

## BIBLE STUDY: ROMANS #10

*Scripture of Lesson: Romans 10: 1~21*

As he did in Chapter 9 Apostle Paul expresses his heart's deep yearning towards his own countrymen to attain unto God's righteousness through faith in Christ. He declares that "Christ is the end (*telos*: fulfillment, result, outcome) of the law for righteousness [v. 4]." Having expounded on the limited nature of the Mosaic Law in previous chapters, he now puts Christ forward as the culmination of the law's intent. So both the Jews and the Gentiles attain unto God's righteousness by believing in Christ and confessing with their lips that Christ is the Lord and He has risen from the dead unto glory. Thus Paul clarifies the steps that a new-born Christian must take to enter into the promise of God.

### 1. Righteousness through faith in Christ: v. 1~13

As Paul clearly showed in previous chapters the Jewish religious leaders misunderstood God's intent and thus misled the people of Israel to the wrongful doctrine of salvation by works. More seriously they rejected their Messiah, about whom the prophets had prophesied long ago many times. They failed to understand that God's righteousness was Christ the Son of God. Thus they served God without knowledge [v. 2]. They did not seek it in faith but by the works of the law [9:32]. Although he had been taught by Gamaliel, the renowned scholar of the law, Paul confesses all such knowledge gained as a Pharisee as only rubbish:

*Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ [Phil 3: 8]*

It is interesting that the Chinese character for righteousness is a combination of two characters arrayed vertically (義): one for sheep (or lamb 羊) and another for self (我). This seems to indicate that the definition of righteousness is placing self below the Lamb of God. Thus, living with Christ as our king and master is considered righteousness to God. There are hundreds of Chinese characters which embody the story of Genesis according to a number of scholars who examined evidences dating back thousands of years. This faith was what justified Abraham [4:3], Isaac and Jacob and all of the Jewish elect that God chose in each generation.

*Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. [Gal 4: 28]*

Paul contrasts the righteousness as Moses defined in the law as something that could be gained by works [v. 5], whereas faith is required to believe that the Son of God came down from heaven and rose up from the dead [v. 6, 7]. Keeping the stipulations of the Mosaic Law does not lead us to God's righteousness. One must believe in her heart and confess that Christ came from heaven to live and that God raised Him from the dead to glory [v.9]. So one attains to righteousness by believing in his heart and to salvation through confession of his faith in Christ with lips [v. 10]. This doctrine of Paul clearly points to the importance of expressing our faith before the church so that fellow Christians, angels and the heavenly host may rejoice at our conversion miracle. After all, how can other believers know what is the condition of your faith unless you express it?

Now here is a wonderful promise that Paul reiterates that everyone who calls upon the name of Jesus Christ shall be saved [v. 12]. None who cries out to God from the bottom of his heart will be ignored. God brings such a person in touch with the gospel of Christ to save him. Therefore, let us not neglect to cry out to God of Heaven for help when we are in need, not only spiritually but also naturally. God is pleased when His children cry out for help. What parents ignore the cries of their children? How much more would God lend

effective helping hand to His loving children! But we must first get to know God before we can cry out His name.

*Discussion topic: Why is our faith in Jesus Christ the requirement for salvation? Are there other ways to salvation than through Jesus Christ? What do you think of the ecumenical movement that embraces all religions of the world as 'brothers and sisters?'*

## **2. Israel has rejected the gospel: v. 14~21**

Here, Paul laments that Israel has rejected the gospel of peace [v. 15]. Some people think this word 'gospel' is pertinent only in the New Testament days. But that is not so. Paul refers to the gospel not only that preached by the NT missionaries such as himself, Barnabas and Timothy, but also by OT prophets such as Isaiah [v. 16, 20] and Moses [v. 19]. Both Moses and Isaiah had distinct experiences of God calling them into His holy ministry to take God's message and to leave the people to God's righteousness and to bring salvation to them. In NT days Christ gave the grand mission of evangelical work to His disciples before He was lifted into heaven:

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen [Matt 20: 19-20]*

Paul clarifies that this faith, which is so essential to our salvation, is created in a person's heart by listening to the true words of God, preached by those who have been sent by God [v. 15, 17]. How can one preach the word of God without being sent – it is unthinkable! The message preached by false preachers would not be true. Not all people of Israel believed the message brought to them by God's messengers. They rejected God's message [v. 16]. Likewise, in the first century when the NT missionaries brought the gospel of Christ to the Jewish people in diaspora, most of them rejected the message [v. 21]. At this point Paul's heart must have been much grieved when he thought how his own countrymen of Israel had been rejecting God's messages delivered through His prophets, rejected and killed their own Messiah, and now were rejecting the gospel of Christ brought to them by the disciples of Christ.

What about today? Many people still reject the gospel message and refuse to let in God's spirit into their hearts and lives. The evangelical work must go on to bring in remnants into God's kingdom before Christ returns to the earth again. Our hearts are warmed when we think of the zeal in Paul's heart for the mission work, how devoted he was and how his heart ached towards his own people.

I am sad to think of those Christians who think their preachers are the only messengers of Christ on the erroneous belief that they meet certain requirements which were meant for a temporary mission work ordered by Jesus in Matt 10. What would you think of people who insist that homes built today must be built using the same construction methods and materials as used in the first century? God directed the people of Israel to build a tabernacle tent for worshipping Him while they were on a journey towards the Promised Land. Once they settled in their intended homeland, God granted King Solomon to build a temple as the place of worship, thus the usefulness of the tent tabernacle was ended. When Christ was crucified, the usefulness of the temple was ended and God allowed the Roman soldiers to totally destroy the temple in AD 70. God allows His people to use different methods, ways and means for the purpose of worshipping Him as times and societies progress. Insisting on old ways is not the wise thing to do in the eyes of God, especially when by doing so we prevent ourselves from having fellowship with fellow Christians the world over.

*Discussion topic: Most Jewish people are still waiting for the Messiah and deny Jesus Christ as their Savior. What is preventing them from believing in Jesus although all OT prophecies about His birth, life, death and resurrection were fulfilled?*