

Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 2:46 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Romans 9:10-10:21

"So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing by (or concerning) the word of Christ!" (Romans 10:17) Paul begins our text for last nite's study, in Romans 9:30-33, by contrasting Gentiles who obtained "righteousness" (i.e., right standing before God) based on faith (in believing in the Gospel) --with Israel, as a whole, who "failed" to attain it because they pursued it by relying on good works (or "law-keeping").

How sad! Paul notes how Israel had a "zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God!" And they didn't recognize, or want to believe (as John MacArthur puts it) that Christ actually "ended the sinner's futile quest for righteousness through his imperfect attempts to save himself by efforts to obey the law"!

Again, Paul could identify with "his kinsmen" in their thinking, having once been there himself, and so expresses his "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel that they might be saved"!

Paul goes on to include some of the clearest and most helpful portions of Scripture in pointing out the way of salvation! "Shepherd's Notes" notes that "nowhere in Scripture is the universal scope of salvation presented with greater clarity! Although God's redemptive plan was worked out in history through on particular race (the Jews), it was meant from the beginning for the benefit of all people!"

Here's the first portion: "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in salvation! (Romans 10:9-10) And he goes on to state that there's "no distinction between Jew and Greek...and that whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved!"

Then Paul gives the so-called "chain of evangelism" statement, asking how someone can "call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? And how will they preach unless they are sent? (10:14-15)

How ironic that on this very day, when Billy Graham is being memorialized in our nation's capital, we would come to verse 15 and the words: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!" (Paul quoting from Isaiah 52:7) All of which should motivate us to be become more involved in sharing the "good news" of the gospel with others!

And we're reminded again of our memory verse: "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ!"

Dr. Constable writes that "what faith really is, in Biblical language, is receiving the testimony of God! It's the inward conviction that what God says to us in the Gospel is true! That, and that alone, is "saving faith"!

And so, what does all this have to do with God's sovereignty and the doctrine of election (as we discussed last week) versus man's responsibility and actions? And what does it mean for Israel and its future?

As to the first--Douglas Moo puts it this way: "We will never be able to put together in a neat package the Biblical truth that God determines everything that happens with the equally Biblical truth that human beings are fully responsible for their actions!" In other words, God sovereign election does not negate human responsibility to believe! Or for us to carry out the great commission!

As to the second issue--concerning Israel! Moo writes that the problem is not with God; it's with Israel! They, of all people, have heard! Psalm 19 notes how "their voice (the voice of all creation) has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world!" And, again quoting Isaiah, Paul ends with God proclaiming that "all the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people!" But we know that God still holds out His hands to them--as He does to all the world!

Well, more of this next week, as we move on to Romans 11!

So, let's continue to live by faith--as we hear from God, through His Word!

Lowell