

Session 21: The Rock of Offence, Continued

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 21)

Those who responded to the law ‘in faith’ were able to see him for who he really was. Take for example, Nathaniel.

John the Baptist shows up and begins to ‘pave the way’ for Jesus to begin his public ministry. When Jesus shows up at John’s preaching, John says, “Behold the Lamb of God.” Two of John’s disciples witness this event and they follow Jesus. It turns out that one of these two is Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.

John 1:40 *One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, **We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.***

John 1:43 *The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.*

John 1:45 *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, **We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.** ⁴⁶ And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*

John 7:52 *They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*

John 1:46 *...Philip saith unto him, Come and see. ⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! ⁴⁸ Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, **thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.***

That was the ‘faith’ that Jesus was looking for in Israel.

Isaiah foretells the reception that Jesus will get from his own people.

Isaiah 53:2 *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him,*

*there is no beauty that we should desire him. ³ He is **despised** and **rejected** of men; a man of **sorrows**, and acquainted with **grief**: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was **despised**, and we esteemed him not.*

When you get over to the earthy ministry of Jesus that is exactly how it goes. (By the way, did you notice where in Isaiah the earthly ministry of Jesus was found? In chapter 53, which was the 4th installment of the 5th course of punishment. Once again, we saw the order of things written in the prophets.) This is also the point that Paul is making at the end of chapter 9:33 when he says: “rock of offence.” They were offended in that, he was not who they thought he should have been and certainly did not look like it.

This now finishes up Romans 9. At the end of the chapter, we have been introduced to the issue of Israel’s stumbling (Romans 9-30-33). In these last verses, Paul demonstrates that Israel is responsible for Israel’s’ stumbling over Christ during the extension of mercy.

In Romans 10, Paul teaches us the details of Israel’s stumbling. More specifically, that Israel is without excuse for continuing to stumble over Christ and operate in unbelief. Obviously, this all pertains to the apostate element in Israel.

As we get started, let me give you a little break down of chapter 10. The chapter is broken into two major parts.

Romans 10:1-21: The Details of Israel’s Stumbling

1. Verses 1-13: Why Israel continues to stumble during this dispensation of grace.
2. Verses 14-21: Israel is responsible for her own stumbling and is without excuse for continuing to stumble during the transitional period.

Romans 10 deals with Israel’s continued stumbling during Paul’s “Acts” ministry or his “to the Jew first” ministry (Acts 9-28).

Overview of Romans 10

In chapter 10, we have Paul filling in the details of Israel’s stumbling. He will explain why Israel stumbled over Christ and why they continue to do so in this dispensation of Gentile grace.

In the latter half of chapter 10 he demonstrates that Israel is responsible for her own stumbling. Paul recognizes that another objection is going to arise, placing the blame on God for Israel’s stumbling. This objection basically asserts that God did not give Israel a proper chance to respond to their Messiah. Their excuse is that if God had made things clearer, then Israel would have recognized what was going on and then they would have recognized and received their Christ.

As we might anticipate, Paul will clear God of any wrongdoing in connection with this accusation.

Before we get started in the chapter, there is one more thing we need to be aware of. Romans 10 is a chapter in which many present-day believers (preachers especially) lift verses out of their context and misapply them. As a result, there are some false teachings (as well intentioned as they might be) that come out of Romans 10 because of lifting those verses out of their context. We will point these out as we get to them in the chapter. For now, let me just say that the first of those major errors concerns a perversion of the gospel while the other major error concerns a call to ministry.

As we get ready to move into chapter 10, it is important to understand that there are some differences between what we were covering in chapter nine and what we are about to cover in chapter 10.

The Differences Between Romans 9 and Romans 10

- In Romans 9, we have already seen evidence that Israel is without excuse for rejecting their Messiah during their program.
- Romans 10 is a chapter that deals with Paul's 'Acts ministry,' (Acts 9-28). Acts is a transition. This is Paul's ministry as he functioned under his "to the Jew first" mandate from God. Therefore, in Romans 10, Paul is no longer dwelling on what Israel did back during their program, but he is demonstrating that Israel is also without excuse for continuing to operate in unbelief.
- Romans 9 refers to Israel's past history (the rejection of her Messiah).
- Romans 10 talks about Israel's present (the continuation of her operating in unbelief during that Acts transitional period).
- Romans 9 is written mainly to the members of the little flock to explain the interruption in their program.
- Romans 10 is written to unbelieving Israel to give them another opportunity to be saved.

There are many today who fail to understand that Romans 10 was not written:

Romans 10 was not written

- to Gentiles.
- about the Gentiles.
- about how to witness to Gentiles.
- to tell Gentiles that they now have the opportunity to do what Israel should have done.

Romans 10 is written to the unbelieving Israel to get them to follow (emulate) what God is now doing in and through the Gentiles. We will see this as we move through the chapter.

***Romans 10:1** Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

Paul is addressing the issue of Israel's unbelief during his 'provoking ministry.' I am calling it his 'provoking ministry' because this is the way Paul describes his ministry to Israel over in chapter 11.

Romans 11:11** I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for **to provoke them to jealousy.

The word "for" is a word of purpose. That is to say, it explains why something is being done. In the case of the previous verse, God offered salvation to Gentiles for the purpose of provoking Israel to jealousy. I am not saying that is God's only purpose, of course it is not, but provoking would certainly be in line with something God wanted to accomplish: the saving of some in Israel.

I do not want to get ahead of ourselves by getting too deeply involved over here in chapter 11, but I will say that Paul's attempt to provoke Israel to jealousy is meant to get them looking at what God is doing with the Gentiles and thinking that the Gentiles now possess something that they should have. That is another part of what is happening during Paul's "to the Jew first" ministry. Paul is hoping that by his ministry to the Gentiles, it will provoke Israel to jealousy and thereby, some of them will be saved.

***Romans 11:14** If by any means I may **provoke to emulation** them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*

But do not miss the issue here. Paul's provoking ministry is not a message for Gentiles to get in on what God is doing with Israel, but it is a message to Israel to get in on what God is doing with the Gentiles. Do you see the difference?

When Paul provokes Israel to "emulation," it means he is trying to get Israel to emulate (copy, imitate) what the Gentiles are doing. And what are they doing? They are responding to Paul's gospel by faith!

And since this is the way God is trying to get things going through Paul and his ministry (and by that I mean, since God is using Paul's ministry with the Gentiles to provoke Israel into copying the Gentiles), what has the present-day church (in general) engaged itself into doing?

Instead of influencing Israel to get in on what God is doing with Gentiles, it has engaged itself in copying as much of Israel's program as it can! That is the very opposite of what God wanted to have happen! Today, the church is emulating Israel in as many ways as it can by observing their

feast days, participating in their rituals and ordinances, and bringing aspects of Israel's religion into the Gentile assemblies. (They think this makes them more spiritual.)

During this Acts, transitional ministry, Paul is demonstrating signs and wonders to verify that God is now working with the Gentiles. Paul is also preaching that Israel is "fallen" which is to say that her prophetic program has ceased, she no longer enjoys a favored nations status and God is no longer dealing with her as his chosen people. It was this kind of preaching that got Paul into serious trouble with the Jews.

Aside: Look at Romans 10:9-10 cannot be used as a Romans Road for salvation because there are two salvation issues her. Discussion is given.

Romans 10:9 *That is thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath 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.*

Romans 11:14 *If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*

Romans 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be reveled in us. ¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, ²¹ Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. ²³ And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting fore the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 22: The Rock of Offence, Continued ***Romans 10:1***

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 22)

The recording states that you should throw away last week notes and replace them with these. That has been done – the posted notes are right.

As we get started, let me remind us of our outline of chapter 10. The chapter is broken into two major parts.

Romans 10:1-21: The Details of Israel's Stumbling

1. Verses 1-13: Why Israel continues to stumble during this dispensation of grace.
2. Verses 14-21: Israel is responsible for her own stumbling and is without excuse for continuing to stumble during the transitional period.

I want to make sure that you see the line of distinction that Paul is making at the end of Romans 9. He introduced the issue of Israel's stumbling in Romans 9:30-33. In these last verses, Paul demonstrates that Israel is responsible for Israel's' stumbling, over the stumbling stone of Christ in the extension of mercy. The stumbling in Chapter 9 is about what Israel did in response to Christ during the extension of mercy, which is after the cross in Israel's program.

In Romans 10, Paul teaches that Israel's continues to stumble, but now it is in the context of the dispensation of Gentile grace. Why is that important for you to know. Because what you will encounter in Chapter 10, is not about things happening in Israel's program, but Israel are continuing to stumble over Christ in the dispensation of Gentile grace. That is an important distinction to make.

Now go back to Romans 10:1 and let us look at it again.

Romans 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that **they** might be saved.

We have to identify what kind of salvation Paul is referring to because we are going to encounter the word "saved" several times in chapters 10-11. The word is not going to mean the same thing every time it is used.

In Romans 10, Paul is referring to individual salvation: justification unto eternal life. How do we know this?

'Belief in Christ' is the subject matter of Romans 10:1 because of the way Chapter 9 finishes up.

Since chapter 9 had to do with their stumbling during the time their program was in force, we know that “shall not be ashamed” had to do with someone who ‘believes on him’ (during the extension of mercy) would not be ashamed or afraid to 1) testify before the apostate nation and 2) oppose the Pharisaical counter-doctrine.

Romans 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

In verse 1, Paul expressed his heart’s desire for the unsaved element in Israel to be saved. Why? Because they “stumbled” over Christ in the extension of mercy, therefore, they were still in their sins. Paul knows that, during this dispensation of Gentile grace, every lost person in Israel is given another chance to be saved: justification unto eternal life.

Romans 9:33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Remember what I told you about the difference between chapter 9 and chapter 10. Although everything Paul writes in the book of Romans is in the dispensation of Gentile grace, the events described in chapter 9 took place back when Israel’s program was in effect during the extension of mercy. Their “stumbling” over Christ in the extension of mercy resulted in their fall: the suspension of their program.

At the end of chapter 9, we effectively have the time of the interruption of Israel’s program being talked about.

The things that Paul is talking about in chapter 10 have to do with Israel’s continued ignorance and hardness of heart during the dispensation of Gentile grace.

Since Israel’s fall, things have changed. For example, since the fall, Israel’s natural status of having favor with God is no longer in effect for them.

Summation:

1. Romans 9: Israel did not view Jesus as their prophesied Messiah during their program; therefore, they crucified him.
2. After the cross, they still failed to recognize him for who he was during the one-year extension of mercy; therefore, they “stumbled” at him and fell.
3. Romans 10: Paul is talking about the unsaved (Israel) and their continued ignorance of God’s righteousness.

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 23: Paul's Burden for Israel

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 23)

We will pick up where we left off last time talking about unsaved Israel.

3. Romans 10: Paul is talking to unsaved about their continued ignorance of God's righteousness.
4. Even though Paul is the 'apostle to the Gentiles,' he was also preaching the message of salvation to Jews. Thus he begins Romans 10 by stating his heart's desire for them to be saved.

An example of his preaching to them would be Acts 13.

Acts 13:14 *But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. ¹⁵ And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. ¹⁶ Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.*

Acts 13:26 *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. ²⁷ For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*

Verse 27 was a powerful testimony against the rulers of Israel's vain religious system; their rejection of Jesus Christ actually fulfilled their scriptures!

So why did Paul, who was called to be the apostle to the Gentiles, spend time preaching to Israel?

Why did Paul spend time preaching to Israel?

1. Because God was offering grace to every man, not just to Gentiles.
2. Because he was carrying the message of the dispensational change.
3. Because he had a heart to see Israelites saved (Romans 10:1).

Let us briefly look at another passage in Acts 17.

Acts 17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a **synagogue of the Jews**:

Paul, an apostle to the Gentiles, was attending the synagogue. In other places we can see that Paul did some other things that were particularly Jewish: he shaved his head, he took vows, he gave money to provide a sacrifice, etc. That may seem inconsistent with who God called Paul to be, but remember that he was provoking unsaved Israel to jealousy.

Acts 17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

So Paul preached for three weeks to these people.

Acts 17:3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

Paul is preaching this to the nation of Israel. Why? Answer in hope that some of them might be saved.

Acts 18:5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and **testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ**.

Acts 18:19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and **reasoned with the Jews**.

Acts 18:28 For he mightily **convinced the Jews**, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures **that Jesus was Christ**.

Of course, at that same time, Paul was also establishing Gentile churches. However, the book of Acts was not concerned with Paul's ministry to Gentiles, it was concerned with Paul's provoking ministry to the Jews. Therefore, we do not read much about it in Acts.

Acts 28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom **he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening**.

Who was Paul ministering to there? Answer: To Jews.

When Paul talks about wanting Jews to be saved, he is talking about in this present dispensation of Gentile grace. During his transitional ministry, Paul taught the Jews that everything about the Messiah taught in the law and in the prophets has happened. And the Lord Jesus was the only person who could have possibly fulfilled all those scriptures; proving that Jesus of Nazareth was the prophesied Christ.

Romans 10:2 For I bear them record that **they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.**

The end of chapter 9 marks the end of Israel's program, and the things in chapter 10 refer to things in the dispensation of Gentile grace. In verses 2-3 of chapter 10, Paul explains the nation's spiritual situation that keeps them stumbling, that keeps them in a position of being 'contrary to God' and 'accursed from Christ.'

They had plenty of zeal, just like Paul did when he was hunting down the members of the believing remnant prior to the dispensational change. He thought he was doing God a service!

Acts 22:3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and **was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.**

Galatians 1:14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, **being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.**

Like Paul when he thought he was serving God by hunting down the members of the believing remnant, unsaved Israel thought they were serving God by keeping the law.

They may have been zealous, but their zeal was "not according to knowledge." What did Paul mean when he said that their zeal was "not according to knowledge?" It meant that even though they may have been zealous, there was something they did not know which negated their zeal.

If a person does not know something; if they do not have the knowledge they need, then we say they are ...what? They are 'ignorant.'

That is not meant to be a derogatory term. 'Ignorant' is what you are when there is information you do not know about. Therefore, even though Israel is zealous of God, there is something they are ignorant of, and it is the same thing they were ignorant of back in their program.

Thus, in the context, what does Paul say they were ignorant of back in their program?

Romans 9:30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. ³¹ But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. ³² Wherefore? **Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;**

Romans 10:2 For I bear them record that **they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.**

Israel was ignorant of how to obtain righteousness. They thought they could get it by the works of the law.

When verse 32 said they “stumbled at that stumblingstone,” who was that stumblingstone? It was Jesus Christ.

In what way did they “stumble” over him? What does it mean that they “stumbled?” If they thought they could be righteous by the law, then what was it about Jesus Christ that they did not understand?

They did not understand that righteousness could only be obtained through him.

What was Israel ignorant of?

1. The inability of the law to make them righteous.
2. Their need of a Redeemer.
3. That Jesus was the Christ, functioning as their Redeemer, per the Davidic covenant.

As a result of that ignorance, what did they do with Jesus? Answer: they rejected him as their Messiah and they crucified him.

What was Paul’s point to all of this in Romans 10:2? Answer: the same ignorance that caused them to reject and crucify their Messiah was the same ignorance that caused them to stumble in the extension of mercy and refuse to change their minds about who Jesus was. It was the same ignorance that continued to plague them once the dispensation of Gentile grace was underway. And that continued ignorance was resulting in the rejection of Paul and his message of grace to “all men.”

In Romans 10, Paul was saying that just as they failed to see the need of Jesus Christ’s redemptive work on the cross back when their program was in force, they continued to be ignorant of the truth that he was the only way to obtain righteousness. God, through his Christ, provided for that righteousness and will give it to them as a free gift of grace in response to their faith.

That was how the Gentiles got that righteousness, as Paul explained in Romans 9:30.

***Romans 9:30** What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. ³¹ But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. ³² Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;*

But that will never make any sense to Israel until they finally understand that the law could never provide for them to have forgiveness of sins and the imputation of righteousness.

***Romans 10:3** For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

Ahhhh! Paul uses the same word we began using back in verse 2: ignorant. They were ignorant of God's righteousness!

When a person tries to be righteous by keeping the law, they are doing exactly what Paul said in verse 3, they are "going about to establish their own righteousness." And that attempt is an automatic rejection of God's righteousness.

Space for personal reflection and notes