

**Romans Session 150**  
**Israel's Failure Was Ignorance of the Person of God**  
**Ignorance of the place of Faith 3**

*Romans 10:4-10 (NASB)*

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

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

<sup>6</sup> *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),*

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

<sup>8</sup> *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,*

<sup>9</sup> *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;*

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

**ISRAEL WAS IGNORANT OF THE PLACE OF FAITH 2**

*Romans 10:4B-10 (NASB)*

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*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.

Personifying **the righteousness based on faith**, Paul says that it **speaks thus**

***Deuteronomy 30:12-14 (NASB)***

<sup>12</sup> ***"It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?'"***

<sup>13</sup> ***"Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?'"***

<sup>14</sup> ***"But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it."***

Calling His people to faithful obedience, God said to Israel,

***Deuteronomy 30:9-10 (NASB)***

<sup>9</sup> ***"Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers;***

<sup>10</sup> ***if you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.***

In His law, God set the standards for holy living and has always required heart obedience, so that the promises to Israel just mentioned were contingent on her faith, evidenced by seeking the Lord with all her heart and soul.

Paul pointed out earlier;

***Romans 4:3 (NASB)***

<sup>3</sup> ***For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."***

***Genesis 15:3-6 (NASB)***

<sup>3</sup> ***And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir."***

<sup>4</sup> ***Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."***

<sup>5</sup> ***And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count***

*them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."*

*<sup>6</sup> Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.*

The physical father of Israel became the spiritual father of all who believe

*Romans 4:10-11 (NASB)*

*<sup>10</sup> How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;*

*<sup>11</sup> and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,*

*Romans 4:13 (NASB)*

*<sup>13</sup> For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

Even the commandments in the Old Testament books of the law are not primarily a call to external obedience. They are above all a call to heartfelt, adoring faith in the God of mercy and lovingkindness, who desires obedience and who graciously forgives sin.

External observance of the law without internal faith in the God who gave the law results in condemnation for sin without mercy, not salvation from it.

On the plains of Moab, Moses proclaimed:

*Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (NASB77)*

*<sup>4</sup> "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!*

*<sup>5</sup> "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

A short while later he reminded the people;

*Deuteronomy 7:7-9 (NASB77)*

*<sup>7</sup> " The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,*

*<sup>8</sup> but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

*<sup>9</sup> "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;*

*Deuteronomy 9:4-5 (NASB77)*

*<sup>4</sup> " Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you.*

*<sup>5</sup> "It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*

**Deuteronomy 10:15 (NASB77)**

<sup>15</sup> *“Yet on your fathers did the LORD set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day.*

**Deuteronomy 14:2 (NASB77)**

<sup>2</sup> *“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.*

**Deuteronomy 15:15-16 (NASB77)**

<sup>15</sup> *“And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore, I command you this today.*

<sup>16</sup> *“And it shall come about if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you;*

The framework of Deuteronomy and of all the rest of Scripture is God's sovereign grace.

Salvation and divine blessing have always begun with God's grace, which is made effective for the sinner when he comes to God in faith.

Paul's point in Romans 10:6-7 is that, even if such things were possible men could not come to salvations by searching for Christ in Heaven, to bring Him down, or by descending into the abyss, the depths of the earth or of the oceans, to raise Him up from the dead.

The righteousness of faith does not require some mystical, esoteric, and impossible journey through the universe to find Christ, no matter what form it takes,

The righteousness based on law, denies Christ's incarnation and denies His resurrection.

Consequently, works righteousness is also a denial of the gracious salvation Christ has provided by His own blood.

As Geoffrey Wilson observes, “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.”

*(Romans: A Digest of Reformed Comment [London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1969], p 177)*