

Tuesday Evening Bible Study at Tokyo Baptist Church
Paul's Letter to the Romans – Chapter 10, Verses 1-4
Notes from Tuesday February 1, 2011
Last Revised on February 6, 2011

Songs

Opening Prayer

Introduction

This evening we continue our study of the Letter of Paul to the Romans.

Last week we finished Chapter 9

Tonight we will begin Chapter 10

But first let's review a little.

Review

As we have repeatedly reminded ourselves,

the **overall** theme of Paul's letter to the Romans is ... the **gospel**,

The gospel is rather fully and beautifully explained in the first **four chapters**.

Chapters 5-8, then, go on to discuss some of the implications of our salvation,

ending with a very triumphant note in the last three verses of Chapter 8:

(Romans 8:37-39)

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul is looking beyond the suffering he expects for himself and most of his readers in this present life

beyond death, to the time and place where Christ shall rule his perfect eternal kingdom

Review: 9:1-13

At the start of Chapter 9, Paul turns his attention to his fellow Jews,

and to the sad fact that most of them had not yet accepted Christ.

But Paul goes on to explain that this sad and deeply troubling fact,

was fully consistent with the history of Israel, and with God's eternal plan.

God's relationship with Israel, had always been one in which the people fell away from God,

while God mercifully preserved his relationship with a small remnant.

Such is the pattern of Biblical history.

That God has worked uniquely thorough the narrow line that descends through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and on through successive generations to the Hose of David and finally the Messiah,

which is (someone said) the salvation history that runs through the Bible like a scarlet thread,

this necessarily means that God has **not** worked in that same way through Ishmael, Esau, the countless other descendants of Abraham,

who had, as it were, lived their lives on the periphery of Biblical history, or beyond its boundaries.

This is not a question of the merit or demerit of particular men,

The human characters that figure prominently in the Bible stories are **not better** than other men.

Israel is no better than other nations.

The Bible is the story of **God's** mercy and grace as manifested ultimately in Christ,

and different men and women have different parts to play in this story.

Review: 9:14-19

This does not mean that God is being capricious or unfair to anyone.

At every step God is gracious and merciful beyond what justice demands,

and all of his steps are directed toward his perfect eternal plan and purpose,

which itself is gracious beyond compare, as is displayed finally and fully on the cross,

and in the Kingdom of Christ which has come upon us, is coming, and is yet to come.

This is the destination where all of Biblical and Human history is finally bound.

The fact that our God is profoundly gracious in all his ways,

and especially in this way, in Christ, on the cross of Calvary,

does not relieve any of us of our responsibility.

We are all responsible for, and guilty of, the sins that we commit.

These sins are not merely excused.

They are punished fully in Christ.

And so we are forgiven,

that we may sin no more.

Review: 9:20-24

In Verses 20-24 Paul reminds us,

That God is not just our sovereign Lord,

he is also our creator and sustainer and savior.

In shaping the lives and fate of men and nations,

He is always completely within his rights,

Paul uses here the familiar metaphor of a potter and his clay.

Yet it is well to remember here, as we use this metaphor,

what kind of a potter we are dealing with,

Jesus Christ our Lord!

One who himself has come down and paid the price for all our sins,

who welcomes all who come to him for salvation.

How can we ever ‘answer back’ to Him?!

No matter what our individual circumstances,

each of us knows full well that we are guilty of sin against God.

The gentiles who are in the Church are there by the surprising grace of God.

the Jews who are in the Church are there by the surprising grace of God.

Furthermore all of this was prepared in advance,

and God is not finished yet!

Review: 9:25-29

In verses 25-29 of Chapter 9,

Paul remembers the words of God,

spoken through the prophets, Hosea and Isaiah.

Who, far in advance of the things foretold,

proclaimed that one day God would be merciful to those who had not been his people,

And that although Israel would be greatly diminished,

she would never be forsaken.

All of this is consistent with the situation that Paul sees, and speaks to, in the church in his day.

Review: 9:30-33

Some Gentiles are already coming to faith in Christ,

and thereby attaining a righteousness which they did not pursue.

Why then have most in Israel, though they pursued such righteousness vigorously, not attained it?

It is, Paul says, because they have not sought it by **faith**,

but **as if** it were based on their works.

They have stumbled, Paul says, over the stumbling stone,

meaning (finally) that they have not believed in Christ.

But they have, in some sense, been stumbling over Christ all along,

because they have been stumbling over God's word,

which was spoken first to them,

and most of them had tried to master it

and in some sense to be its master,

rather than placing their faith in the One who spoke the Word.

So ends our review.

Before we read on, are there any comments or questions?

Paul's Letter to the Romans, Chapter 10, Verses 1-4

Will someone please read Romans, Chapter 10, Verses 1-4, in Japanese.

Thank you. Now will someone please read those some words in English.

1 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

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

Thank you.

(Verse 1)

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

If all in Israel were irretrievably lost, then the Apostle Paul would not pray for them.

But neither would he pray for them if none of them were at serious risk of being lost forever.

Verse 2 reads

(Verse 2)

For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

The Jews have heard the true and living God,

he has been speaking to them at various times and in various ways since Abraham.

and they are very zealous for Him, as Paul attests, and as everyone can see,

but they do not really know him,

at least most of them do not,

not in a way that makes him effectively their savior.

That's why Paul prays!

Verse 3 reads

(Verse 3)

For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Q. In what sense were the Jews ignorant of the righteousness of God?

A. They rejected Jesus. Yes, but why?

A. Because they did not know that God alone is righteous.

In fact some of them did know this,

but most of them did not.

Proof that most of them did not understand is found in the fact that they sought continually to establish a righteousness of their own.

Q. How? How did they seek to establish a righteousness of their own?

A. By trying to obey the law. Yes, Just a few verses earlier (9:31) Paul said that the Jews had pursued a law that would lead to righteousness but did not succeed in reaching that law.

Q. What did Paul mean by that?

A. That they tried to obey the Law perfectly, but could not, because nobody can. Yes.

A. That the Law was always about Christ (God's righteousness) but most failed to grasp that and, therefore, instead of submitting to God's righteousness (His mercy and grace and faithfulness) they had tried to establish their own righteousness. Yes.

A. That by rejecting Christ, they had rejected the very meaning and purpose of the law. Yes!

It is absolutely impossible to keep the law in any meaningful sense, while rejecting Christ.

To accept Christ, as Lord and Savior, is finally the only way to keep the law.

(Verse 4)

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

Q. What do you think Paul means here?

A. That the gospel abolishes the Law, or sets it aside? No, almost certainly not.

The English word, end, may possibly mean termination, abolition, and the like but it might also mean destination, goal, purpose and etc.

It is here used to translate the Greek word “telos” which I understand has an even a broader range of meaning which might include, for example (in addition to the meanings just mentioned) things like reason, completion, perfection, and etc.

Almost certainly Paul does not here mean to say that the law is terminated or abolished by Christ.

That would be inconsistent with Paul’s theology generally,

and in his Letter to the Romans particularly,

especially here, in this section of Romans where he has built his arguments almost entirely on Old Testament scripture (i.e. the Law).

Paul views OT Scripture as the basis for **proclaiming** and **proving** the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A. Paul means that the law is about God’s righteousness, which is ultimately and fully manifested in Christ, to everyone who believes.

To know Christ and to believe what God has accomplished in Him,

is to know God and the Righteousness of God.

which is also the goal, meaning, and purpose of the Law.

Conversely, to reject Christ, is to reject the Law,

and to remain ignorant of the righteousness of God,

and therefore to remain exposed to the wrath of God.

Questions or Comments?

(n.b. This is where we ran out of time on this evening, because there was considerable discussion)