

ISRAEL REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE TEACHING OF THEIR OWN OLD TESTAMENT

Last week we focused on the first 4 reasons for Israel's unwillingness to believe in Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Savior that was predicted to come in the Old Testament of the Bible. This morning we'll cover the **fifth reason** for their unbelief and continue on in our study of Romans chapter 10. Let's begin by reviewing the first 10 verses of Romans 10:

1 Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is that the Jewish people might be saved.

2 I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal.

3 For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Instead, they are clinging to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. They won't go along with God's way.

4 For Christ has accomplished the whole purpose of the law. All who believe in him are made right with God.

5 For Moses wrote that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands.

6 But the way of getting right with God through faith says, "You don't need to go to heaven" (to find Christ and bring him down to help you).

7 And it says, "You don't need to go to the place of the dead" (to bring Christ back to life again).

8 Salvation that comes from trusting Christ—which is the message we preach—is already within easy reach. In fact, the Scriptures say, "The message is close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart."

9 For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.

To summarize last week's message in just a few words, we could say this:

There's more to being saved than just knowing the truth about Jesus Christ. TRUE SAVING FAITH ACKNOWLEDGES JESUS AS LORD. Will you acknowledge Jesus as your sovereign ruler? That's the issue. The true heart that really believes, understands who Christ is and willingly submits to His authority.

The Jews didn't understand the proportions of the Gospel message. They saw it as a

Gentile message and thus refused to accept it. When people came to try and teach them, they threw them out. They thought they were doing a service to God to kill such people and throw them out of the synagogues. Jesus warned His disciples of this in John 16:1,2:

- 1 "I have told you these things so that you won't fall away.
2 For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing God a service.*

Let's join Paul again in verses 11-15 as he continues trying to explain the extent of the Gospel message to the church at Rome. Romans 10:11-15:

- 11 As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who believes in him will not be disappointed."
12 **Jew and Gentile are the same** in this respect. They all have the same Lord, who generously gives his riches to all who ask for them.
13 For "Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?
15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

Verse 12 must have had the same impact for a Jew as being hit by a Roman chariot at full speed. Paul writes that **there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile**. What a thing to say to a people who had such a "zeal" for their own racial identity and religious heritage. If we turn over to Galatians 3:26-29, we find as clear a definition as can be found in the Bible as to who is eligible to receive the salvation brought by Christ:

- 26 SO YOU ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.**
*27 And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have been made like him.
28 **There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians—you are one in Christ Jesus.**
29 And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and now all the promises God gave to him belong to you.*

In Ephesians 3:3-6,10, Paul further clarifies any doubts that anyone may have about there being any distinction among Jews and Gentiles:

- 3 As I briefly mentioned earlier in this letter, God himself revealed his secret plan to me.
4 As you read what I have written, you will understand what I know about this plan regarding Christ.*

5 God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now he has revealed it by the Holy Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets.

*6 And this is the secret plan: **The Gentiles have an equal share with the Jews in all the riches inherited by God's children.** Both groups have believed the Good News, and **both are part of the same body** and enjoy together the promise of blessings through Christ Jesus.*

*10 God's purpose was to show his wisdom in all its rich variety to all the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. **They will see this when Jews and Gentiles are joined together in his church.***

All people are now one in Christ. Romans 10:12 told us that: *“They all have the same Lord, who generously gives his riches to all who ask for them.”*

The Jews were looking for a national deliverer, not a universal Savior. They were looking for a Messiah who would lead them in power to overthrow the Roman Empire and regain their position as a world power. They didn't want someone who was going to come along and let everybody else into their exclusive little club. But if we were to do an Old Testament study of prophecy, we would see that **the Jews knew** from these writings that this was God's intent all the time. They simply did not want to accept it.

Let's now see how Paul reinforces his message here in verses 13 through 15 of Romans 10:

*13 For “**Anyone** who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

*14 But **how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him?** And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?*

15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

We just learned that only those who call on the name of the Lord can be saved. In other words **only those who ask under God's terms can be saved.** It would then follow that no one can be saved who doesn't ask. And none can call unless they believe. And none can believe unless they hear. And none can hear unless somebody tells them. And nobody can tell them unless they're sent. So God has a whole plan in place for getting out the message. Because how can they call on one in whom they haven't believed? And how are they going to believe in someone of whom they haven't heard? They're not. How are they going to believe without a preacher? They're not. How is someone going to preach unless they're sent? They're not.

If God doesn't send preachers who preach the truth so that people can believe and call upon the name of the Lord, they can't be saved. You don't get saved by some mystical meditation, or examining yourself, or assuming a yoga position, or studying the stars. You can't be saved unless you call upon the name of the Lord believing in all He is. You can't do that unless you believe. You can't believe unless you've heard. And you

can't hear unless someone tells you. And nobody is going to tell you unless they're sent. The point here is that God had to send preachers. The clear message of the Gospel precedes saving faith. And God sent preachers to both the Jews and the Gentiles. This is the beauty which is being referred to in verse 15. Paul isn't saying here that such people have beautiful feet physically. It's the message they bring that's so beautiful. This comes right out of Isaiah 52:7-10:

7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns!

8 The watchmen shout and sing with joy, for before their very eyes they see the Lord bringing his people home to Jerusalem.

9 Let the ruins of Jerusalem break into joyful song, for the Lord has comforted his people. He has redeemed Jerusalem.

*10 The Lord will demonstrate his holy power before the eyes of all the nations. **THE ENDS OF THE EARTH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF OUR GOD.***

Right here in Isaiah the Jews are being told that salvation is not only for Israel but for the entire world. So you see they knew it wasn't only for them but they didn't want to accept it. All along in their own Old Testament it was indicated that salvation would extend far beyond the nation of Israel. Paul defines the problem clearly in verse 16 of Romans 10. In fact, let's read Romans 10:16-21:

16 But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, "Lord, who has believed our message?"

17 Yet faith comes from listening to this message of good news—the Good News about Christ.

18 But what about the Jews? Have they actually heard the message? Yes, they have: "The message of God's creation has gone out to everyone, and its words to all the world."

19 But did the people of Israel really understand? Yes, they did, for even in the time of Moses, God had said, "I will rouse your jealousy by blessing other nations. I will make you angry by blessing the foolish Gentiles."

20 And later Isaiah spoke boldly for God: "I was found by people who were not looking for me. I showed myself to those who were not asking for me."

21 But regarding Israel, God said, "All day long I opened my arms to them, but they kept disobeying me and arguing with me."

The fifth reason for the unbelief of Israel was:

5) Israel was ignorant of the Scripture, the Old Testament of the Bible, the predictions made in the Bible

The problem is that they haven't obeyed the Gospel. Preaching was to all men, but all didn't obey it. The Gospel is still offered to all people to the ends of the earth, to whomever will call upon the name of the Lord. But **people just won't obey** it and that's

the tragedy.

Again Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly against the Jews in Acts 13:46,47:

46 Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, “It was necessary that this Good News from God be given first to you Jews. But since you have rejected it and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life—well, we will offer it to Gentiles.

47 For this is as the Lord commanded us when he said, ‘I have made you a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth.’ ”

Paul and Barnabas first brought this Good News to the Jews but they rejected it. They wouldn't believe it. Then Paul sums up his position in Romans 10:17:

17 Yet faith comes from listening to this message of good news—the Good News about Christ.

People have to hear the message. We already talked about that. We've got to have the information before we can make the commitment. Salvation comes to those who hear the message about Christ and believe.

Our job as believers then is to present the message of the Gospel so people do hear it, and so that they have an opportunity to ask questions about it in order to understand it and have the proper information on which to make a decision.

Then in verse 18 Paul says:

18 But what about the Jews? Have they actually heard the message? Yes, they have: “The message of God's creation has gone out to everyone, and its words to all the world.”

There are several opinions on the meaning of this verse but I'm going to go along with the one expressed by F.F. Bruce, that wherever there were Jews, and in particular wherever a Jewish community existed, there the Gospel message had been preached. So the Jews have heard the message and are not able to blame their not believing on not having heard the message. But I also see some merit in the idea that this verse suggests that wherever there is a seeking heart, God will find a way of having that seeker hear the Gospel message. Somehow, someday, God can communicate His truth in a way we do not necessarily comprehend. If you'll recall, in Romans 1 and 2, we talked about several ways that God might have for revealing Himself to unbelievers. The Gospel is extended to those who have a desire to know the truth.

Let me try to sum up verses 11-18. Paul is saying that the Gospel is not the product of yet another local religion. The Gospel is the Good News that God has sent throughout all the world. It goes way beyond just the Jews to include **anyone who calls upon the name of**

the Lord. SADLY MANY JEWS REJECTED THIS TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL BECAUSE IT INCLUDED GENTILES. Many still reject it for the same reason. The Jews saw the Gospel and the Christian faith as a Gentile religion. They could not accept anything that included Gentiles with themselves.

Let's now look at verse 19:

19 But did the people of Israel really understand? Yes, they did, for even in the time of Moses, God had said, "I will rouse your jealousy by blessing other nations. I will make you angry by blessing the foolish Gentiles."

Didn't the Jews know that Gentiles were to be included? Sure they knew. Paul is quoting Moses here from Deuteronomy 32:21 where God tells the Jews:

21 They have roused my jealousy by worshiping non-gods; they have provoked my fury with useless idols. Now I will rouse their jealousy by blessing other nations; I will provoke their fury by blessing the foolish Gentiles.

The Jews knew this because Moses told them in Deuteronomy 32:21. They were told that God was going to turn to another people, a Gentile nation, and bless them, thus provoking Israel to jealousy. Just as the Jews gave their love to another by worshipping other gods, God gave His love to another people. And the Jews were warned of this over and over again throughout the Scripture, but they ignored the warnings. Jesus told them over and over again throughout His ministry: *"If you don't want the Kingdom of God, I'll find someone else who does."* And that's exactly what He did, which is exactly what Moses warned about in Deuteronomy 32:21. And sure enough it provoked the Jews to jealousy. Then in Romans 10:20 we find the second Old Testament text from Isaiah:

20 And later Isaiah spoke boldly (clearly) for God: "I was found by people who were not looking for me. I showed myself to those who were not asking for me."

This verse is from Isaiah 65:1:

1 "I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' to a nation that was not called by My name.

The Jews continually sought after God according to their own terms and never found Him. But there was a people that didn't seek and didn't ask, and God had a relationship with them. Then the last verse in chapter 10, verse 21:

21 But regarding Israel, God said, "All day long I opened my arms to them, but they kept disobeying me and arguing with me."

This verse is quoting Isaiah 65:2:

2 “I opened my arms to my own people all day long, but they have rebelled. They follow their own evil paths and thoughts.

Why did the Lord reject Israel and turn to the Gentiles? Because all day long He stretched out His hands to a disobedient people. He couldn't get them to respond. **They refused to believe.** So God is telling them they were ignorant of their own Scripture. If they would have read and known those Old Testament prophecies we've already read, they would have known that the day would come when because of their rebellion, God would reach out to the rest of the world to provoke Israel to jealousy. And when that happened, a thinking knowledgeable Jew who knew his Old Testament should have said to himself, **“This is what was spoken of by the prophets, it's happening. Therefore, Jesus must be the Messiah. This must be the true message.”** They should have concluded that.

So it was that because of Israel's rebellion and disobedience, God reached out to all the nations and peoples of the world. That's not to say that those Jews who believed the message were excluded. They too of course were included if they believed. God created the Church to take the place of Israel (at some time in the future a remnant of Israel will be grafted back into the Church). Is this condition of Israel permanent? The answer to that question comes in Romans chapter 11 and the answer of course is, “No.”

We'd like to close this morning with a story told by Dr. Charles Feinberg in a book he wrote entitled, *Israel*:

“A minister was preaching on Glasgow green in Scotland when someone asked permission to speak and made his way to the platform. Responding to the words of the minister, he said, ‘I do not believe what this man has been talking about. I do not believe in a Hell, in a judgment, or in a God, for I have never seen any of them.’ He continued talking in this manner until another voice was heard from the crowd. ‘May I speak?’ The unbeliever sat down and the next man began. ‘Friends, you say there is a river running not far from this place, the river, Clyde. There's no such thing. It's not true. You tell me that there are grass and trees all around me where I now stand. There's no such thing. That's also untrue. You tell me there are a great many people standing here before me. Again I say this is not true. There's no one standing here except myself, I'm alone. I suppose you wonder what I'm talking about? I was born blind. I've never seen any of you. And as I talk it only shows that I'm blind or I wouldn't say such things. And you, unbeliever, the more you talk, the more it exposes your own blindness.’”

How appropriate a story to illustrate what happened to the nation of Israel. Israel was blind and went around saying, *“It doesn't exist, it isn't so,”* and showed their own

ignorance, their own blindness. I pray that there is no one here this morning that has that kind of ignorance. But I know that most of us have relatives, friends, and co-workers that are gripped by that kind of ignorance, and the same ignorance that condemned Israel will condemn them. Are they ignorant of the righteousness of God? Are they ignorant of His holy standard? Are they ignorant of the provision of Christ? Are they rejecting Christianity for one reason or another? Are they ignorant of the predictions of Scripture?

If they are, who do you suppose is going to tell them if you don't? Do you ever have that feeling that the Holy Spirit is moving you to say something about your faith to an unbeliever? If you are convinced such a feeling is coming from God, follow His leading. You may be the one God wants to use to bring that person into the Kingdom of God and through whom they will be given eternal life.

This message is specifically targeted here for Israel, but has wide ramifications for us all. Come back next week and find out what God has in store for the nation of Israel.