**The Book of Romans**

 Part Four: God’s righteousness is revealed in in His Sovereign Plan for Israel. (Romans 9-11)

***The Nation Israel and Man’s Responsibility***

***Or, Why is it so hard to accept a free salvation?***

***Romans 9:30–10:21***

In helping his readers understand why the Jews are not flocking to the Gospel in spite of their privileges, Paul’s emphasis was first upon God’s sovereignty (9:1-18), and then man’s rebellion (9:19-29). Here he takes up man’s duty, and failure, to believe. If that’s “all” we have to do, why is it so difficult, given a promise-keeping God? Our unbelief is a major indicator of our rejecting Him. The human side of the equation is that only few believe, that is, relatively few WANT to know God and see Him as their soul-satisfying treasure. Most would rather go their own way, which is why only a remnant is saved. Luke 13:22-30

***Are we saved by faith or works of the Law?*** 9:30–10:4

Paul has explained that mankind loves religion, but on our own terms. We want God to do our bidding and support our causes, and in exchange, we offer our own righteousness. (In today’s terms, we value karma, not grace.) The Jews (as a group) missed the intent of the Law, which was not given as a path of self-righteousness, but to expose sin.

But Gentiles, confessing that they were sinners, were provided forgiveness of their sins. They had not been seeking the true God, but He found them through the Gospel. The Jews were seeking to worship this God, even zealously, but by their works, not by believing Him and embracing in His Messiah. When we turn to Christ, we gladly give up claims of self-righteousness to gain Him. Philippians 3:1-11

***And what does it mean to be saved by faith (as opposed to works)?*** 10:5-17

Even before the Law, Abraham was “justified by faith” (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:1-5), so the Law was never given as a way to be justified by works. It was added because Israel kept sinning, and in fact, was a contrast to faith, meant to show how sinful humans are and can be (Galatians 3:19; Romans 7:13).

So in contrast to the impossible keeping of the law for righteousness, Paul describes salvation by grace through faith: calling upon the Lord because of the message (Jesus’ death and resurrection for sinners) proclaimed, heard, and believed. Paul’s quote (10:6-8) is from Deuteronomy 30:11-14, from the section (Deuteronomy 29-33) which prophesies Israel’s failure and final regathering under a different covenant (Deuteronomy 29:1), which we know now as the New Covenant.

***Could this unbelief be a misunderstanding?*** 10:18-21

Paul explains that Israel’s rejection has been persistent and conscious. In Scripture, unbelief is hardly ever mere ignorance, but rather a settled refusal to accept the truth (Romans 1:18-20). In this case, we see a consistent national rejection, which began in Egypt (Deuteronomy 9:6-8), continued in the wilderness (Numbers), during the times of the Judges (Judges 2:11-23), the Kings (2 Chronicles 36:11-16), and even after the Babylonian Captivity (Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Malachi).

***How do I believe in Jesus? What must I do to be saved?***

***1. Humility: To be saved, you must first admit you are lost.***

Those who believe they can please God via religion and self-sacrifice will never come to Jesus.

Titus 3:3-7

***2. Hearing: To be saved, you must hear God’s Son.***

Salvation does not come to those who know ABOUT Jesus, but those who hear and answer His Gospel

call as presented in His Word by His Spirit. John 5:21-24; 6:44-47

***3. Heeding: To be saved, you must embrace the Gospel.***

We call upon Jesus when we believe His Word, which assures us of complete forgiveness.

Isaiah 53:1-6; 55:6, 7