

Lesson 11

Chapter Ten

A Better Way in Christ (10:1-4)

What Paul described as causing him “great sorrow” and “continual grief” in the previous chapter he now describes as his **heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel** namely **that they may be saved** (10:1). Jesus taught, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matt. 10:37). A great challenge to faithfulness comes when our loved ones are not faithful. We feel that we somehow betray our family if we stand firm to a faith that teaches that our loved ones are separated from God. Paul offers the wonderful example that the best way to help our family is by leading them to the truth through our words and our example.

Paul, like no other, was in a position to sympathize with the Jew’s rejection of Jesus. He could recall clearly when he himself rejected Jesus. He told King Agrippa, “Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9). He did this out of a zealous desire to serve God (Phil. 3:6). In this same spirit, he says of the Jews, **I bear them witness that they have a zeal for**

God, but not according to knowledge (10:2). They were ignorant of that knowledge through which can be gained “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3). As a result, they missed the way that God had offered in Christ to make men righteous.

He writes, **they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God** (10:3). How had they sought to establish their own righteousness? Through binding human traditions to the neglect of God’s word (Mark 7:9-13). By trusting in their own power to justify themselves (Luke 18:9). God expected the Jews to obey the law, but not through binding man-made traditions over God’s word, or through an imagined sense of self-justification.

Christ has offered a new way, which sets aside the Mosaic law. Paul declares, **Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes** (10:4). This makes it clear that in Christ,

all obligation to Mosaic law has come to an “end” (Gr. *telos*, “termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be,” – Thayer).

In the face of such a statement, some continue to claim that today people are still under obligation to obey Mosaic Law. So-called “Messianic Jews” accept Jesus but still follow Mosaic dietary laws, festivals, and Jewish traditions in worship. Seventh Day Adventists argue that the Sabbath is still binding today. Many others broadly teach that the Ten Commandments are still binding. Paul makes it clear that the Law of Moses comes to an end in Christ. Paul tells the Ephesians, “let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Col. 2:16-17). How much better to cling to the “substance” of the Law of Christ,



Bust of the emperor Titus from Ephesus. Before he was emperor, Titus conquered Jerusalem and allowed his men to destroy the city and the temple. Photo: Kyle Pope.

than to the passing “shadow” of the Law of Moses.

The Righteousness of Faith (10:5-17)

When Moses spoke to Israel he rebuked them for failing to have faith in God, describing it that they “did not believe Him nor obey His voice” (Deut. 9:23). In Paul’s letter to churches in Galatia, he commanded them, “bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). Clearly, Mosaic Law was not a system without *faith*, nor is the Law of Christ a system without *law*. Even so, just as Paul described the two covenants earlier in the epistle as one of “grace” in contrast to the other of “law” (Rom. 6:14-15), here he speaks of one as a system of “faith” in contrast to the other a system of “law.” He makes this contrast by speaking of “righteousness which is of the law” or “righteousness of faith.” To do so he addresses some specific differences of approach between the two covenants.

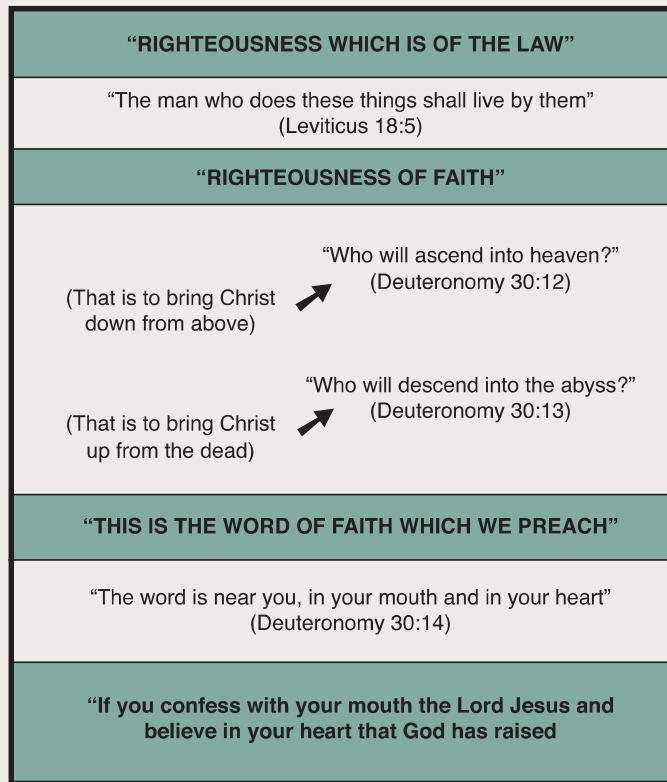
First, he addresses what Moses wrote about the **righteousness which is of the law** defining it by a quote from Leviticus 18:5—**“The man who does those things shall live by them”** (10:5). Next, he uses the Law of Moses itself to illustrate the **righteousness of faith** (10:6a) using a series of quotes from Deuteronomy 30:12-14. The use of these quotes is very valuable to help us see our responsibility under Christ.

The passage Paul quotes comes near the end of the Law of Moses after proclaiming God’s blessings

for obeying the Law with “all your heart and with all of your soul” (Deut. 30:10). Moses then declares, “For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off” (Deut. 30:11). The Holy Spirit, declares through Moses, that God has not set a standard for Israel which they could not attain. The next verses show that understanding and

as a paraphrase of the term “sea” from Deuteronomy 30:13 (10:7a). From this, Paul suggests, **(that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)** (10:7b). Jesus has already come up from the dead. There is no need to seek someone to bring knowledge from beyond this life. Finally he quotes Deuteronomy 30:14, **“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”** adding that this attitude is **the word of faith which we preach** (10:8).

How does this differ from Paul’s definition of the “righteousness which is of the law”? Is Paul teaching that there is no obligation under Christ to follow law? On the contrary, the quotes from Deuteronomy 30:12-14, illustrate a dependence upon what God has done in order to fully obey what God has commanded. This is not excusing man from responsibility, but pointing out how “the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Rom. 8:4).



obeying the word of God is both possible and within reach. Paul offers application of each point to our life in Christ.

He begins, **Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?”** a quote from Deuteronomy 30:12, adding the comment **(that is, to bring Christ down from above)** (10:6). Christ has already ascended into heaven for us and sits at God’s right hand. To ask more is to bring Him down. He continues, **or, “Who will descend into the abyss?”** using the term “abyss”

Confession and Faith

To explain this aspect of the New Law (which he has just illustrated with the Old Law) he explains three elements of the scheme of redemption. He declares, **if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved** (Rom. 10:9). What about this differs from the “righteousness which is of the law,” which says, “the man who does these things shall live by



The Arch of Titus, was built to celebrate his conquest of Jerusalem. It portrays objects taken from the temple after its destruction. Courtesy of FreeStockPhotos.com.

them”? The Mosaic Law did not involve putting one’s faith in a redeemer as the atonement for sin. To confess Jesus and believe that He died for our sin is a reliance upon the One who has come from heaven and out of the “abyss” giving us the way to accomplish the word that is “very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it” (Deut. 30:14).

Paul goes on to explain more about the significance of confession and faith. He explains, **with the heart one believes unto** (Gr. *eis*, lit. “into”) **righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto** (Gr. *eis*, lit. “into”) **salvation** (10:10). This clearly teaches that one who would come to Christ must believe *and* confess Jesus. This alone would refute the idea that salvation is by faith alone. Confession is part of what brings one “into salvation” in Christ. Does this teach confession as an act of

merit? No, but it does make it clear that part of saving faith involves confession. Jesus taught, “whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32).

Are confession and faith all that is necessary for salvation? We must remember what Paul has already taught in this very epistle. Only a few chapters before this he taught that in baptism one is “buried” with Christ, that they might be raised with Him in the resurrection (Rom. 6:5). Near the beginning of the book Paul taught that God’s patience “leads” to repentance (Rom. 2:4). A survey of the New Testament will reveal that both baptism and repentance are also necessary for salvation (see Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21).

All of these things are a part of the “righteousness of faith,” a system that trusts in Jesus as man’s redeemer. Paul quotes Isaiah 28:16, **“Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame”** (Rom. 10:11). In this, once again Paul illustrates

“Calling” on the Lord is wholeheartedly following the system of faith that is in Christ Jesus.

from the Old Law, God’s plan of redemption in Christ Jesus—a system of “righteousness of faith.” Only by trusting in Jesus, can anyone escape the shame he rightly deserves on account of sin. This hope is available

to all, because, **there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him** (10:12). Now in Christ, **“whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved”** (10:13), a quote from Joel 2:32. This “calling” on Jesus, as Paul has just illustrated in our text, involves the whole system of faithful obedience to Christ. It is not merely calling out “save me Lord Jesus!” (as the world tries to suggest). It is following wholeheartedly the system of faith that is in Christ Jesus.

The Source of Faith

It is sad to see how often one false idea can give birth to another. We have considered throughout this study repeated proofs from this epistle that refute the false doctrine of inherited sin and total depravity. An extension of this false doctrine focuses on the matter of faith itself. If man is by nature “wholly inclined toward evil” (as some falsely claim), man then asks how could one ever even come to have faith? One would think that the examples of conversion alone would prove that faith comes from the hearing of the message of the gospel, believing it, and accepting it faithfully. Yet, as if this were not enough, the Holy Spirit leads Paul to express clearly the genuine source of faith.

After quoting Joel 2:32, which teaches that we must “call” on the Lord, he asks, **how then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?** (10:14a). This

“call” must come from faith. He goes further, **how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?** (10:14b). Is faith infused into the heart by divine operation? No. One must hear in order to be-

lieve. Further, **how shall they hear without a preacher?** (10:14c). Faith in Christ is not imposed on the heart. It is not like revelation in the heart of a prophet. It does not come from the direct operation of God. Instead it is dependent upon “a preacher.” He does not mean a preacher in the narrow sense we often think of today (i.e., a “full-time” local evangelist). But simply one who proclaims the message.

Such individuals who are willing to proclaim the gospel to others, will not preach unless, directly or indirectly sent (10:15a). As a result, their work is to be highly esteemed. Paul paraphrases Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15, **“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!”** (10:15). Unfortunately, the fact that there are those who preach the gospel does not guarantee that all who hear will accept it. Isaiah himself begins his powerful chapter on the suffering Messiah asking, **“Lord, who has believed our report?”** (10:16; Isa. 53:1). That does not change the fact that the source of faith is still the hearing of the message of the gospel. Paul declares, **faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God** (Rom. 10:17).

“Have They Not Heard?” (10:18-21)

In the account that Jesus offers of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man in regret, begs Abraham to send one from the dead to warn his brothers of the punishment after death. Abraham replies, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” (Luke 16:29). If Israel had never heard the word of God, they might have had an excuse for their rejection. But this was not the case. Paul asks, **have they not heard?** To which he answers, **yes indeed**, then

quotes Psalm 19:4 from the Greek Old Testament, **their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world** (10:18). In the context of the Psalm, the pronoun “their” refers to the beginning words of the Psalm, “the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Ps. 19:1). Paul and the Psalmist speak to the testimony of the heavens and the firmament to the glory of God. These “voices” have gone out to all (cf. Rom. 1:20).

Yet, the testimony of nature alone does not grant knowledge of the will of God. That requires revelation. Paul asks, **did Israel not know?** (10:19a). Were they ignorant of the testimony of nature? Were they without revealed knowledge of the coming will of God’s new covenant to all the nations? Paul answers from the Law and the Prophets. From the Law, he writes, **Moses says: “I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation”** (10:19b; Deut. 32:21). In the Law itself, God foreshadows a time when God would “provoke” Israel to jealousy through His acceptance of Gentiles. In such a statement they should have known that something different was coming. From the Prophets he cites Isaiah, who is **very bold and says: “I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me”** (10:20; Isa. 65:1). These words offered hope to those outside of the covenant with Israel. This should have led the Jew to anticipate a new and different time. Especially given

the fact that, **to Israel he says: “All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people”** (10:21; Isa. 65:2). What do such statements reveal? They illustrate the foundation of the premise introduced in 2:29 (“he is



Damaged relief from the Arch of Titus showing the golden lampstand from the temple being carried away from Jerusalem.

a Jew who is one inwardly”) and restated at the beginning of the present section in 9:6 (“they are not all Israel who are of Israel”). Although Paul in anguish seeks to lead all to salvation, he consoles himself and the Roman Christians from a Jewish background with the realization that God’s true people are children of faith and spirit, not of flesh.

Questions

1. What is Paul's "heart's desire and prayer" (10:1)? _____

2. What are at least two ways that the Jews had sought to "establish their own righteousness" (10:3)?
 - a. _____ (Mark 7:9-13);
 - b. _____ (Luke 18:9).
3. What is the meaning of the Greek word *telos* translated "end" in verse 4? _____

What does this indicate about the Law of Moses? _____

4. Where are two passages located that show that the Law of Moses involved faith and the Law of Christ involves law? _____ : _____ and _____ : _____
5. Fill in the blanks from the portion of Leviticus 18:5 which Paul quotes to illustrate "righteousness which is of the law" (10:5) "The _____ who _____ things shall _____ by _____" (NKJV).
6. How would asking that someone "ascend to heaven" to allow man to do God's commands "bring Christ down from heaven" (10:6)? _____
7. How would asking that someone "descend into the abyss" to allow man to do God's commands "bring Christ up from the dead" (10:7)? _____

8. What two acts of obedience to the gospel does Paul relate to Deuteronomy 30:14 (10:8-19)?
 - a. _____ and b. _____
9. What two other acts of obedience to the gospel has Paul already discussed in this epistle and where are they found? a. _____ (____:____) and b. _____ (____:____).
10. What does Paul teach is the source of faith (10:17)? _____
11. By whom had God promised that He would "provoke" Israel to jealousy (10:19; Deut. 32:21)? _____
