

---

## God Wants You To Be Saved!

Romans 10:14-21 - Read Passage: [epmkg.com/Romans10](http://epmkg.com/Romans10)

---

### About Austin's Study Notes

*This document contains information and resources Pastor Austin Rammell used to research and compile his weekly message. Resources are copyrighted by their respective authors and credited via footnotes. We encourage you to purchase the original resource materials to perform your own study.*

---

## Notes

### *Their Voice Has Gone Out*

#### **ROMANS 10:14-15**

In order to demonstrate the indispensable necessity of evangelism, Paul asks four consecutive questions.

First, in order to be saved, sinners must call on the name of the Lord. But “how, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?” Calling on his name presupposes that they know and believe his name. This is the only place in Paul’s letters where he uses the term *believe in*, although it is the regular expression in John’s writings for saving faith. Here, since saving faith is presented as “calling on” Christ’s name, the kind of belief Paul has in mind must be the prior stage of believing the facts about Jesus that are included in his “name.”

Second, “how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?” Just as believing is logically prior to calling, so hearing is logically prior to believing. In other words, people will not believe Christ until they have heard him speaking through his messengers or ambassadors.

Third, “how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” In ancient times, before the development of the mass media of communication, the major means of transmitting news was the herald’s public proclamations in the city square or the marketplace. There could be no hearers without heralds.

Fourth, “how can anyone preach unless they are sent?” It is not clear what kind of sending Paul has in mind. Paul and his fellow apostles were directly commissioned by

---

Christ. There were also apostles of the churches, sent out as missionaries. In either case, the need for heralds is now confirmed from Scripture: “As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’ ”

The essence of Paul’s argument is seen if we put his six verbs in the opposite order: Christ sends heralds, heralds preach, people hear, hearers believe, believers call, and those who call are saved. The relentless logic of Paul’s case for evangelism is felt most forcibly when the stages are stated negatively and each is seen to be essential to the next. Unless some people are commissioned for the task, there will be no gospel preachers; unless the gospel is preached, sinners will not hear Christ’s message and voice; unless they hear him, they will not believe the truths of his death and resurrection; unless they believe these truths, they will not call on him; and unless they call on his name, they will not be saved.

*Who Has Believed?*

### **ROMANS 10:16–19**

Preaching leads to hearing, and hearing to believing. Why then have the Israelites not believed? In answer to this perplexing question, Paul ventilates and rejects two possible explanations. Later he will supply his own explanation.

First, “did they not hear?” This is the right first question to ask, since believing depends on hearing. But Paul no sooner asks the question than he summarily dismisses it: “Of course they did.” As evidence of this assertion, he quotes Psalm 19:4. His choice of biblical quotation is surprising, since what Psalm 19 celebrates is not the worldwide spread of the gospel but the universal witness of the heavens to their Creator. Paul of course knew this. It seems perfectly reasonable to suggest that he was transferring eloquent biblical language about global witness from the creation to the church, taking the former as symbolic of the latter. If God wants the general revelation of his glory to be universal, how much more must he want the special revelation of his grace to be universal too! So the Jews *have* heard; they cannot blame their not believing on their not hearing.

Second, then, “Did Israel not understand?” We take Paul’s point that it is quite possible to hear without understanding, as Jesus warned us in his parable of the sower. But Paul also rejects this explanation of Jewish unbelief and backs up his position by first quoting from Moses. There are people with “no understanding.” But they are not the Jews; they are the Gentiles, whom Moses also describes as “not a nation.” God reveals his intention to make Israel both *envious* of and *angry* at the “no nation,” “no understanding” Gentiles because of the blessings he would give them.

*God Holds Out His Hands*

---

## ROMANS 10:20–21

If, then, Israel's rejection of the gospel cannot be attributed either to her not hearing it or to her not understanding it, she must be without excuse. This is the third possible explanation of her unbelief, which Paul now accepts. Israel is simply stubborn.

True, the Israelites were ignorant of God's righteousness, but this is now seen to be willful ignorance. They had stumbled over the "stumbling stone," namely, Christ.

In order to enforce this idea, Paul now quotes Isaiah. The prophet's *bold* words prove to come from the lips of God himself. He draws a sharp contrast between the Gentiles and the Jews, his actions toward them and their attitudes toward him.

God deliberately reverses the roles between himself and the Gentiles. It would normally be for them to ask, seek and knock (as Jesus was later to put it) and to adopt toward him the respectful attitude of a servant at the master's disposal, saying "Here I am." Instead, although they did not ask or seek or offer themselves to God's service, he allowed himself to be found by them, he revealed himself to them, and he even offered himself to them, saying humbly to them, "Here am I." This is dramatic imagery for grace, God taking the initiative to make himself known.

God's initiative to Israel is even more pronounced. He does not simply allow himself to be found; he actively holds out his hands to them. Like a parent inviting a child to come home, offering a hug and a kiss, and promising a welcome, so God has opened and stretched out his arms to his people. He has kept his arms continuously outstretched, all day long, pleading with them to return. But he has received no response. They do not even give him the neutral response of the Gentiles, who decline either to ask or to seek. No, their response is negative, resistant, recalcitrant, dismissive. They are determined to remain a disobedient and obstinate people. We feel God's dismay, his grief.

So Paul concludes his second exploration into the unbelief of Israel. In chapter 9 he attributed it to God's purpose of election, on account of which many were passed by and only a remnant was left, an Israel within Israel. In chapter 10, however, he attributes it to Israel's own disobedience. Their fall was their fault. The paradox between divine sovereignty and human responsibility remains.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Stott, J., Larsen, D., & Larsen, S. (2016). [\*Reading Romans with John Stott: With Questions for Groups or Individuals\*](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 35–42). Downers Grove, IL: IVP Connect: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press.

VERSES 14, 15. *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? &c., &c.* Paul considered it as involved in what he had already said, and especially in the predictions of the ancient prophets, that it was the will of God that all men should call upon him. This being the case, he argues to prove that it was his will that the gospel should be preached to all. As invocation implies faith, as faith implies knowledge, knowledge instruction, and instruction an instructor, so it is plain that if God would have all men to call upon him, he designed preachers to be sent to all, whose proclamation of mercy being heard, might be believed, and being believed, might lead men to call on him and be saved. This is agreeable to the prediction of Isaiah, who foretold that the advent of the preachers of the gospel should be hailed with great and universal joy. According to this, which is the common and most natural view of the passage, it is an argument founded on the principle, that if God wills the end, he wills also the means; if he would have the Gentiles saved, according to the predictions of his prophets, he would have the gospel preached to them. “Qui vult finem, vult etiam media. Deus vult ut homines invocent ipsum salutariter. Ergo vult ut credant. Ergo vult ut audiant. Ergo vult ut habeant praedicatores. Itaque praedicatores misit.”—*Bengel*. Calvin’s view of the object of the passage is the same, but his idea of the nature of the argument is very different. He supposes the apostle to reason thus. The Gentiles actually call upon God; but invocation implies faith, faith hearing, hearing preaching, and preaching a divine mission. If, therefore, the Gentiles have actually received and obeyed the gospel, it is proof enough that God designed it to be sent to them. This interpretation is ingenious, and affords a good sense; but it is founded on an assumption which the Jew would be slow to admit, that the Gentile was an acceptable worshipper of God. If he admitted this, he admitted every thing and the argument becomes unnecessary. According to De Wette, Meyer, and others, the design of the apostle is to show the necessity of divine messengers in order to ground thereon a reproof of disobedience to that message. The whole context, however, shows, that he is not here assigning the reasons for the rejection of the Jews, but vindicating the propriety of preaching to the Gentiles. God had predicted that the Gentiles should be saved; he had provided a method of salvation adapted to all men; he had declared that whosoever called upon the name of the Lord should be saved; from which it follows, that it is his will that they should hear of him whom they were required to invoke.

VERSE 15. *As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.* The word here rendered *preach the gospel*, is the same as that immediately afterwards translated, *bring glad tidings*. The word *gospel*, therefore, must be taken in its original meaning, *good news, the good news of peace*. The passage in Isa. 52:7, which the apostle faithfully, as to the meaning, follows, has reference to the Messiah’s kingdom. It is one of those numerous prophetic declarations, which announce in general terms the coming deliverance of the Church, a deliverance which embraced, at the first stage of its accomplishment, the restoration from the Babylonish captivity. This, however, so far from being the blessing principally intended, derived all its value from being introductory to that more glorious deliverance to be effected by the

Redeemer. *How beautiful the feet*, of course means, how delightful the approach. The bearing of this passage on the object of the apostle is sufficiently obvious. He had proved that the gospel should be preached to all men, and refers to the declaration of the ancient prophet, which spoke of the joy with which the advent of the messengers of mercy should be hailed.

VERSE 16. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel, for Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?* This verse may be viewed as an objection to the apostle's doctrine, confirmed by the quotation of a passage from Isaiah. 'You say the gospel ought to be preached to all men, but if God had intended that it should be preached to them, they would obey it; which they have not done.' This view of the passage would have some plausibility if Calvin's representation of Paul's argument were correct. Did the apostle reason from the fact that the Gentiles believed that it was God's intention they should have the gospel preached to them, it would be very natural to object, that as only a few have obeyed, it was evidently not designed for them. But even on the supposition of the correctness of this view of the argument, this interpretation of ver. 16 is barely possible, for the quotation from Isaiah cannot be understood otherwise than as the language of the apostle, or as intended to confirm what he himself had said. There is no necessity for the assumption that this verse is the language of an objection. Paul had said that the preaching of the gospel to all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, was according to the will of God. This is true *although* (ἀλλ' ὅτι) all have not obeyed. This disobedience was foreseen and predicted, *for* Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? The complaint of the prophet was not confined to the men of his generation. It had reference mainly to the general rejection of the gospel, especially by the theocratical people. Christ came to his own, and his own received him not. And this was predicted of old. *Our report*, or message. The word is ἀκροῖα, literally the faculty or act of hearing; then, metonymically, what is heard, i.e., a message, preaching, or teaching. The message of the prophet concerning the servant of the Lord, and what he was to do and suffer for his people, as recorded in Isa. 53, it was predicted would be believed by the great majority of those to whom it was addressed.

VERSE 17. *So then faith (cometh) by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* The passage in Isaiah speaks of an ἀκροῖα, a message, something addressed to the ear. The design of that message was that men should believe. They were required to receive and rest upon it as true. Without it, there could be no ground of faith; nothing on which faith could rest. Therefore faith is from hearing. It is receiving the message as true. But this message is by the word or command of God. It is therefore a sure foundation of faith. And as all men are required to believe, the message should be sent to all, and the divine command on which it rests, must include an injunction to make the proclamation universal. Thus the two ideas presented in the context, viz., the necessity of knowledge to faith, and the purpose of God to extend that knowledge to the Gentiles, are both confirmed in this verse. The above is the common interpretation of this passage. It assumes that ῥημα θεοῦ is to be taken in the sense of command of God, whereas it commonly means the word or message of God. If this

sense be retained here, then ἀκ οἴ must mean the act of hearing. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing supposes something to be heard, a ρῆμα, or word of God.' In Luke 5:5, Heb. 11:3, (compare Heb. 1:3,) ρῆμα Θεοῦ means God's (or the Lord's) command. There is no necessity, therefore, for giving ἀκ οἴ a different sense here from that which it must have in the preceding verse.

VERSE 18. *But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, &c.* The concise and abrupt manner of argument and expression in this and the verses which precede and follow, renders the apostle's meaning somewhat doubtful. This verse is frequently considered as referring to the Jews, and designed to show that their want of faith could not be excused on the ground of want of knowledge. The sense of the passage would then be, 'As faith cometh by hearing, have not the Jews heard? Have they not had the opportunity of believing? Yes, indeed, for the gospel has been proclaimed far and wide.' So Koppe, Flatt, Tholuck, Meyer, Philippi, &c. But there are several objections to this view of the passage. In the first place, it is not in harmony with the context. Paul is not speaking now of the rejection of the Jews, or the grounds of it, but of the calling of the Gentiles. 2. If the 16th verse refers to the Gentiles, "They have not all obeyed the gospel," and therefore this verse, "Have they not heard?" cannot, without any intimation of change, be naturally referred to a different subject. 3. In the following verse, where the Jews are really intended, they are distinctly mentioned, "Did not Israel know?"

Paul's object in the whole context is to vindicate the propriety of extending the gospel call to all nations. This he had beautifully done in vs. 14, 15, by showing that preaching was a necessary means of accomplishing the clearly revealed will of God, that men of all nations should participate in his grace. "True, indeed, as had been foretold, the merciful offers of the gospel were not universally accepted, ver. 16, but still faith cometh by hearing, and therefore the gospel should be widely preached, ver. 17. Well, has not this been done? has not the angel of mercy broke loose from his long confinement within the pale of the Jewish Church, and flown through the heavens with the proclamation of love?" ver. 18. This verse, therefore, is to be considered as a strong declaration that what Paul had proved ought to be done, had in fact been accomplished. The middle wall of partition had been broken down, the gospel of salvation, the religion of God, was free from its trammels, the offers of mercy were as wide and general as the proclamation of the heavens. This idea the apostle beautifully and appositely expresses in the sublime language of Psalm 19, "The heavens declare the glory of God, day unto day uttereth speech, there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard, their line is gone through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." The last verse contains the words used by the apostle. His object in using the words of the Psalmist was, no doubt, to convey more clearly and affectingly to the minds of his hearers the idea that the proclamation of the gospel was now as free from all national or ecclesiastical restrictions, as the instructions shed down upon all people by the heavens under which they dwell. Paul, of course, is not to be understood as quoting the Psalmist as though the ancient prophet was speaking of the preaching of the gospel. He

simply uses scriptural language to express his own ideas, as is done involuntarily almost by every preacher in every sermon. It is, however, nevertheless true, as Hengstenberg remarks in his Christology, that “The universal revelation of God in nature, was a providential prediction of the universal proclamation of the gospel. If the former was not fortuitous, but founded in the nature of God, so must the latter be. The manifestation of God in nature, is, for all his creatures to whom it is made, a pledge of their participation in the clearer and higher revelations.”

It will be perceived that the apostle says, “Their *sound* has gone, &c.,” whereas in the 19th Psalm it is, “Their *line* is gone.” Paul follows the Septuagint, which, instead of giving the literal sense of the Hebrew word, gives correctly its figurative meaning. The word signifies *a line*, then *a musical chord*, and then, metonymically, *sound*.

VERSE 19. *But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy, &c.* Another passage difficult from its conciseness. The difficulty is to ascertain what the question refers to. Did not Israel know what? The gospel? or, The calling of the Gentiles and their own rejection? The latter seems, for two reasons, the decidedly preferable interpretation. 1. The question is most naturally understood as referring to the main subject under discussion, which is, as frequently remarked, the calling of the Gentiles and rejection of the Jews. 2. The question is explained by the quotations which follow. ‘Does not Israel know what Moses and Isaiah so plainly teach?’ viz., that a people who were no people, should be preferred to Israel; while the latter were to be regarded as disobedient and gainsaying. According to the other interpretation, the meaning of the apostle is, ‘Does not Israel know the gospel? Have not the people of God been instructed? If, therefore, as was predicted, they are superseded by the heathen, it must be their own fault.’ Calvin thinks there is an evident contrast between this and the preceding verse. ‘If even the heathen have had some knowledge of God, how is it with Israel, the favoured people of God? &c.’ But this whole interpretation, as intimated above, is inconsistent with the drift of the context, and the spirit of the passages quoted from the Old Testament.

*First Moses says, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, &c.* The word *first* seems evidently to be used in reference to Isaiah, who is quoted afterward, and should not be connected, as it is by many, with Israel. ‘Did not Israel first learn the gospel? &c.’ So Storr, Flatt, &c. Better in the ordinary way, ‘First Moses, and then Isaiah, say, &c.’ The passage quoted from Moses is Deut. 32:21. In that chapter the sacred writer recounts the mercies of God, and the ingratitude and rebellion of the people. In ver. 21 he warns them, that as they had provoked him to jealousy by that which is not God, he would provoke them to jealousy by them that are no people. That is, as they forsook him and made choice of another god, so he would reject them and make choice of another people. The passage, therefore, plainly enough intimates that the Jews were in no such sense the people of God, as to interfere with their being cast off and others called.

VERSES 20, 21. *But Esaias is very bold, and saith, &c.* That is, according to a very common Hebrew construction, in which one verb qualifies another adverbially, *saith very plainly* or *openly*. Plain as the passage in Deuteronomy is, it is not so clear and pointed as that now referred to, Isaiah 65:1, 2.

Paul follows the Septuagint version of the passage, merely transposing the clauses. The sense is accurately expressed. 'I am sought of *them that* asked not *for me*, I am found of them that sought me not,' is the literal version of the Hebrew, as given in our translation. The apostle quotes and applies the passage in the sense in which it is to be interpreted in the ancient prophet. In the first verse of that chapter Isaiah says, that God will manifest himself to those "who were not called by his name;" and in the second, he gives the immediate reason of this turning unto the Gentiles, "I have stretched out my hand all the day to a rebellious people." This quotation, therefore, confirms both the great doctrines taught in this chapter; the Jews were no longer the exclusive or peculiar people of God, and the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom were thrown wide open to all mankind. With regard to Israel, the language of God is peculiarly strong and tender. *All day long I have stretched forth my hands.* *The stretching forth the hands* is the gesture of invitation, and even supplication. God has extended wide his arms, and urged men frequently and long to return to his love; and it is only those who refuse. that he finally rejects.

## DOCTRINE

1. Christianity is, from its nature, adapted to be an universal religion. There is nothing, as was the case with Judaism, which binds it to a particular location, or confines it to a particular people. All its duties may be performed, and all its blessings enjoyed, in every part of the world, and by every nation under heaven, vs. 11-13.

2. The relation of men to God, and his to them, is not determined by any national or ecclesiastical connection. He deals with all, on the same general principles, and is ready to save all who call upon him, ver. 12.

3. **WHOSOEVER** will, may take of the water of life. The essential conditions of salvation have in every age been the same. Even under the Old Testament dispensation, God accepted all who sincerely invoked his name, ver. 13.

4. The preaching of the gospel is the great means of salvation, and it is the will of God that it should be extended to all people, vs. 14, 15.

5. As invocation implies faith, and faith requires knowledge, and knowledge instruction, and instruction teachers, and teachers a mission, it is evident not only that God wills that teachers should be sent to all those whom he is willing to save, when they call upon him, but that all parts of this divinely connected chain of causes and effects are necessary to the end proposed, viz., the salvation of men. It is, therefore, as incumbent on those who have

---

the power, to send the gospel abroad, as it is on those to whom it is sent, to receive it, vs. 14, 15.

6. As the rudiments of the tree are in the seed, so all the elements of the New Testament doctrines are in the Old. The Christian dispensation is the explanation, fulfilment, and development of the Jewish, vs. 11, 13, 15.

## REMARKS

1. Christians should breathe the spirit of an universal religion. A religion which regards all men as brethren, which looks on God, not as the God of this nation, or of that church, but as the God and Father of all, which proposes to all the same conditions of acceptance, and which opens equally to all the same boundless and unsearchable blessings, vs. 11–13.

2. It must be very offensive to God, who looks on all men with equal favour, (except as moral conduct makes a difference,) to observe how one class of mortals looks down upon another, on account of some merely adventitious difference of rank, colour, external circumstances, or social or ecclesiastical connection, ver. 12.

3. How will the remembrance of the simplicity and reasonableness of the plan of salvation, and the readiness of God to accept of all who call upon him, overwhelm those who perish from beneath the sound of the gospel! ver. 13.

4. It is the first and most pressing duty of the church to cause all men to hear the gospel. The solemn question, implied in the language of the apostle, *HOW CAN THEY BELIEVE WITHOUT A PREACHER?* should sound day and night in the ears of the churches, vs. 14, 15.

5. “How can they preach except they be sent?” The failure of the whole must result from the failure of any one of the parts of the system of means. How long, alas! has the failure been in the very first step. Preachers have not been sent, and if not sent, how could men hear, believe, or call upon God? vs. 14, 15.

6. If “faith comes by hearing,” how great is the value of a stated ministry! How obvious the duty to establish, sustain, and attend upon it! ver. 17.

7. The gospel’s want of success, or the fact that few believe our report, is only a reason for its wider extension. The more who hear, the more will be saved, even should it be but a small proportion of the whole, ver. 16.

8. How delightful will be the time when literally the sound of the gospel shall be as extensively diffused as the declaration which the heavens, in their circuit, make of the glory of God! ver. 18.

---

9. The blessings of a covenant relation to God are the unalienable right of no people and of no church, but can be preserved only by fidelity on the part of men to the covenant itself, ver. 19.

10. God is often found by those who apparently are the farthest from him, while he remains undiscovered by those who think themselves always in his presence, ver. 20.

11. God's dealings, even with reprobate sinners, are full of tenderness and compassion. All the day long he extends the arms of his mercy, even to the disobedient and the gainsaying. This will be felt and acknowledged at last by all who perish, to the glory of God's forbearance, and to their own confusion and self-condemnation, ver. 21.

12. Communities and individuals should beware how they slight the mercies of God, and especially how they turn a deaf ear to the invitations of the gospel. For when the blessings of a church relation have once been withdrawn from a people, they are long in being restored. Witness the Jewish and the fallen Christian churches. And when God ceases to urge on the disobedient sinner the offers of mercy, his destiny is sealed, 5:21.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Hodge, C. (1882). [\*A commentary on the Epistle to the Romans\*](#) (New Edition, pp. 545–554). Grand Rapids, MI: Louis Kregel.