

Romans Session 149
Israel's Failure was ignorance of the Person of God
The Ignorance of the Provision of Christ 2
Ignorance of the place of Faith 2

Romans 10:4-10 (NASB)

⁴ *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

⁵ *For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.*

⁶ *But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down),*

⁷ *or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."*

⁸ *But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,*

⁹ *that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;*

¹⁰ *for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*

IGNORANCE OF THE PROVISION OF CHRIST 2

Romans 10:4-10 (NASB)

⁴ *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness"*

Because of that arrogant self-satisfaction and self-righteousness, Jews were blind to the marvelous truth of the New Covenant, that *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.*

They stumbled over the stone of stumbling spoken of earlier

Romans 9:32-33 (NASB) ³² *Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³ just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."*

And, in Isaiah:

Isaiah 8:14-15 (NASB) ¹⁴ *"Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁵ "Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught."*

But it was said that God would;

Isaiah 8:14b-15 (NASB) ¹⁴ *"become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁵ "Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught."*

Christ declared early in His ministry that the man-made self-righteousness characterized by the scribes and Pharisees was repugnant to God and would qualify no one to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matthew 5:20 (NASB) ²⁰ *"For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Until a person acknowledges his own unrighteousness in light of divine and perfect righteousness, he will see no need for a Savior to liberate him from sin and provide him with God's own righteousness.

No preacher, teacher, or evangelist can faithfully or effectively present the gospel if he does not first convince his hearers of their damning unrighteousness apart from Christ.

Jews in the New Testament times sought to fulfill **the Law** by their own efforts and thereby attain a righteousness acceptable to God.

Paul however declares that **Christ** is the only **end**, the only fulfillment, of perfect divinely acceptable **righteousness**.

Some interpreters believe Paul is here referring to the fulfillment of the law of which Jesus spoke when He said;

Matthew 5:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ *"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.*

¹⁸ *"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*

Others maintain that the apostle is speaking of Christ's fulfillment of the Old Covenant through the New Covenant of the gospel.

Paul cannot be speaking of Christ's historical fulfillment of the law, as important as that truth is. Christ did indeed historically fulfill **the law** and the entire Old Covenant by His perfect, sinless life, whether anyone believes in Him or not.

But that accomplishment does not provide anyone else with saving righteousness. Rather, as indicated at the end of verse 4, Paul is saying that belief in Christ as Savior and Lord ends the sinner's futile quest for **righteousness** through his own imperfect attempts to fulfill **the law**. When a sinner receives Christ, he also receives the gift of Christ's own **righteousness**.

Paul here uses the term **law** in its most general sense, as representing the totality of God's commands and requirements under the Old Covenant, including such things as observance of the temple sacrifices and the feasts.

Those who try to please God and thereby attain salvation through legalism or religious ritual even behavior and forms commanded by Him pursue an absolutely vain quest, because the best righteousness fallen man can hope to achieve on his own is worth no more than "a filthy garment in God's eyes.

Isaiah 64:6 (NASB)

⁶ *For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.*

Anticipating the provision by Christ, Isaiah declared that:

Isaiah 45:24b (NASB)

²⁴ *"Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength."*

The glorious truth of the gospel is that God;

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NASB)

²¹ *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

It was for freedom, that Christ set us free;

Galatians 5:1 (NASB)

¹ *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

He said the same thing in different words to the Colossian Church;

Colossians 2:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ *When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,*

¹⁴ *having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*

In his letter to Rome, Paul has already proclaimed,

Romans 3:20-22 (NASB)

²⁰ *because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.*

²¹ *But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,*

²² *even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;*

So being willfully ignorant of Christ and His righteousness, the Jews cut themselves off from redemption.

ISRAEL WAS IGNORANT OF THE PLACE OF FAITH 2

Romans 10:4B-10 (NASB)

⁴ *everyone who believes.*

⁵ *For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.*

⁶ *But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?'" (that is, to bring Christ down),*

⁷ *or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."*

⁸ *But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,*

⁹ *that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;*

¹⁰ *for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*

Because Israel was ignorant of God's holiness and of His provision for salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ, she was also ignorant of the place of faith in God's plan of salvation.

Because they relied upon their own works righteousness, Jews saw no need for faith.

As Paul had already pointed out;

Romans 9:31-32 (NASB)

³¹ *but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.*

³² *Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,*

Consequently, they cut themselves off from Christ and thereby also cut themselves off from the righteousness that He imparts **to everyone who believes** in Him.

To reject Christ is to forfeit the perfect righteousness that only He can provide.

Believers receive as a gracious gift from God what they never could have achieved by their own efforts.

Everyone who believes in Him, signs, as it were, the new and eternal covenant that Christ sealed with His own blood.

Hebrews 12:24 (NASB)

²⁴ *and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.*

Hebrews 13:20 (NASB)

²⁰ *Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,*

Thereby making His righteousness our own.

To verify the place of faith in God's eternal plan for man's redemption, Paul reminds his readers that;

Leviticus 18:5 (NASB)

⁵ *'So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD.*

In other words, whoever relies on his own obedience to the **law** is held accountable for everything that the **law** requires. Quoting again from Deuteronomy, Paul testifies that;

Deuteronomy 27:26 (NASB)

²⁶ *'Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'*

Galatians 3:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ *For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM."*

The righteousness which is based on law demands absolute perfection in every detail of the **law**. For that reason, James says;

James 2:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ *For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*

It would look like this, a person who failed in only one point of the law would remain just as lost as a person who failed in every point of the law.

Anyone who is not self-deceived realizes the impossibility of never stumbling even in the smallest way.

And the foolish person who does presumptuously rely on his own obedience to the **law** will attain only the imperfect and unacceptable **righteousness** that his imperfect obedience merits.

In God's sight, such righteousness is wholly unrighteous and can never remove sin or earn divine favor.

Galatians 3:11a (NASB)

¹¹ *Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident;*

Because of the countless rabbinical traditions that had been developed over the previous several hundred years, the Jews of Paul's time had so lowered and replaced with traditions god's divine standard of righteousness that many Jews believed that they lived in satisfactory obedience to the law.

After Jesus cited several Old Testament commandments, the rich young ruler told Him with doubtless sincerity,

Matthew 19:16-20 (NASB)

¹⁶ *And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"*

¹⁷ *And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."*

¹⁸ *Then he *said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS;*

¹⁹ *HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."*

²⁰ *The young man *said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?"*

The truths that Paul emphasizes here may be summarized as follows:

First, the man who pursues salvation by trying to keep the law will be judged based on that effort.

Second, it is impossible to keep all the law.

Third, the inevitable failure of works-righteousness results in eternal damnation.

The idea that even the most ardent Pharisee was unable to keep God's law and was therefore cursed was unthinkable to Jews.

Many Jews believed they were acceptable to God simply because they were Jews, members of His chosen race through physical descent from Abraham, in their thinking, the most reprobate Jew was more pleasing to God than the most upright Gentile.

But Paul makes clear earlier in this epistle,

Romans 4:15a (NASB)

¹⁵ *for the Law brings about wrath,*

The law both demonstrates and incites man's natural lawlessness and releases God's wrath against him.

The law justifies no one

The law redeems no one

The law provides mercy for no one

By the law, man is left to his own resources, all of which are imperfect, sinful, and powerless to save, which necessitates salvations by faith.