

The longing of Paul's heart was that his people, the Jews, would be saved. However, he explains that the reason that most Jews did not believe was because they sought to be righteous by keeping the law instead of receiving the righteousness of God through faith. He goes on to show that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to be righteous before God whether you are a Jew or a Gentile.

Romans 9: After proclaiming that nothing can prevent God from accomplishing His purpose of completing our redemption (Rom. 8:28-39), Paul then expresses His sorrow that the majority of the Jews did not believe in Christ despite the promises that they have been given by God. However, Paul points out that this does not mean that God's promises have failed. The fact that a great number of Jews did not believe does not mean that God's purposes for Israel have been defeated or abandoned, and this is because "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (v. 6-8). Paul uses the remainder of the chapter to demonstrate that those whom God has chosen (the elect) will believe so "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth" (v. 11). God chose Isaac over Ishmael (vs. 7-9) and Jacob over Esau (vs. 10-13), because salvation is of God (vs. 14-16). How a person responds to the gospel is determined by God (vs. 17-21) for only He can give the gift of faith. He postpones His wrath on the wicked so that He can redeem His chosen (vs. 22-24), and so despite the unbelief of the majority of the Jews, God is working to redeem the remnant that belong to Him (vs. 25-29). Paul then presents the paradox that the Gentiles, who never sought after God, are now being saved while the Jews as a whole, who had the law and other benefits of being God's people, are not being saved (vs. 30-31). The reason is that the Gentiles are seeking salvation through faith in Christ and the Jews are seeking it through keeping of the law. Christ has become a stumbling stone for the Jews but the means of salvation to the Gentiles (vs. 32-33).

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" – Paul had expressed his great sorrow in the previous chapter (Romans 9:1-3) over the fact that his people, the Jews, were not coming to Jesus Christ for salvation. He again expresses his desire for the salvation of his people and that he continually prayed to God to that end.

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge [correct information; truth]" – Paul was a witness to the fact that, in general, the Jews had at least a superficial desire to serve God. They brought sacrifices to the temple and attended services in the synagogues. However, their zeal was channeled into following their own faulty ideas of what pleased God and did not follow the truth of Jesus Christ.

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.

The Jews were focused on keeping the law in order to prove their own righteousness because they did not understand the gift of righteousness that comes from God through faith in Christ. Submitting themselves to the righteousness to God meant relying on God's righteousness to be imputed to them through faith in Christ instead of relying on their own feeble attempts to be righteous through the law.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

"For Christ is the end [goal or purpose] of the law for righteousness" – Christ being the "end of the law for righteousness" means that the purpose of the law is to lead people to Christ for their righteousness because it's not humanly possible to be righteous enough by keeping the law (Rom. 8:3-4; Gal. 3:23-25).

"to every one that believeth" – This righteousness from God can only come through faith (**Rom. 3:21-22** "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference").

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

Paul quotes from Leviticus to illustrate the perfection needed to be righteous under the law: **Lev. 18:5** "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD." A man has to be able to completely keep all of the law in order to be righteous and live. Breaking even one law is a sin and therefore makes him worthy of death (Rom. 6:23a).

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

Paul is quoting (and adding his commentary in parentheses) from a passage in Deuteronomy where the LORD is commanding Israel to obey His law: **Deut. 30:11-14** "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." The LORD was saying to Israel that the contents of the law was not something that was been hidden from them or requires someone to go on a long quest in order to retrieve it so that they may know and obey it. The LORD had given them the law so that they can easily speak it, know it and do it. The apostle's reason for quoting this passage is to show that the righteousness that comes by faith is not hidden nor does it take superhuman effort to acquire, because they have already heard "the word of faith" that has been preached by Paul and others.

9 That if 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.

In the previous verse Paul quoted the passage from Deuteronomy to make the point that the word of faith is not hidden or a long way away. The word of faith is simple and is in our mouth and in our heart. Now he explains how that when that word of faith bears fruit in us, it will manifest itself in our mouths and hearts and bring salvation.

“That if thou shalt confess [to say the same thing; agree] with thy mouth the Lord Jesus” – To confess the Lord Jesus means to agree with what God the Father says about Him. We verbally acknowledge that what the Bible teaches about Jesus Christ is true and that we believe and embrace it. Someone who is not willing to do this has a reason to question their salvation. Confession is a result of salvation, but since the mouth was referenced first in the verse from Deuteronomy that Paul quoted (v. 8), he mentions it first here. **“and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead”** – The greatest declaration that Jesus is the Son of God is the resurrection, as Paul states in **Rom. 1:4** (“*And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*”). Someone who believes in the resurrection of Christ will also believe the other “less dramatic” evidences of Who Christ is, and the evidence will be the confession expressing agreement with God about Who Christ is and what He has done.

“thou shalt be saved” – Implied in the confession of Christ and the believing in His resurrection is the trust for salvation. The confession and believing are the acts of someone in whom the Holy Spirit has produced the faith for salvation.

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness” – Paul now puts the two acts in chronological or cause/effect order. We must believe with our heart (the core of our innermost being) what God has said about Christ in the Bible. It is not mere intellectual acknowledgment of the fact that Jesus existed or was an historical figure. Once we believe, then God imputes His righteousness to us.

“and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” – As a result of this belief, the Holy Spirit regenerates our spirit (the new birth) and indwells us, making us righteous before God. We are then able to genuinely confess our faith in Christ, which is the evidence of our salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Most commentators agree that Paul is quoting from **Isa. 28:16**, which he also quoted in Rom. 9:33: “*Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*” The Hebrew word translated “make haste” refers to acting quickly, such as out of fear. Paul is quoting from the Septuagint, which is the OT translated into Greek, which has been now been translated into English in our KJV Bible. Paul is using this OT passage to make the point that those believe on Christ (the stone) have no reason to be ashamed or in fear, either now or in the future. The courage to confess Christ is a Biblical evidence of salvation.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.
13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek” – Paul has already shown that the Jew has no inherent advantage over “the Greek” (a Gentile) earlier in this epistle (**Rom. 2:11** “*For there is no respect of persons with God*”; **Rom. 3:9** “*What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin*”). God treats them the same for they are both enslaved by sin and in need of His grace.

“for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him” – God is Lord “over all” (Jew or Gentile) that call on Him and He is just as willing to share the riches of His grace to the Gentile as He is to share them with the Jew when they call on Him for salvation.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” – Paul quotes from **Joel 2:32** to support his point: “*And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.*” God’s invitation to believe on Christ is extended to Jew and Gentile alike and those who respond in faith by calling on Him will be saved.

Verses 14-21: Paul emphasizes that preachers must be sent so that the world can hear the gospel and believe before they will call upon the LORD. Sadly, not all who hear the gospel will respond and be saved, but faith comes through hearing the word of God. If Israel will listen to the word of God then they can respond in faith and be saved. Paul quotes OT passages to show that Israel has no excuse because the truth has been revealed to them through the glory of the creation and in other ways. God had also revealed to them through prophets that He would turn to the Gentiles while Israel was rejecting Him. Paul continues this subject in chapter 11 where he discusses God’s plans for Israel while they are in rebellion against Him as well as in the future when He will redeem them as a nation.