

## God's Universal Offer of Salvation

**Lesson Scope:** [Romans 9:30](#) to [Romans 10:21](#)

### Lesson Focus

Our lesson text gets to the root of why Israel failed to be all that God desired. Many Israelites went about to establish their own righteousness through the works of the Law and failed to see Christ as "the end of the law." He is the One who fulfilled completely all the Old Testament prophecies of a coming Messiah.

The inclusion of the Gentiles in God's plan further confused Israel. They saw the Gentiles as "aliens" and "strangers from the covenants of promise" (Ephesians 2:12). They could not grasp the faith-based provision of the New Covenant.

Jesus' death and resurrection created equal opportunity for both Jew and Gentile to be saved. Many Israelites stumbled on the Rock that should have become their foundation and cornerstone. Their rejection of Christ resulted in their loss of God's blessing, which was conferred upon "whosoever believeth."

It will be important for you as an individual familiarize yourself with the complete unit of thought in chapters 9-11. Today's lesson lays the groundwork for the next lesson by its teaching on why God rejected Israel.

Chapters 9-11 are written to a Gentile audience. However, Paul himself states that even though he was primarily an apostle to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7); he still had an intense desire for the Jewish people to come to know salvation.

We who have a Christian heritage also have a great accountability, as did the Jews of Paul's day. This lesson should challenge us to make sure that we are responding worthily to the great privilege that is ours both in receiving the message and in proclaiming it to others.

Man's own attempts to attain righteousness are as filthy rags in God's sight. Only through faith in Jesus Christ can anyone become righteous and enjoy salvation

**Lesson Aim:** To see principles that relate to God's provision for all men to be saved.

**Theme Verses:** [Ephesians 2:8-9](#). For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.

## Lesson Text

### "Ignorant of God's Righteousness"

[Romans 9:30-33](#) <sup>30</sup> What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. <sup>31</sup> But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. <sup>32</sup> Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; <sup>33</sup> As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

[Romans 10:1-3](#) <sup>1</sup> Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. <sup>2</sup> For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup> For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

### "The Righteousness Which Is of Faith"

[Romans 10:4-21](#) <sup>4</sup> For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. <sup>5</sup> For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. <sup>6</sup> But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*;) <sup>7</sup> Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) <sup>8</sup> But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; <sup>9</sup> That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. <sup>11</sup> For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. <sup>12</sup> For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek:

for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. <sup>13</sup> For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. <sup>14</sup> 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? <sup>15</sup> And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! <sup>16</sup> But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? <sup>17</sup> So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. <sup>18</sup> But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. <sup>19</sup> But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you. <sup>20</sup> But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. <sup>21</sup> But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

### **Questions for Study**

#### **"Ignorant of God's Righteousness"**

1. What requirements for attaining righteousness did Israel fail to grasp?
2. What responses of man indicate stumbling?
3. What are some futile efforts of man to restore a relationship with God?
4. How can we be sure our zeal is "according to knowledge"?

#### **"The Righteousness Which Is of Faith"**

5. What is meant by the statement "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness"?
6. What basic truths about salvation are given in verses Romans 10:8-13?
7. Does the Gentile now have more opportunity than the Jew? Explain.
8. What influences does God use to draw man to Himself?

### **Analyzing the Passage**

Followed after (Romans 9:31) suggests a quest for something greatly desired. The word sought in Romans 9:32 and Romans 10:20 has a very

similar meaning. Many of the Jews waited with great anticipation for the coming of the Messiah, while the Gentiles were unaware of the expanded privileges the New Covenant would bring. The contrasting thoughts of followed not after (Romans 9:30), and followed after (9:31) illustrate the futility of man's efforts to restore his relationship with God apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

Righteousness as used in Romans 9:30 and 10:3-10 has the basic thought of being restored to God or being right with God. The law of righteousness (9:31) is the standard of holiness and conduct God requires of those who want to be right with Him. Jesus Himself illustrated this new law when He said, "It hath been said" (Mosaic Law), "but I say unto you" (the law of righteousness). This law supersedes the Mosaic Law (Romans 9:32; 10:5) and cannot be "attained to" outside of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Attention to all the details was a very important part of observing this Ceremonial Law (Romans 10:5). This made it difficult for many Jews to accept the simplicity of God's provisions under the New Covenant.

Foolish (Romans 10:19) means "without understanding, or lacking intelligence." This fits with Israel's view of the Gentiles.

Gainsaying people (Romans 10:21) talk back and are contrary.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **"Ignorant of God's Righteousness"**

1. Only those who seek salvation by faith can attain to righteousness (Romans 9:30-33). The Law made men aware of sin but could not save them from it. Many in Israel zealously sought after righteousness, but they failed because they did not comprehend that the purpose of the Law was to point man to Christ (Galatians 3:24). God accepts only those who by faith submit to His provisions for salvation.

2. Christ becomes a stumbling block to those who refuse to believe on Him (Romans 9:33). The Israelites carried personal responsibility for their ignorance. Their refusal to receive Christ as the Messiah disqualified them from further involvement in God's plan. All those who insist on following their own way do so to their own destruction. "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Luke 20:18).

3. Those who have been saved seek the salvation of others (Romans

10:1-2). Paul's desire for his "kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:3) was that they would recognize their failure and turn to the Lord. We should also have the desire of our heavenly Father that all men, including the Jews of our day, "be saved, and ... come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

4. Righteousness is possible only to those who forsake their own way and submit to God's way (Romans 10:3). Righteousness is not merely being religious. Many are deceived by a "form of godliness" that gives room for the flesh. To continue in our own way is an expression of self-righteousness.

### **"The Righteousness Which Is of Faith"**

5. Salvation through Christ is easily understood and readily available (Romans 10:6-8). The provision of salvation is within reach of all who desire it. Even an illiterate or uneducated person can grasp the message and respond to the call of salvation. His testimony can be an instrument to bring the message to others. The simplicity of salvation is often repulsive to the intellectual mind.

6. Salvation is only for those who confess with the mouth and believe in the heart (Romans 10:9-11). This dual condition for salvation is important. We must have faith in God's provision through Christ. Confession is the expression of our need for God's provision.

7. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:12-13). "All have sinned," but all can be saved. God will force no one but will forgive anyone who is willing to sincerely cry out to Him for salvation. His storehouse of grace and forgiveness is inexhaustible.

8. The message of salvation is heard through the preaching of the Word (Romans 10:14-15). Coupled with the work of the Holy Spirit—God's Word, whether written, spoken, or lived by His children—is His instrument to call men to salvation. This enjoins upon God's people the great responsibility of being "epistle[s] ... known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2).

9. Those with the greatest opportunities sometimes reject salvation (Romans 10:21). With knowledge comes accountability. Will we be faithful, or will we fail as Israel did? "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48).

## **Important Teachings**

1. Only those who seek salvation by faith can attain to righteousness (Romans 9:30-33).
2. Christ becomes a stumbling block to those who refuse to believe on Him (Romans 9:33).
3. Those who have been saved seek the salvation of others (Romans 10:1-2).
4. Righteousness is possible only to those who forsake their own way and submit to God's way (Romans 10:3).
5. Salvation through Christ is easily understood and readily available (Romans 10:6-8).
6. Salvation is only for those who confess with the mouth and believe in the heart (Romans 10:9-11).
7. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:12-13).
8. The message of salvation is heard through the preaching of the Word (Romans 10:14-15).
9. Those with the greatest opportunities sometimes reject salvation (10:21).
10. God proclaims Himself to the world through nature (Romans 10:18).

## **Answers to Questions**

*1. What requirements for attaining righteousness did Israel fail to grasp?*

They rejected Christ as the Messiah. They did not understand the change in law that Christ's death had effected. Salvation could not be earned by practicing the Ceremonial Law. Faith was the missing key.

*2. What responses of man indicate stumbling?*

To insist on our own way without considering the advice of faithful brethren is very dangerous. If we question cornerstone doctrines of our faith and practice, it will likely not be long until we lose them. Although it may take time for some to appreciate some of the church's applications to the Scriptures, defending one's immaturity is counterproductive.

*3. What are some futile efforts of man to restore a relationship with God?*

Some emphasize faith without works (believing without obedience). Others think their good works are a satisfactory compensation for sin. Still others have turned to asceticism.

4. *How can we be sure our zeal is "according to knowledge"?*

Our zeal is according to knowledge when it blends with the eternal purposes of God. Because finite man has a limited knowledge of what those purposes are, God's people follow His Word and His Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-16).

5. *What is meant by the statement "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness"?*

The Law pointed forward to Christ (Galatians 3:24). His coming fulfilled the purpose of the Law and brought the Old Covenant to an end. His perfect sacrifice opened up the "new and living way." Righteousness could no longer be attained through keeping the Law.

6. *What basic truths about salvation are given in verses Romans 10:8-13?*

Salvation is readily available to all men. A blood sacrifice is not needed, because Jesus' blood provides redemption for all; therefore we simply need to believe and confess Him. God's work is effective if one truly believes. Faith is an integral part of salvation. God is no respecter of persons.

7. *Does the Gentile now have more opportunity than the Jew? Explain.* No. Although God has turned away from working with Israel as a nation, salvation is a faith-based provision for "whosoever will."

8. *What influences does God use to draw man to Himself?*

Verse 18 seems to refer to Psalm 19:4, where it speaks of the heavenly bodies communicating about God to the inhabitants of the earth. According to verse 19, God's turning to the Gentiles was in part to make Israel aware of their fallen position. God uses His Spirit and His Word to speak to man's conscience. Difficult circumstances in life can cause man to cry out to God.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.... The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but

unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-24).

When a sinner cries out, "What must I do to be saved?" the universal answer continues to resound, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

### **Research Guide**

1. Read Part V on "God's Plan of Salvation" in *Doctrines of the Bible*, especially chapters III—V.
2. Study the Old Testament passages quoted or referred to in the lesson scope.
3. Read Galatians 3:6-4:7 to increase your understanding of the purpose of the Law and to understand why the works of the Law cannot coexist with salvation by faith.