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## God Is Sovereign

Romans 9:30-10:13 - Read Passage: [epmkg.com/Romans9](http://epmkg.com/Romans9)

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### Notes

9:30–33. Once again Paul asked his familiar rhetorical question, **What then shall we say?** (cf. 4:1; 6:1; 8:31; 9:14) preparatory to his summation of this situation. His identification of **the Gentiles** (lit., “the nations”) as the ones who **have obtained ... a righteousness that is by** (*ek*, “out from”) **faith** is interesting. As Paul stated later, the church included Jewish as well as Gentile believers (11:1–5), but by the time of Paul’s third missionary journey the increasing rejection of the gospel by the Jews and the predominance of Gentiles in the church led the apostle to speak of “the Gentiles” as antithetical to **Israel**. The latter **pursued** (“kept on pursuing”) **a Law of righteousness**, but **has not attained it**. “A Law of righteousness” refers to the Mosaic Law (cf. 7:7, 12, 14). To seek to attain righteousness by observing the Law requires that it be kept perfectly (cf. James 2:10). **Why** did Israel **not** attain it? **Because they pursued it not by** (*ek*, “out from”) **faith but as if it were by** (*ek*, “out from”) **works**. The Israelites did not admit their inability to keep the Law perfectly and turn by faith to God for forgiveness. Instead a few of them kept trying to keep the Law by their own efforts. Consequently **they stumbled** (cf. Rom. 11:11) **over the “stumbling Stone.”** The Lord Jesus Christ, “the stumbling Stone” (cf. 1 Peter 2:4–8), did not conform to the Jews’ expectations, so they rejected Him instead of responding to Him by faith. To show that God anticipated this, Paul quoted from Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16 (cf. Rom. 10:11), combining the two statements to indicate the two contrasting reactions by **men** to the **Stone** that God placed **in Zion** (cf. “Zion” in 11:26).

10:1–4. Having stated the fact of Israel’s stumbling in the preceding verses, Paul now explained the reason for that stumbling. But first, in words reminiscent of the opening verses of chapter 9, the apostle expressed his deep personal spiritual burden for the salvation of the people of Israel. Perhaps with his own experience in mind (cf. Acts 26:11; Gal. 1:13–14; Phil. 3:4–6) Paul affirmed, **For I can testify** (pres. tense, “I testify, bear witness”) **about them that they are zealous for God**. Israel was called “the

God-intoxicated people.” Paul had to acknowledge, however, that **their zeal is not based on** (lit., “according to”) **knowledge** (*epignōsin*, “intensive, full knowledge”). The Jews obviously had knowledge of God but not full knowledge. Otherwise they would not have stumbled over Christ by seeking to gain righteousness on the basis of works.

Paul continued his explanation of Israel’s failure and their misguided zeal. **Since they did not know** (the participle *agnountes* means “being ignorant,” here in the sense of not understanding) **the righteousness that comes from God**. The NIV implies that the people of Israel did not understand the God-provided righteousness expounded in this letter to the Christians in Rome (cf. Rom. 1:17). That may be true, even though they should have known from their own Scriptures (cf. Gen. 15:6; Ps. 32:1–2). But here preferably the righteousness in view is the righteousness God requires for people to be accepted by Him, which is God’s own infinite righteousness. The Jews did not really understand God’s own infinite righteousness, which is why they were continuing to seek **to establish their own** (cf. Isa. 64:6). Little wonder then that **they did not submit to** (“place themselves under”) **God’s righteousness**, that is, the righteousness God provides through Christ by faith. The Greek in Romans 10:4 includes the coordinating particle *gar*, “for” (not trans. in the NIV). It introduces a statement that is crucial to Paul’s explanation of Israel’s stumbling—**Christ is the end of the Law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes**. The word translated “end” (*telos*) stands in the emphatic first position in the Greek sentence. It means that Christ is the designed end (termination) or Purpose-Goal of the Law (cf. Gal. 3:24), the Object to which the Law pointed.

The Law did not and could not of itself provide righteousness before God for individuals (cf. Rom. 3:20; 7:7). But Christ fulfilled the Law (Matt. 5:17–18) by keeping it perfectly during His sinless life (cf. John 8:46) and then gave His life in payment for the penalty of sin and the broken Law (cf. Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:13–14). The Law then pointed to Him as the Source of the God-provided righteousness it could not supply (Gal. 3:24). A godly Jew who trusted Yahweh and followed the Levitical system, including the sin offering and the trespass offering, would most likely be inclined to respond to Christ by faith and would receive God’s righteousness (i.e., be justified; Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24; 4:3, 5). He then could meet the requirements of the Law by the indwelling Holy Spirit (8:4). Conversely, a Jew who sought by works to establish his own righteousness would not recognize Christ as “the end of the Law” and would stumble over Him.

## 2. GOD’S GRACIOUS OFFER (10:5–15).

10:5–8. In presenting God’s gracious offer of salvation in Christ and the provision of righteousness by faith, Paul first stated the contrast of the by-works approach to achieving righteousness. He wrote, **Moses describes** (lit., “writes”) **the righteousness that is by the Law**. Then Paul quoted Leviticus 18:5, **The man who does these things will live by them**. If a Jew were to receive righteousness by keeping the demands of the Law, that would be

human achievement; it would not be from God. However, a Jew would need to keep the entire Law perfectly all his life—an impossible task (James 2:10). But then Paul also quoted Moses in support of his righteousness-by-faith position centered in Christ as “the end of the Law” and the means by which righteousness is available for everyone who believes. It does not seem appropriate that Paul was merely borrowing Moses’ words and applying them to something foreign in Moses’ thought. This suggests, then, that **righteousness ... by faith** is not a new concept, but had been proclaimed to Israel by Moses.

The material Paul quoted in Romans 10:6–8 is taken somewhat freely from Deuteronomy 30:12–14 with clauses quoted here and there. The material in Deuteronomy was part of Moses’ charge to the generation of Israel about to enter the land of Canaan. This exhortation was the conclusion of Moses’ prophetic description of God’s dealing with Israel. Blessing was promised for faith and obedience, and chastisement would result from rejection and disobedience. If Israel forsook God, Moses said, she would face worldwide dispersion and affliction. When the people then finally do turn to God in faith, He will restore them to blessing, prosperity, and prominence among the nations (Deut. 30:1–10). The point of Moses’ exhortation (Deut. 30:11) is that the generation to whom he was speaking had the message (it was very **near you** and **in your mouth**, Deut. 30:14) and could respond by faith (**in your heart**, Deut. 30:14) and walk with God in obedience. Since the Israelites in Moses’ day had the message, they did not need to ask that it be brought down from heaven or that someone “cross the sea to get it” (Deut. 30:13). Instead, **the word** (Moses’ instructions) was “near” them (Deut. 30:14).

In effect, Paul indicated that the same truth applied to his generation, with the added fact that Christ had come in the flesh (John 1:14) and had been resurrected. Therefore there was no need for anyone to ask **to bring Christ down** (in His Incarnation) or **to bring Christ up from the dead**; He had already come and had been resurrected. The message of righteousness by faith in Paul’s day was “near” his readers (available to them) and this was “the word” (*rhēma*, “saying”) **of faith** he was **proclaiming** (*rhēma*, “the spoken word” is also used in Eph. 5:26; 6:17; 1 Peter 1:25). Thus the gospel, “the word of faith,” is available and accessible.

10:9–13. In these verses Paul stated the content of that message concerning faith. Confessing **with the mouth** that **Jesus is Lord** is mentioned first to conform to the order of the quotation from Deuteronomy 30:14 in Romans 10:8. The confession is an acknowledgement that God has been incarnated in Jesus (cf. v. 6), that Jesus Christ is God. Also essential is **heart-faith that God raised Him from the dead** (cf. v. 7). The result is salvation. The true order is given in verse 10: **For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified** (lit., “it is believed unto righteousness”), **and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved** (lit., “it is confessed unto salvation”). Yet these are not two separate steps to salvation. They are chronologically together. Salvation comes through acknowledging to God that Christ is God and believing in Him.

Paul then (v. 11) supported his position by re quoting part of Isaiah 28:16 (cf. Rom. 9:33), adding the Greek word translated **everyone**. God responds with the gift of provided righteousness to each individual who believes. Then Paul reminded his readers of God's impartiality, as he did when discussing human sinfulness (3:22). Just as all who sin will be judged, so all who believe will be saved and **richly** blessed. This conclusion also is supported by a quotation from Joel 2:32: **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved**. To **call on** the Lord means to pray in faith for salvation. (On the significance of the "name," see comments on Acts 3:16.)<sup>1</sup>

**30–33** In verses 6–13 the apostle showed that the unbelief and rejection of ethnic Israel as a whole did not invalidate God's covenant promise; the promise had respect to and was realized in the election of grace. In verses 14–18 he had vindicated this procedure by appeal to the sovereignty of God's mercy. In verses 19–29 he had answered the objection that God's sovereign determinations relieved men of responsibility and blame. This section closes with proof that the Old Testament itself and the plan of God disclosed therein had in view only a remnant as the partakers of salvation. This remnant, spoken of also as the seed, brings us back to verse 8. Thus a unity of conception ties all these verses (vss. 6–29) together and the paramount consideration pleaded by the apostle is the differentiation which God in the exercise of his sovereign will determines, a differentiation also which insures that his covenant promise never falls to the ground. The electing purpose stands fast; there is the remnant according to the election of grace.

In verses 30–33, however, a new aspect of the situation with which Paul is dealing comes into view. The emphasis upon the sovereign will of God in the preceding verses does not eliminate human responsibility, nor is the one incompatible with the other. It is not as if God's sovereign will runs athwart all that obtains in the sphere of human will and action. The case is rather that what occurs in the one realm is correlative with what occurs in the other, not because the human will governs and determines God's will but because God's will is concerned with men there is a correspondence between what God wills and what men subjectively are. It is with the latter Paul deals in verses 30–33.

"What shall we say then?" is the same form of question as in verse 14 (cf. 3:5; 4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 8:31). It scarcely agrees with the construction of the whole passage to regard what follows as anything else than the direct answer to this question. The question arises in connection with the unbelief of Israel so much in the forefront in verses 1–3. But alongside of this unbelief there is also the faith of Gentiles (vss. 25, 26). This diversity provokes the question: What are we to make of it? The answer is given in a form that accentuates the

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<sup>1</sup> Witmer, J. A. (1985). [Romans](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 479–481). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

anomaly; the outcome is so different from what God's dealings in the past with the respective peoples would lead us to expect. This strange outcome is that Gentiles not following after righteousness gained righteousness and that Jews, though following righteousness, did not attain to it.

When Gentiles are said not to follow righteousness, there is allusion to the fact that they were outside the pale of special revelation and had been abandoned to their own ways (*cf.* 1:18–32; Acts 14:16; 17:30). But thought is focused on what is central to the theme of this epistle in the earlier chapters and again in Chapter 10, namely, that they did *not seek after the righteousness of justification*. It is not that they were destitute of all moral interest (*cf.* 2:12–15) but that the matter of justification and of the righteousness securing it was not their pursuit. On the other hand, Israel unto whom the oracles of God had been committed did pursue this righteousness. We may not tone down this statement. As possessors of special revelation, epitomized in the Abrahamic covenant, the matter of righteousness with God unto justification was focal in their interest; it was central in their religion. It is this contrast that points up the tragedy of the sequel. Gentiles attained to this righteousness and Israel failed to arrive there.

The change of form used in verse 31 must not, however, be overlooked. Israel is said to “follow after a law of righteousness”. This should not be taken as referring to the righteousness of the law, that of works. “Law” in this case is similar to its use in 3:27b; 7:21, 23; 8:2 and means principle or rule or order. Israel is represented as pursuing that order or institution which was concerned with justification. But Israel came short of gaining the righteousness to which that institution bore witness; “they did not arrive at that law”; they did not attain to what was provided in the institution that was their glory. We sense the importunity of the question: why? This is Paul's question: “wherefore?” Verses 32, 33 are the answer.

This answer is already anticipated in verse 30: the Gentiles are said to have “attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith”. In this instance it was necessary to define the righteousness as that of faith because the apostle does not in this context return to the subject of the righteousness to which the Gentiles attained. In verse 32 the question is why *Israel* did *not* attain to the same. The indictment is a reiteration of the thesis set forth earlier in the epistle, especially in 3:27–4:25. No further exposition is necessary other than to observe the way in which the antithesis is stated: “not of faith but as of works”. “As of works” indicates the conception entertained by Israel respecting the way by which justification was to be secured and the kind of righteousness constituting this justification. The misapprehension was total. Hence the failure.

The latter part of verse 32 is an expansion of this fatal error in the terms of an Old Testament figure. The Scripture had forewarned of the stumbling which constituted Israel's fall. There is neither need nor warrant to weaken the meaning of the term “stumbled” as if it referred merely to irritation or annoyance. It clearly refers to a fall and “the stone of

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stumbling” (Isa. 8:14), as the stone over which one stumbles, confirms this interpretation. If the figure of running a race is present in verses 30, 31 and carried on in verse 32, then the picture is the graphic one of stumbling over the hurdle and failing to gain the prize.

Verse 32 is a fuller confirmation from the Old Testament of the allusion to Isaiah 8:14 in verse 33. The quotation is a combination of two passages of different purport in their original contexts (Isa. 8:14; 28:16). In the former the Lord of hosts is said to be “for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel”. According to the latter the “stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone” is laid in Zion for a foundation and serves the purpose of giving stability and security. Paul takes parts of both passages, weaves these parts together into a unit, and by this abridgement and combination obtains the diverse thought of both passages. This twofold aspect he applies to the subject with which he is dealing, the failure of Israel and the attainment of the Gentiles. He thus shows that the Scripture had foretold in effect the twofold outcome. The main interest, however, is confirmation of the stumbling of Israel. It is this tragedy that looms high in the apostle’s concern, as is apparent from the preceding and succeeding contexts.

It cannot be doubted that Paul applies both passages to Christ. This is all the more significant in the case of Isaiah 8:14 for there it is the Lord of hosts who is spoken of as being for a stone of stumbling. The apostle had no hesitation in applying to Christ passages which pertained to the Lord of hosts. Since these passages are applied to Christ (*cf.* also Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:6–8), the faith mentioned in verses 30, 32 is the faith specified in verse 33 as believing upon Christ. It is the faith of resting upon him and in the context (*cf.* vss. 30, 31) is viewed particularly as the faith directed to justification. The righteousness attained is that of faith in contrast with works. The effect, “shall not be put to shame”, taken from Isaiah 28:16, varies from the Hebrew. The latter says: “he that believeth shall not be in haste”. Paul in quoting follows the rendering of the Greek translators. The rendering should not be regarded as importing an idea alien to the thought of the Hebrew. The idea expressed by the Greek is that the believer will not be confounded, he will not have occasion to be ashamed of his confidence. And the Hebrew may express the closely related thought that he will not flee in disappointment.

ROMANS 10

XVI. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH

(10:1-21)

**10:1-8**

- 1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, 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 God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.
- 4 For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.
- 5 For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby.
- 6 But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down:)
- 7 or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.)
- 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach:

**1** In this chapter the apostle is concerned with the same subject as that dealt with in the latter part of the preceding chapter. In 9:32, 33 the stumbling of Israel consisted in seeking righteousness by works and not by faith. This is but another way of saying that they sought to establish their own righteousness and did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God, the way it is stated in 10:3. Thus there is no break in the thought at 10:1. It should be noted, however, that into the midst of this treatment of the guilt of Israel the apostle interjects what reminds us of the way in which the whole subject of the unbelief of Israel had been introduced (9:1-3). The terms he uses now do not have the intensity used earlier. But it is the same heartfelt, deep-seated solicitude for his kinsmen according to the flesh. The address with which he begins, "Brethren", is one charged with emotion and affection

and draws our attention to a solicitude, expressed in the words that follow, for those who are outside of the fellowship which the term “brethren” implies.

The word rendered “desire” is more properly translated “good-pleasure” (*cf.*, with reference to God, Matt. 11:26; Luke 2:14; 10:21; 12:32; Eph. 1:5, 9; Phil. 2:13 and, with reference to men, Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 5:8; 12:10; 1 Thess. 2:8; 3:1; 2 Thess. 2:12). We are reminded of Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11, in which God proclaims it to be his good-pleasure that the wicked turn from his evil way and live. So here Paul asserts the good-pleasure, the delight of his heart with reference to Israel. This is joined with supplication to God for Israel. “That they might be saved” expresses that to which the good-pleasure of his heart and his supplication were directed. The sorrow and pain of heart (9:1) were not, therefore, emotions of hopeless melancholy; they were joined with goodwill toward Israel and the outgoing of specific entreaty to God on their behalf to the end that they might be saved. Here we have a lesson of profound import. In the preceding chapter the emphasis is upon the sovereign and determinative will of God in the differentiation that exists among men. God has mercy on whom he wills and whom he wills he hardens. Some are vessels for wrath, others for mercy. And ultimate destiny is envisioned in destruction and glory. But this differentiation is God’s action and prerogative, not man’s. And, because so, our attitude to men is not to be governed by God’s secret counsel concerning them. It is this lesson and the distinction involved that are so eloquently inscribed on the apostle’s passion for the salvation of his kinsmen. We violate the order of human thought and trespass the boundary between God’s prerogative and man’s when the truth of God’s sovereign counsel constrains despair or abandonment of concern for the eternal interests of men.

**2, 3** When Paul says “I bear them witness” he is making allowance for the religious interest which Israel possessed and accords to them the credit due on this account. They have “zeal for God”. No one knew better than the apostle what such zeal was; in no one had it risen to greater intensity (*cf.* Acts 26:5, 8; Gal. 1:14). Hence he knew from personal experience the state of mind and conscience with which he credited his kinsmen and his “witness” to that effect takes on added meaning for that reason. The adversative, “but not according to knowledge”, points to the criterion by which “zeal for God” is to be judged. Zeal is a neutral quality and can be the greatest vice. It is that to which it is directed that determines its ethical character. The criterion, therefore, is “knowledge”. The term used here is one that often expresses the thorough knowledge that is after godliness to be distinguished from the knowledge that puffs up (*cf.* 1 Cor. 8:1; 13:2, 8 with Eph. 1:17; 4:13; Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9; 3:10; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7; Tit. 1:1). Verse 3 gives the reason why their zeal was not according to knowledge and explains what this lack of knowledge was: they did not know God’s righteousness. It is not merely that they did not acknowledge this righteousness while at the same time knowing that it was that to which the Scriptures bore witness; they did not apprehend that which had been revealed. This concept of “God’s righteousness” is that introduced at 1:17 and unfolded still further at 3:21, 22 (*cf.* the exposition at these points). In opposition to God’s righteousness Israel sought to establish

their own. Thus again Paul institutes the antithesis between a God-righteousness and a human righteousness, a righteousness with divine properties in contrast with that derived from human character and works. This is the theme developed in the early part of the epistle. Just as in 9:11, 30–32 there is distinct allusion to what had been argued at length in 3:21–5:21, so here also. The basic error of Israel was misconception respecting the righteousness unto justification. The righteousness of God as the provision for man's basic need is here viewed as an ordinance or institution requiring subjection. To this ordinance Israel did not subject themselves. It is the "zeal for God" that places in bolder relief the tragedy of Israel's failure to attain to the law of righteousness. And the sin of ignorance is accentuated when by not knowing we miss the central provision of God's grace. How contrary to the popular notion that ignorance is an excuse and good intent the norm of approbation.<sup>4</sup>

4 This verse gives the reason for the thesis of verse 3 that God's righteousness and not man's is the institution of God: "Christ is the end of the law". This has been taken in the sense that the purpose of the law is fulfilled or realized in Christ. The term rendered "end" does on occasion have this meaning (*cf.* Luke 22:37; 1 Tim. 1:5). It is also true that if law is understood in the sense of the Mosaic institution, then this institution is fulfilled in Christ (*cf.* Gal. 3:24). Furthermore, the righteousness which Christ has provided unto our justification is one that meets all the requirements of God's law in its sanctions and demands. There are, however, objections to this interpretation.

1. Though the word "end" can express aim or purpose, preponderantly, and particularly in Paul, it means termination, denoting a terminal point (*cf.* Matt. 10:22; 24:6, 14; Mark 3:26; Luke 1:33; John 13:1; Rom. 6:21; 1 Cor. 1:8; 15:24; 2 Cor. 1:13; 3:13; 11:15; Phil. 3:19; Heb. 6:11; 7:3; 1 Pet. 4:7).

2. If "end" means purpose then we should expect the apostle to say that the purpose of the law is Christ, the reason being that, on this assumption, the purpose of the law would be the main thought and the real subject of the sentence. But this would give an awkward if not impossible construction as will appear from the translation that would be required: "The end of the law is Christ for righteousness to every one that believeth".

3. In this epistle and in the context the antithesis is between the righteousness of the law as that of works and God's righteousness as the righteousness of faith. The next verse is the clearest demonstration of this antithesis and of the meaning we are to attach to the apostle's concept of the law as the way of attaining to righteousness (*cf.* also 3:20, 21, 28; 4:13, 14; 8:3; 9:32). The view most consonant with this context is, therefore, that the apostle is speaking in verse 4 of the law as a way of righteousness before God and affirming the relation that Christ sustains to this conception. The only relation that Christ sustains to it is that he terminates it.

4. It needs to be noted immediately, however, that a qualification is added: “to every one that believeth”. This qualification implies that only for the believer is Christ the end of the law for righteousness. Paul does not mean that the erroneous conception ceased to be entertained. That was sadly not the case, as verse 3 proves. It is, Paul says, for every one who believes that Christ is the end of the law, and his whole statement is simply to the effect that every believer is done with the law as a way of attaining to righteousness. In this consideration we have an added reason for the interpretation given. If Paul were speaking of the purpose of the law as fulfilled in Christ, we would expect the absolute statement: “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness”, and no addition would be necessary or in place.

The foregoing observation regarding the force of the apostle’s statement bears also upon an erroneous interpretation of this verse, enunciated by several commentators to the effect that the Mosaic law had propounded law as the means of procuring righteousness.

It is strange that this notion should be entertained in the face of Paul’s frequent appeal to the Old Testament and even to Moses and the Mosaic law in support of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith (*cf.* 3:21, 22; 4:6–8, 13; 9:15, 16; 10:6–8; 15:8, 9; Gal. 3:10, 11, 17–22; 4:21–31). There is no suggestion to the effect that in the theocracy works of law had been represented as the basis of salvation and that now by virtue of Christ’s death this method had been displaced by the righteousness of faith. We need but reflect again on the force of the proposition in question: *for the believer* Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. Paul is speaking of “law” as commandment, not of the Mosaic law in any specific sense but of law as demanding obedience, and therefore in the most general sense of law-righteousness as opposed to faith-righteousness.

**5–8** The antithesis which had been developed in verses 3, 4 the apostle finds enunciated in the books of Moses. That is to say, Moses speaks of the righteousness which is of the law and defines what it is and he also speaks of the righteousness of faith. For the former Leviticus 18:5 is quoted and for the latter Deuteronomy 30:12, 14. The general purpose of this appeal to these passages is apparent. In characteristic manner Paul adduces the Old Testament witness to support his thesis. At least he derives from Scripture illustrations of the antithesis instituted in the preceding verses and thus confirms from the Jewish Scriptures themselves the argument he is conducting. But there are difficulties connected with the particular passages quoted, especially in the application which Paul makes.

The difficulty with the first (Lev. 18:5) is that in the original setting it does not appear to have any reference to legal righteousness as opposed to that of grace. Suffice it to say now that the formal statement Paul appropriates as one suited to express the principle of law-righteousness. It cannot be doubted but the proposition, “The man that doeth the

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righteousness of the law shall live thereby”, is, of itself, an adequate and watertight definition of the principle of legalism. (See Appendix B, pp. 249ff., for fuller discussion.)

Since Paul in verses 6–8 does not introduce the allusions to Deuteronomy 30:12–14 with such a formula as “Moses writeth” (vs. 5) or “Isaiah hath said” (9:29) but with the more unusual expression “The righteousness of faith saith”, it could be argued that he is not here adducing Scripture proof but making his own independent assertion. Also, since he does not quote with close adherence to the Hebrew or Greek but makes alterations and intersperses his own comments which have no parallels in the passage concerned, it has been maintained that here is not strictly *quotation* in support of his argument but “a free employment of the words of Moses, which the apostle uses as an apt substratum for his own course of thought” so that “the independent dogmatic argument” finds only a formal point of support in the Deuteronomic passage. But since there is patent allusion to and partial quotation from Deuteronomy 30:12–14 and since the formula, “the righteousness of faith saith”, is immediately followed by quotation (Deut. 30:12), it is difficult to escape the thought that in this passage the apostle finds the language of faith and appeals to it as confirmation of the righteousness of faith as much as Leviticus 18:5 expresses the principle regulative of law-righteousness. The type of adaptation and application we find in this instance is not wholly diverse from what we find in other instances (*cf.* 9:25, 26 and vs. 5 preceding).

We should not perplex the difficulties of this passage by supposing that the apostle takes a passage concerned with law-righteousness and applies it to the opposite, namely, faith-righteousness. It is true that Moses is dealing with the commandments and the statutes which Israel were charged to obey. Of this commandment he speaks when it is said, “it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off” (Deut. 30:11), and the protestations of the verses that follow are all in confirmation of the nearness and practicality of the covenant ordinances. It would be a complete misconstruction of Deuteronomy to interpret it legalistically. The whole thrust is the opposite (*cf.* Deut. 7:7ff.; 9:6ff.; 10:15ff.; 14:2ff.; 15:15f.; 29:9f., 29; 32:9; 33:29). The words in question, therefore, do not find their place in a legalistic framework but in that of the grace which the covenant bespoke. Their import is that the things revealed for faith and life are accessible: we do not have to ascend to heaven nor go to the utmost parts of the sea to find them. By revelation “they belong to us and our children for ever” (Deut. 29:29) and therefore nigh in our mouth and in our heart. This truth Paul finds exemplified in the righteousness of faith and he applies it to the basic tenets of belief in Christ. These same tenets were a stumblingblock to unbelieving Israel. Thus, when we think of the truth expressed in Deuteronomy 30:12–14, we can see the appropriateness of the use of this passage to show that the same tenets over which the Jews stumbled are the tenets which verify to the fullest extent the truth of the passage from which the apostle quotes. As we proceed we shall discover this relevance.

When Paul says “the righteousness of faith saith”, he is personifying the same (*cf.* Prov. 1:20; 8:1; Heb. 12:5). It is to the effect of saying “Scripture says with reference to the righteousness of faith”. The main question in verse 6 is the meaning of Paul’s own statement: “that is, to bring Christ down” and in verse 7: “that is, to bring Christ up from the dead”.

The former has been interpreted to mean: Christ has ascended up to heaven, and the preceding question is the retort of unbelief: who can ascend up to heaven to establish contact with him? This makes good sense of itself but it does not accord with the unbelief of Israel that hovers in the background in this context nor does it suit that which follows in succeeding verses. It is better, therefore, to take the statement as implying that Jesus never came down from heaven and the preceding question as the taunt of unbelief. What Paul is insisting on is the accessibility, the nearness of revelation. That Christ came down from heaven and tabernacled among men is the most signal proof of this fact. We dare not say: who shall ascend to heaven to find the truth? For this question discounts the incarnation and is a denial of its meaning. In Christ the truth came to earth.

The other statement: “that is, to bring Christ up from the dead” (vs. 7) should be interpreted as a denial of the resurrection. The question: “who shall descend into the abyss?” echoes the same kind of unbelief as that of verse 6. It is to the effect: who shall go down to the abyss to find the truth? The abyss as representing that which is below is contrasted with heaven as that which is above. The question, as the language of unbelief, discounts the significance of Christ’s resurrection. For the latter means that Jesus went to the realm of the dead and returned to life again. We do not need to go down to the abyss to find the truth any more than we need to ascend to heaven for the same purpose. For as Christ came from heaven to earth so also did he come again from the lower parts of the earth (*cf.* Eph. 4:9) and manifested himself to men.

Verse 8 is the assertion of what is the burden of Deuteronomy 30:12–14 and is, with slight alteration, quotation of verse 14. Paul now specifies what this word is: it is “the word of faith, which we preach”. So the word of Deuteronomy 30:14 is applied directly to the message of the gospel as preached by the apostles. “The word of faith” is the word to which faith is directed,<sup>12</sup> not the word which faith utters. It is the word *preached* and therefore the message which brings the gospel into our mouth and heart.

## 10:9–15

9 because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved:

10 for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

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- 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame.
  - 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him:
  - 13 for, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
  - 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?
  - 15 and how shall they preach, except they be sent? even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!

**9–11** There are various ways of summarizing the gospel message and of stating the cardinal elements of faith. The way adopted in a particular case is determined by the context and suited to the angle from which the gospel is viewed. In this passage attention is focused upon the lordship and the resurrection of Christ, confession that Jesus is Lord and belief that God raised him from the dead. It appears that the conjunction at the beginning of verse 9 means “that” rather than “because”; it specifies what is in the mouth and in the heart, confession of Jesus’ lordship and belief of the resurrection, respectively. The order which the apostle follows corresponds to that of verse 8, “in thy mouth, and in thy heart”, the order followed in the text quoted (Deut. 30:14).

The confession “Jesus as Lord” or “Jesus is Lord” refers to the lordship which Jesus exercises in virtue of his exaltation (*cf.* 1:4; 14:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Eph. 1:20–23; Phil. 2:11; also Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36; 10:36; Heb. 1:3; 1 Pet. 3:21, 22). This lordship presupposes the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ and consists in his investiture with universal dominion. It can readily be seen how far-reaching are the implications of the confession. On several occasions Paul had reflected earlier in this epistle on the significance of Jesus’ resurrection (*cf.* 1:4; 4:24, 25; 5:10; 6:4, 5, 9, 10, and the exposition at these points). In this instance the accent falls upon believing in the heart that God raised him. The heart is the seat and organ of religious consciousness and must not be restricted to the realm of emotions or affections. It is determinative of what a person is morally and religiously and, therefore, embraces the intellective and volitive as well as the emotive. Hence believing with the *heart* that God raised Jesus means that this event with its implications respecting Jesus as the person raised and the exceeding greatness of God’s power as the active agency has secured the consent of that which is most decisive in our persons and is correspondingly determinative of religious conviction. The effect of this confession and belief is said to be salvation—“thou shalt be saved”. We are not to regard confession and faith as having the same efficacy unto salvation. The contrast between mouth and heart needs to be observed. But we may not tone down the importance of confession with the mouth. Confession without faith would be vain (*cf.* Matt. 7:22, 23; Tit. 1:16). But likewise

faith without confession would be shown to be spurious. Our Lord and the New Testament in general bear out Paul's coordination of faith and confession (*cf.* Matt. 10:22; Luke 12:8; John 9:22; 12:42; 1 Tim. 6:12; 1 John 2:23; 4:15; 2 John 7). Confession with the mouth is the evidence of the genuineness of faith and sustains to the same the relation which good works sustain (*cf.* 12:1, 2; 14:17; Eph. 2:8–10; 4:1, 2; James 2:17–22).

In verse 10 the order is inverted; faith is mentioned first and then confession. This shows that verse 9 is not intended to announce the order of priority whether causal or logical. Obviously there would have to be belief with the heart before there could be confession with the mouth. This verse is explanatory of the preceding. A few features deserve comment. (1) Literally the rendering would be: "For with the heart it is believed unto righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed unto salvation". This can be taken, as in the version, as equivalent to "one believes" and "one confesses". But the subjects can be taken over from the preceding verse and so the resurrection would be the subject of "is believed" and the lordship of Christ of "is confessed". This would particularize the tenets believed and confessed as in verse 9. It may be, however, that Paul intended a more general statement and focused attention upon the heart as the organ of faith and the mouth as the organ of confession. "Heart" and "mouth" have the positions of emphasis. In either case this emphasis must not be overlooked, and thus again the stress falls upon the necessity of confession with the mouth as well as belief of the heart. (2) There is a specification in this verse that does not appear in verse 9. Faith is unto *righteousness*, confession is unto *salvation*, whereas in verse 9 salvation is said to be the common effect of both. In accord with 9:30–33; 10:2–6 the righteousness contemplated must be that which is unto justification and it is consonant with the teaching of the epistle throughout that faith should be represented as the instrument. Thus when Paul becomes more analytic than in verse 9 we find what we would expect—that faith is directed to *righteousness* (for exposition *cf. ad* 1:16, 17; 3:22; 4:1–12 *passim*). Confession is unto salvation as faith is unto righteousness. This cannot mean confession to the exclusion of faith. Such a supposition would be contrary to verse 9 and other passages (*cf.* 1:16; Eph. 2:8). It does, however, draw attention to the place of confession with the mouth. Confession verifies and confirms the faith of the heart.

Verse 11 is another appeal to Isaiah 28:16 (*cf.* 9:33) with the insertion on the apostle's part of "whosoever". This emphasis, implied though not expressed in Isaiah, is supplied in anticipation of verses 12, 13.

**12, 13** "For there is no distinction" gives the reason for the "whosoever" of verse 11. Upon the absence of differentiation in respect of sin and condemnation, on the one hand, and opportunity of salvation, on the other, Paul had repeatedly reflected (*cf.* 1:16; 3:9, 19, 22, 23, 29, 30; 4:11, 12; 9:24). The distinctive feature of this text is the reason given in the latter half. In 3:29, 30 the oneness of God is given as the reason why God justifies Jews and Gentiles through faith. Here in verse 12 the same kind of argument is derived from the

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lordship of Christ: “the same *Lord* is Lord of all”. That Christ is in view should be apparent from the immediately preceding context as well as from Paul’s usage in general (*cf.* vs. 9). When it is said that he “is rich unto all that call upon him”, the thought is not so much that of the riches that reside in Christ (*cf.* Eph. 3:8) as that of the readiness and fulness with which he receives those who call upon him. Verse 13 is again confirmation from the Old Testament (Joel 2:32; Heb. and LXX 3:5). This formula “call upon the name of the Lord” is a characteristic Old Testament way of expressing the worship that is addressed to God and applies specifically to the worship of supplication (*cf.* Gen. 4:26; 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25; 1 Kings 18:24; 2 Kings 5:11; Psalms 79:6; 105:1; 116:4, 13; Isa. 64:7). Joel 2:32 has the same significance as belongs to it elsewhere. When Paul applies the same to Christ this is another example of the practice of taking Old Testament passages which refer to God without qualification and applying them to Christ. It was the distinguishing mark of New Testament believers that they called upon the name of the Lord Jesus (*cf.* Acts 9:14, 21; 22:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:22) and therefore accorded to him the worship that belonged to God alone. In the present text the formula is applied to initial faith in Christ but should not be restricted to the act of commitment to Christ which believing in Christ specifically denotes. Calling upon the name of the Lord is a more inclusive act of worship that presupposes faith.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Murray, J. (1968). [\*The Epistle to the Romans\*](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 41–58). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.