must be maintained by our rocking. It is grace from beginning to end. Any compromise at this point undermines the whole of our salvation. For if we try to reinforce our eternal security by injecting just a little bit of personal morality into the mix, we reject and dishonor the perfect righteousness and finished work of Jesus Christ. This is good news because it gives us the freedom to be what we are without trying: sinful people desperately in need of grace for justification, sanctification, and glorification. And it’s also good news because it means we will have the 100 percent pure, unadulterated grace we need to empower our repentance and godly living.

Whole-Bible Connections

GLOBAL REDEMPTION. “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For [p 72](#) ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’ ” (Rom. 10:12–13). In Romans 3 Paul had used exactly the same phrase, “there is no distinction,” to underscore the universality of sin: “there is no distinction: for all have sinned” (3:22–23). While in Romans 3 Paul said there is no distinction in who sins, in Romans 10 Paul says there is no distinction in who can be saved. The gospel is not for insiders. And this has been God’s plan all along. God called Abraham to be a blessing to the nations (Gen. 12:1–3). This is reiterated by the prophets (e.g., Isa. 42:6; 49:6). Indeed, Paul quotes Joel 2:32 when he says that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:13). The result is that at the end of the Bible, when readers are given a glimpse into the new heavens and the new earth, we see “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Rev. 7:9).

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS. In Romans 11:8 Paul once again speaks to the blindness and deafness that those apart from God suffer from until the prison of their spiritual senses has been broken open. In this instance, he quotes Isaiah 29:10 and Deuteronomy 29:4 to demonstrate the old covenant examples of this spiritual defect. Indeed, in Isaiah 6:9–13, God calls the prophet Isaiah to a mission of preaching a message that not only falls on deaf ears and hostile hearts but actually creates them. And Jesus applies this same dynamic to his motivation in teaching in parables (Matt. 13:14–15). Paul is reminding his Jewish readers that even their hard-heartedness was not

unforeseen by God. It is no surprise. And he wants all to know that faith comes by hearing, and that even effectual hearing is a gift of God's grace in the gospel (Rom. 10:17).

Theological Soundings

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY IN EVANGELISM. For all that Paul has said about God's sovereignty in history and in salvation, the apostle does not allow this emphasis to undermine the compatible reality of human responsibility. While in Romans 9 Paul teaches us about God's sovereignty, in Romans 10 he teaches us that divine sovereignty coexists with our responsibility. Paul's reasoning in Romans 10:14–17 shows that God's sovereign will fuels, not replaces, the urgency of telling others the gospel of Jesus Christ. "How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?" (10:14). Indeed, the urgency of evangelism would be hindered if God were *not* sovereign, for then we would have no reason to hope that anyone would be brought from death to life by our preaching and witnessing.

ISRAEL AND LAST THINGS. Entire volumes have been written on the place of Israel and the wider world in God's plan for what is often called eschatology or "the end times."³ Many scholars believe that the unrepentance and disbelief [p 73](#) of Jews yesterday and today is only a temporary predicament, that there will be a widespread revival within the Jewish people shortly before Christ's final return. This is certainly plausible, since Paul explains that the hardening that has come upon Israel, preventing them from seeing Jesus Christ as the Messiah, is only "partial" (11:25), and it is only "until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in." In Romans 11:29, he reiterates that God's calling on the Jewish people is irrevocable, just as earlier he has reminded us that God has not rejected his chosen people (11:1). On the other hand, it is also clear from the New Testament that many (if not all) of the promises made to ethnic Israel are now fulfilled in Christ and the church. Intelligent, Bible-believing Christians hold differing views on what all this means for the place of national, ethnic Israel within the eschatological landscape. Despite these differing views, Bible-believing Christians of all viewpoints agree that God keeps his promises. His plan to glorify every person who expresses faith in Christ, be they Jew or Greek, insider or outsider, is secure. This is grounds for great hope and joy as we anticipate the glorious future awaiting us in the new heavens and the new earth.

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of Romans 10:1–11:36 for your own life today. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of (1) the *Gospel Glimpses*, (2) the *Whole-Bible Connections*, (3) the *Theological Soundings*, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses

2. Whole-Bible Connections

p 74 3. Theological Soundings

4. Romans 10:1–11:36

As You Finish This Unit ...

Take a moment to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you continue in this study of Romans. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you.