

ROMANS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Romans chapter 10 as we continue our study through the Word of God and this amazing letter that Paul wrote to the church in Rome!

We have covered a lot of ground over the last several weeks. We have seen Paul condemn the whole human race by saying, “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Romans 3:23.

And as hard as that is to swallow, we need to understand that before we can come to the Savior, come to Jesus. You see, apart from sin we think we are doing good. Thus, we need to understand we are sinners separated from God and we need someone to save us from our sin!

It is then that Paul moves to justification and shows us that we are justified before God, there is no record of our sin any longer because Jesus has paid in full the penalty for our sins!

It is not a matter of our good deeds outweighing our bad deeds that get us into heaven. It is not following the Law that gets us into heaven. It is all about our faith and having faith in the One who can save us, ***JESUS!***

It is as Paul said, “**Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.**” Romans 3:28.

From justification Paul then moves to sanctification. In other words, the moment we come to saving faith, God is working in our lives to mold and shape us into the men and women He wants us to be. And yes, it is life-long process, but we should be growing, we should be maturing in the faith!

Paul tells us in Romans 6:4-7, **“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.”**

And last week we began Paul’s fourth main division of this letter to the Romans, a section dealing with election.

In regard to election or the sovereignty of God, we saw in Romans 9:15-16, **“For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.’ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.”**

Now, as we move into chapter 10 this evening we are going to see man’s responsibility or his free will to choose, to receive Christ as Paul says in Romans 10:13, **“For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’”**

Here again God tells us to believe it by faith, divine election and man’s free will, it is not something we are going to be able to understand or reconcile with our finite minds, nor does God ask us to.

It is like the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; one God manifested in three distinct persons. I can’t figure it out with my finite mind, but God has clearly shown us this truth in His Word and He wants us to believe it by faith!

It is as the Lord said in Isaiah 55:8-9, **“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.’”**

So we have looked at divine election and now our responsibility to come to saving faith by believing and receiving Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior!

We can also breakdown Romans chapters 9-11, dealing with election, this way.

Romans chapter 9 deals with Israel’s past election.

Romans chapter 10 deals with Israel’s present rejection of the Messiah, of Jesus.

And in Romans chapter 11 we will see Israel’s future restoration, for God is not done with the Jewish people, there is a remnant that will be saved, the nation of Israel will turn to the Messiah. And may we not forget that there has always been a faithful remnant of Jewish believers!

Now, as Paul concluded in Romans chapter 9, he was setting the stage for what he is going to be talking about here in Romans chapter 10, Israel’s present rejection of Jesus, the Messiah.

He tells us in Romans 9:30-33, **“What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’”**

And we will see this evening that man has a responsibility to come to saving faith. God is not responsible for lost sinners who refuse to come to Him. He is drawing all people, by the Holy Spirit, to Jesus but it is up to them to receive Him or reject Him!

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Romans chapter 10, beginning in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

ROMANS 10

VERSE 1

Once again, we see Paul's heart for the Jewish people and he loves them and desires to see them saved!

We saw in the previous chapter, that if it were possible he would go to Hell if his Jewish brethren would be saved and here, once again, we see the heart of Paul for his people. They rejected the Rock, Jesus Christ and tried to attain righteousness by works outside of the Messiah. And as Paul sees their stumbling, it then leads to action on his part, it leads Paul to pray for His people that they might be saved.

Now some, they would rejoice over the stumbling of another or say something to the effect, "They are only getting what they deserve!"

May that not be our attitude towards the unsaved, or even the saved! May we have the heart of Paul, or really the heart of God towards people; towards family, friends, co-workers; that they would be saved, and we would be praying for them! For our brothers and sisters in the Lord, that we would be praying for them!

VERSE 2

Paul knew from his own personal experience that you can have a real zeal for God, be very active for God and yet lack the true knowledge of God. And as great as that sounds, in the end, it is meaningless! God will not accept it for you must worship Him in Spirit and in truth!

In Acts 9:1-5 we are told of Paul's zeal for God without knowledge. We are told, "**Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' And he said, 'Who are You, Lord?' Then the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'**"

Do you see how Paul was trying to serve God, he was sincere, but without knowledge! And as great as we think we are doing, when the Lord tells you that you are wrong, you need to listen!

Then we see Paul's conversion to the Lord Jesus and how his zeal for God is now with knowledge, it is true knowledge.

We are told in Acts chapter 9, beginning in verse 6, **“So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’ Then the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’ And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Here I am, Lord.’ So the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.’ Then Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.’ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed, and said, ‘Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in**

Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?’ But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.” Acts 9:6-22.

Paul had a bad reputation among believers, but that was now changing as he went forth in the power of God’s Spirit and was serving God in truth!

And think about it today. There are many people who are very zealous for God but without knowledge!

And this zeal for God is seen as they try to work their way into heaven by doing this and doing that, but you will never enter in by works, only by faith!

In fact, you can go to Israel today and you will find Jews who are very, very zealous for God. They are wearing black, long coats, black hats, curls underneath, coming down the sides. They will go to the Western Wall to pray. And as they open their prayer books their heads are bobbing back and forth. They have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge and that is not good! God will not accept that kind of righteousness!

You see, they are trying to approach God through good works and that will never happen because the only righteousness God will accept is perfection. Thus, it is only the righteousness of Christ that is imputed into our lives by faith that will save us!

How do we know this? Because our knowledge comes as the Word of God, illuminated by the Spirit of God and it enables us to walk in holiness before God.

You see, as sincere and devoted as people are to their faith, outside of Christ it is meaningless, you can’t do anything that He will accept apart from Him.

I can be very sincere and show my devotion to what I believe by driving my car across a bridge, even though the sign says, ***“BRIDGE OUT!”***

And yet, all that sincerity and devotion will leave me crashing upon the rocks below, it won't save me and the same is true for those that reject Jesus and try to enter in another way!

Notice what Paul says next regarding the righteousness they thought they had.

VERSE 3

Did you hear what Paul was saying here? They are ignorant of the righteousness that God has provided for them through Jesus Christ. And thus, they are seeking to establish a righteous standing before God by their works, by their good works, by their prayers and these things of which they are very zealous to follow, and by their endeavors they are trying to have a righteous standing before God. And they will never attain that righteousness by the Law, by good works!

You see, they lacked or truly rejected what God desired of them and tried to attain God's favor by keeping the Law, all 613 commandments and yet in Isaiah 64:6 we are told, **“But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousness are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.”**

That is their own prophet that has said that all our good works are like filthy rags before a holy and righteous God.

Even today the Jews struggle in this area. If you were to ask an Orthodox Jew today this question, “As much as you are zealous for God, what are you doing about sin? You have no Temple, you have no priesthood, you have no sacrifices! So how do you atone for your sins?”

And this just blows me away, but they will tell you, “God knows we would sacrifice for our sins if we had a Temple. Therefore, God will weigh our good deeds against our bad deeds and if the good deeds outweigh the bad deeds, God will accept us into heaven!”

What is wrong with that? It is not Scriptural! Even their own Scriptures should put them to silence, but they don't. In Leviticus 17:11 we are told, "**For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.**" And in the New Testament, in Hebrews 9:22 we are told, "**And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.**"

So they have a zeal for God, but, as you can see, it is without knowledge! And because of that, they are headed for Hell. That is why Paul said in Romans 10:1, "**Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.**"

But even Gentiles have this idea of good deeds and bad deeds and as long as you are a good person, God will accept you. As true as that may be, you are not a good person and that is the problem. Paul said, "**There is none righteous, no, not one . . . there is none who does good, no, not one.**" Romans 3:10, 12.

Also, as good as you may be in keeping the Law, in doing what is right so you can get into heaven, James shatters that kind of thinking when he says, "**For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.**" James 2:10.

I think that is pretty clear, we can't do it, but Jesus has done it for us! And Paul is telling us here that it is not only important to have the right information but then you must apply it to your life, you must submit to the righteousness of God that is found in Jesus!

Robert Murray MaCheyne, that godly Presbyterian preacher, tells the story of how he was passing out Gospel tracts one day and he gave one to a very well-dressed lady. As she looked at it she gave this man of god a haughty look and said, “Sir, you must not know who I am!” In a kind and gentle way, he replied back, “Madam, there is coming a day of judgment, and on that day, it will not make any difference who you are!”

How true that is, the only thing that will make a difference is our relationship with Jesus and His righteousness accounted into our lives by faith!

Therefore, people cannot come to Christ without the right information about the gospel; but information alone is not enough to save any person. There must be a radical submission to the righteousness of God, and a putting away of our own righteousness!

And if you are still struggling with the Law and trying to keep it to attain some kind of righteousness, or if you are just trying to be a good person to attain this righteousness, listen to what Paul says next.

VERSES 4-7

I think this is a good way to look at the Law. The Law was a signpost, pointing the way. But it could never take them to their destination.

That should make sense. I can see a sign on the road that says, “22 miles to Sheboygan” but that sign can’t get me there, it can only point the way to Sheboygan.

Thus, the Law cannot give righteousness; it only leads the sinner to the Savior who can give righteousness. It is a sign pointing us to Jesus!

The problem came as the Jews began to worship the Law instead of the Savior! And, as I have said, the Law was there to bring us to Christ, not to save us.

Yes, Christ fulfilled the Law completely; He was the only one who could (Matthew 5:17-18). The problem for us is that we can't keep the Law! Thus, Paul says that Christ is the "**end**" or *TELOS* in the Greek, which speaks of a termination or the purpose or goal of the Law was to point people to Jesus, that is the completion of the Law. That means that the Law is ended as far as Christians are concerned.

Remember what Paul said in Galatians 3:24-25, "**Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**"

If you have come to Christ, then the Law has done its job and it is done away with. Salvation is based upon believing and receiving Jesus, and not in fulfilling the Law by works!

Of this verse, Romans 10:4, Spurgeon said, "Christ did not come to make the law milder, or to render it possible for our cracked and battered obedience to be accepted as a sort of compromise. The law is not compelled to lower its terms, as though it had originally asked too much; it is holy and just and good, and ought not to be altered in one jot or tittle, nor can it be. Our Lord gives the law all it requires, not a part, for that would be an admission that it might justly have been content with less at first."

Then, in Romans 10:6 Paul quotes out of Leviticus 18:5 to show God's standard. If you want to be righteous before God in your own righteousness then you must live by the Law, you must keep it perfectly.

Is that possible? Of course not because man is sinful, he is a sinner separated from God. In the minds of the Jews they saw the Scribes and the Pharisees as holy men of God and if only two people were to make it into heaven, one would be a Scribe and the other a Pharisee.

But Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:20, **“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”**

Thus, any hopes of man achieving righteousness by the Law is now doomed to fail from the very start, as Paul said, **“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”** Romans 3:20.

Think of it like this; when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the Law of God the children of Israel were already breaking it and 3,000 Jews lost their lives in the judgment of God (Exodus 32:28). But, on the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit of Life descended upon the people, 3,000 lives were saved (Acts 2:41).

It is as Paul said in Romans 8:2-4, **“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”**

Then Paul quotes out of Deuteronomy 30:12-14. And this is interesting to me. Keep in mind that these verses are not referring to faith and the gospel at all. They are speaking about the law, and specifically the commandment to **“turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul”** (Deut. 30:10b). God is saying that the law is not hidden, distant, or inaccessible. A man doesn't have to go up to heaven or cross the sea to find it. It is near at hand and waiting to be obeyed.

But the Apostle Paul takes these words and reapplies them to the gospel. He says that the language of faith doesn't ask a man to climb to heaven to bring Christ down. For one thing, that would be utterly impossible; but it would also be quite unnecessary, because Christ has already come down to earth in His Incarnation!

As one writer put it, "It isn't who is going to ascend into heaven to bring the Messiah down. Or who will descend in the abyss to bring the Messiah up. It isn't the accomplishing of some great work. It isn't the killing of the seven headed dragon and getting the golden apples. It isn't something that man can boast in. It isn't something that man can glory in his accomplishments. Righteousness doesn't come from our good efforts. Our righteousness comes as a gift of God imparted to us through our faith in Jesus Christ, which eliminates boasting. None of us can boast of how good we are or how righteous we are because my righteousness has nothing to do with my good efforts! My righteousness is completely through my faith in Jesus Christ! On Christ, the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand. My glory is in Jesus Christ. And in that righteousness that He has imparted to me because of my faith and trust in Him." Exactly!

Isn't it amazing the great lengths people will go to achieve righteousness, reaching up into heaven to bring God down – but He has already come! Or reaching down to the grave to bring Him up – He has already risen from the dead!

You see, a righteousness based on the Law denies His Incarnation and His Resurrection! It is as Geoffrey Wilson said, "The sheer perversity of unbelief is shown by the many who prefer to undertake an impossible odyssey rather than put their trust in an accessible Christ."

The foolishness of man trying to attain righteousness before God by his own efforts, it won't work, it won't be accepted! What do we do then? Let's read on and see what Paul has to say regarding this issue.

VERSES 8-13

Notice what Paul is doing here. Paul is telling us that salvation does not come by the Law through works but by grace through faith in Jesus! And the idea here is that it begins in our heart, the inner man and not the outward act of obedience. Why is that? Because God wants your heart and once you surrender to Him, that which has taken place on the inside will be manifested in your actions.

For the Jewish religious leaders, they were trying to fulfill the Law outwardly but inwardly they were wicked, their hearts were deceitful as Jesus said, **“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, ‘If we had lived**

in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’ Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?” Matthew 23:23-33.

That is a heavy rebuke by the Lord against these Jewish religious leaders and the point is simple. They looked good outwardly but inwardly they were dead! God wants the heart and it is out of the heart that our actions flow!

And here, the point that Paul is making is that we don’t have to go to heaven to find Christ or to the dead, but God’s Word is near, it is not complicated, the Word of faith, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

All you must do, the free will of man, is confess that Jesus is Lord, believe in His resurrection and what is in your heart will be confessed from your lips! It is as Denney put it, “A heart believing unto righteousness, and a mouth making confession unto salvation, are not really two things, but two sides of the same thing.”

Do you see the simplicity of salvation – it cost Christ His life and He has extended that free gift of eternal life based upon His finished work, if we believe by faith and receive Him into our lives.

It is as Spurgeon said, “We believe everything which the Lord Jesus has taught, but we must go a step further, and trust him. It is not even enough to believe in him, as being the Son of God, and the anointed of the Lord; but we must believe on him . . . The faith that saves is not believing certain truths, nor even believing that Jesus is a Savior; but it is resting on him, depending on him, lying with all your weight on Christ as the foundation of your hope. Believe that he can save you; believe that he will save you; at any rate leave the whole matter of your salvation with him in unquestioning confidence. Depend upon him without fear as to your present eternal salvation. This is the faith which saves the soul.” Amen to that!

As Paul moves on, in Romans 10:11-13 we see Paul speak of who this salvation is for. Remember what we studied in Romans chapter 9, the sovereignty of God in the election of man.

But here in Romans chapter 10 we see the human responsibility to believe in Jesus, to call upon Jesus. How do you know if God predestined you, elected you to be a child of God? By calling upon Him and receiving Him into your life. What if you don't? Then you are not elected to be a child of God – the sovereignty of God and the free will of man, it is 100% of both!

And let me say this because today, there is a push for Reformed Theology, Calvinism! It is the idea that God saved some people and others, He created them for Hell. And it doesn't matter what you do to get saved, if you are not elected, you can't be saved, even if you want to. On the other end of the spectrum, if you are elected, there is nothing you can do about that, you are elected by God, even if you don't want to be.

Is that crazy or what? And yet, many believe it. But Paul puts that to rest here and he tells us, “**For whoever calls upon the name of the LORD shall be saved.**” Romans 10:13. One writer put it like this,

Notice the “whoever's” here. Whoever believes on Him. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. The door is open to all men.

I do not subscribe to the Calvinistic theology that says that there is limited atonement. That Christ only died for those that would believe. I believe that Christ died for the sins of the world. And I believe that the door is open for all men to come. And that whoever believes in Him will be saved. I also believe that believing in Him is a matter of choice. That a person chooses to believe in Jesus Christ or he chooses not to believe in Jesus Christ. And I believe that it is a choice that is made in one's heart and not an intellectual choice.

I do not believe that anybody has ever rejected Jesus Christ on purely intellectual grounds. They may declare that they have intellectual difficulties. But that is just their excuse for not believing. The real reason for their not believing is that they don't want to submit to the Lordship of Jesus because of the requirements that He makes of us. To live after the spirit and not to live after the flesh. And because they want to live after the flesh because their hearts are evil, they choose not to believe in Jesus.

- Source Unknown

I hope that is clear. God's sovereignty and man's free will to choose and they are both involved 100%!

Also, here in Romans 10:13, Paul quotes out of Joel 2:32 to show how salvation was not to the Jews alone, but also to the Gentiles, for all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved!

And folks, this is not a New Testament idea, for we are told in Isaiah 60:1-3, "**Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.**"

Salvation will and has come to the Gentiles, but for the most part, at this time, Israel has rejected the salvation of God! But, as we will see as we get to Romans chapter 11, God will save the Jewish people, they will come to saving faith!

VERSES 14-15

Paul quotes out of Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15. In Nahum, written some 150 years after the prophet Jonah came and called for the people of Nineveh to repent, and they did, but now judgment was coming upon the Assyrians for their rebellion against God and this was good news to the Jews.

In Isaiah it speaks of the good news of the glorious Kingdom Age, and that of course is great news!

But I believe Paul is speaking of the present time we live in, that we are to bring the Gospel message to the people who don't know Him or else how will they believe if they don't know about Him? How shall they believe in Him if they have not heard of Him?

Thus, we have been instructed by the Lord to, **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”** Matthew 28:19-20.

But think about this for a minute. God could have chosen any means for the message of salvation to come, such as angelic messengers or directly working without a human preacher. Nevertheless God's "normal" way of bringing people to Jesus Christ is through the preaching of the gospel. May we go forth with the Good News, the Gospel Message and bring it to a lost and dying world!

And for the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, but Paul is speaking to the Jewish people here, the remedy for Israel's rejection of Jesus, and for all, is to hear the Word of God that they might believe in Jesus and for those that bring forth this good news, how beautiful their footsteps are as they go forward with glad tidings of Jesus Christ!

VERSES 16-17

Here is the problem! Even though people hear the Gospel message, not all will receive it and believe it! Why is that? Because of the hardness of man's heart to the things of God and no matter how clear things may be, if they don't want to receive it, they won't, it is a matter of the heart, not the mind!

Look at what is spoken of in Isaiah 53:1-6, **“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”**

Now Jewish scholars have traditionally believed, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, that this is speaking of the nation of Israel, but that is wrong. When did Israel die for the sins of the world? They didn't, in fact they were in need of the Savior, of the Messiah just like the rest of the world.

The evidence was before them that Jesus is the Messiah, the fulfillment of what the Old Testament prophets spoke of. He healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, caused the lame to walk and-so-on, and yet, because of the hardness of their hearts, the Jewish religious leaders said He did these things by the power of the Devil and not of God.

Let me show you how controversial this passage of Isaiah is. We are told,

One might think the passage is obscure and irrelevant based on the fact that so many people are unfamiliar with it. That unfamiliarity in part stems from the fact that Isaiah 53 does not appear in the regular synagogue calendar readings. Yet it could be argued that the very fact that it is left out shouts out the importance of this passage. Even the reasons for omitting it point to the uniqueness of this passage. For example, one Jewish scholar, Claude Montefiore, explained: "Because of the christological interpretation given to the chapter by Christians it is omitted from the series of prophetic lessons for the Deuteronomy Sabbaths . . . the omission is deliberate and striking." . . .

Some of the first written interpretations or targums (ancient paraphrases on biblical texts) see this passage as referring to an individual servant, the Messiah, who would suffer. Messianic Jewish talmudist, Rachmiel Frydland, recounts those early views:

“Our ancient commentators with one accord noted that the context clearly speaks of God’s Anointed One, the Messiah. The Aramaic translation of this chapter, ascribed to Rabbi Jonathan ben Uzziel, a disciple of Hillel who lived early in the second century c.e., begins with the simple and worthy words:

‘Behold my servant Messiah shall prosper; he shall be high, and increase, and be exceeding strong: as the house of Israel looked to him through many days, because their countenance was darkened among the peoples, and their complexion beyond the sons of men (Targum Jonathan on Isaiah 53, ad locum).’”

“We find the same interpretation in the Babylonian Talmud:

What is his [the Messiah’s] name? The Rabbis said: His name is “the leper scholar,” as it is written, “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God, and afflicted.” (Sanhedrin 98b)

“Similarly, in an explanation of Ruth 2:14 in the Midrash Rabbah it states:

He is speaking of the King Messiah: “Come hither” draw near to the throne “and dip thy morsel in the vinegar,” this refers to the chastisements, as it is said, “But he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.”

“The Zohar, in its interpretation of Isaiah 53, points to the Messiah as well:

There is in the Garden of Eden a palace named the Palace of the Sons of Sickness. This palace the Messiah enters, and He summons every pain and every chastisement of Israel. All of these come and rest upon Him. And had He not thus lightened them upon Himself, there had been no man able to bear Israel’s chastisements for the transgression of the law; as it is written, “Surely our sicknesses he has carried.” (Zohar II, 212a)

The early sages expected a personal Messiah to fulfill the Isaiah prophecy. No alternative interpretation was applied to this passage until the Middle Ages. And then, a completely different view was presented. This view was popularized by Jewish commentator Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Itzhaki), who lived one thousand years after Jesus.

Rashi held the position that the servant passages of Isaiah referred to the collective fate of the nation of Israel rather than a personal Messiah. Some rabbis, such as Ibn Ezra and Kimchi, agreed. However, many other rabbinic sages during this same period and later—including Maimonides - realized the inconsistencies of Rashi's views and would not abandon the original messianic interpretations.

- <https://jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/issues-v13-n06/whos-the-subject-of-isaiah-53-you-decide/>

You see, if you don't want to believe you won't no matter how much evidence there is before you!

Now, in saying that, may it not discourage us or cause us to stop from proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ! Listen to Paul's warning to Timothy, and I believe to us in the days we are living in when people want to have their ears tickled instead of their hearts pierced by the Word of God!

Paul said, **“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”** II Timothy 4:1-5.

Just because a child refuses to take their medicine do you stop giving it to them? Of course not, it is what is needed for them to be healed.

Just because people don't want to hear the Word of God do we stop giving it to them? Of course not, it is what they need to be healed spiritually speaking, it is where their faith begins, and it ends!

VERSE 18

Someone, however, might insist that the Jews were not given adequate opportunity to hear the message. But Paul shows them that they have had plenty of opportunity to hear the Gospel message.

In Psalm 19:1-6 David shows us that God's existence is seen in nature, by creation itself, and then in verses 7-14 he shows us how God's existence is seen in the Scriptures, the Word of God.

So not only the Jews, but all the world has seen nature and has no excuse in believing that God created all this.

Now, as His representatives, it is our responsibility to go out into the world and present to them the Gospel message so that they might come into a personal relationship with Him!

VERSE 19

Paul shows us from the Old Testament that God is going to use the Gentiles to cause Israel to be jealous with the hope that they will return to God. It is as Paul said in Romans 11:11, **“I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.”**

The thing is, in knowing what they know; they are accountable for their rejection of the Messiah, of Jesus!

As we read on, look at how Paul speaks of the Gentiles being saved and he uses the Old Testament to do this!

VERSE 20

You see, God knew that Israel would turn against him and that He would use the Gentiles, who were not seeking Him, to cause them to be jealous!

It is as Paul said in Romans 9:30-32, **“What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.”**

The problem for the Jews is they tried to obtain a righteousness by the Law through works while the Gentiles obtained the righteousness of God by grace through faith.

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, and this is from The Amplified Bible, **“For it is by free grace (God’s unmerited favor) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ’s salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God; Not because of works [not the fulfillment of the Law’s demands], lest any man should boast. [It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.]”**

Exactly! One writer summed this up for us like this. He wrote,

With these verses the argument takes a turn. The apostle anticipated another objection. Someone might argue, “Yes, Israel heard but she did not understand that God purposed to offer righteousness by faith to all mankind, including Gentiles.” So Paul wrote, Again I ask (lit., “But I say”), did Israel not understand? (egnō, “know”) His answer this time was from two Old Testament quotations, one as early as Moses (Deut. 32:21) and the second by Isaiah (Isa. 65:1). Both Old Testament leaders wrote about God’s turning to the Gentiles, whom the Jews thought had no understanding (asynetō, “senseless”; Rom. 1:21, 31). And yet concerning Israel, God has been gracious in spite of her disobedience (a quotation of Isa. 65:2). Israel’s continuing rebellious and unbelieving disobedience was judged by God’s turning to the Gentiles (Rom. 10:20; Acts 8:1-8, 10). At the same time God has not withheld salvation from Jews. He has held out His hands, imploring them to return to Him.

- Source Unknown

And God has done that for all mankind. He has held out His hands to the people of this world that they would come to Him, but it is their choice! And we will see Paul close with that thought of God holding out His hands to the Jewish people specifically!

VERSE 21

Notice the love of God as He stretches out His hand to Israel, a stiff-necked, hard-hearted, rebellious people, not at all different from us.

And, in Matthew 23:37 you can see the heart of Jesus for the Jewish people as we are told, **“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”**

How sad!

We have looked at Israel’s past election.

This evening we have looked at Israel’s present rejection of the Messiah.

And next time, as we get into Romans chapter 11, we will see Israel’s future restoration!

I do realize that there are many who feel that God is done with Israel, but He is not! That is what Romans chapter 11 will deal with, ***ISRAEL’S FUTURE RESTORATION!***

But to give you a glimpse of that before we close, listen to what Paul said in Romans 11:25-27, **“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.’”**

God is not done with His people, He is faithful to His Word, and thus, we can trust in Him for what He has promised He is able to bring to pass!