

## **Romans 9:30-10:13 Answers Why Israel Stumbles Over Christ**

**Context:** Most Israelis in Paul's day rejected Jesus as Messiah. This naturally led to the question, Has the Word of God failed? Romans 9 – 11 explains that God's Word had not failed because His promises were on to those descendants of Abraham who also had the faith of Abraham. Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel. Romans 9 concerns God's sovereignty in salvation (unconditional election). Romans 10 concerns man's responsibility. There are human reasons why Israel rejected the righteousness of Christ.

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**\*\*\*\*What unexpected twist did Paul highlight in 9:30-33?** The Gentiles, who were not God's people and who were not looking for righteousness, found it. The Jews, who were God's people, pursued righteousness and missed it.

**I Found It:** Years ago Campus Crusade for Christ launched an evangelistic campaign on college campuses wherein billboards and posters proclaimed, "I found it". Believers wore buttons that said, "I found it." The idea was to generate curiosity among the lost and open up doors of conversation. According to 9:30-31, Israel lost it and the Gentiles found it!

**1. Humanly speaking, how was it that the Gentiles got righteousness but Israel did not (9:30-32)?** The Gentiles, not having the law, got righteousness by faith. Israel did not get righteousness because they tried to obtain it by doing the works of the law.

Salvation is not a goal to be achieved, it is a gift to be received.

**2. Since the law couldn't save Israel, what good was it (9:31)?** See *Romans 3:20-22*. God gave it to show them their sin, set a standard for righteousness and their need for righteousness apart from law.

**ESV Romans 3:20-22** . . . through the law comes knowledge of sin . . . the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it — the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

**What problem is there with trying to earn a law based righteousness?**

**ESV James 2:10** . . . whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

**Based on 9:33, over what did Israel stumble?** They stumbled over "him" (Jesus), a rock of offense and stone of stumbling to those seeking a works based righteousness.

**ESV 1 Corinthians 1:23** . . . we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews . . .

**Stumbling & Shame:** People will either be offended by Jesus and stumble over Him or they will believe in Him and be saved from shame on Judgment Day. There will be stumbling and shame or belief and blessing.

**Note:** “Zion” (9:33) is another name for Jerusalem.

**3. In 9:33, what was Paul’s purpose in quoting Isaiah 28:16?** Isaiah was an authoritative Old Testament prophet who predicted the Messiah would be a stumbling stone and rock of offense. Quoting Isaiah supported Paul’s teaching on why Israel rejected Jesus and that the Word of God has not failed.

**Important Perspective:** Israeli rejection of Jesus has been pervasive and persistent for 2,000 years. This was predicted by Isaiah long before it happened.

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**\*\*\*\*What was Paul’s heart desire and prayer (10:1-4)?** Paul wanted God to save the Israelis and he prayed to that end.

**4. What scriptural basis is there to pray for the salvation of the lost (10:1)?** See *1 Timothy 2:1-4*. Paul’s example shines supreme (parents often teach their children by example even if not by verbal instruction).

**ESV 1 Timothy 2:1-4 . . .** I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

**To their credit, what was true of the Israelites (10:2)?** They had a zeal for God. The Jews of that time were noted by the Romans for their fanatical devotion to the Law of Moses. For example, during the Maccabean era (between the Old and New Testaments), a priest named Eleazar allowed himself to be whipped to death rather than eat pork as ordered by the Greek tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes (Coleman & Peace, p. 92).

**What serious problem was there with Israeli zeal (10:2)?** Their zeal was not according to knowledge. They had heat but no light.

**Example:** Imagine zeal as a powerful locomotive. On railroad tracks it is a useful tool. If it jumps the tracks it wreaks destruction and death.

“There is a perverse and obstinate ignorance at the very heart of their knowledge of God and in the center of their dedicated and meticulous obedience an obstinate disobedience” (Cranfield).

**5. Have you ever heard, “It doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you are sincere?”**

**How does such a statement compare with 10:1-2?** It clearly does matter what you believe. It is important to be sincere, but it is also important to be sincerely right. One’s faith is only as valid as the object of his faith. A person might sincerely believe the ice on a lake will support his weight, but no matter how sincere if the ice is too thin he will fall through it.

**What knowledge were the Israelis lacking (10:2-3)?** They were ignorant of how to get the righteousness of God by faith. Instead, they sought to create their own righteousness by works of the law. They were ignorant of the Gospel:

ESV **Romans 1:17** . . . in it [the Gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

**6. In what sense did they not submit to God’s righteousness (10:3)?** See *Galatians 2:21*. They did not submit in the sense they rejected righteousness from God and substituted self righteousness of their own making.

ESV **Galatians 2:21** . . . if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

**Application:** Israel had two options: law righteousness or faith righteousness. Put another way, self righteousness versus God righteousness. If a person feels he is self righteous he will not need Christ’s righteousness.

**How would a person submit himself to God’s righteousness (10:3)?** The way to submit to God’s righteousness is by faith in Jesus!

**According to 10:4, what did Christ put an end to?** Christ put an end to the law for righteousness for everyone who believes.

**7. In what ways is Christ the end of the law (10:4)?** See *3:28, 6:14, 8:3-4*. End is from *telos*, which **1**) primarily denotes a goal or purpose and **2**) then secondarily a termination or conclusion. Christ is both:

**1)** The true purpose of the law was set a standard of righteousness and show people their sin. It was never given so that people could earn their own righteousness by keeping the law. Instead, it pointed to the righteousness of God that can be ours by faith (not by works). It is for everyone who believes. Christ came to fulfill the law and as the goal of the law. It is Jesus to whom the law pointed.

ESV **Galatians 3:24-25** . . . the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian . . .

(Note: the man in Romans 7 was clearly under the law).

ESV **Romans 3:28** . . . we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

**2)** He is also the end of the law for all who believe in Him (he releases them from it).

ESV **Romans 6:14** . . . you are not under law but under grace.

ESV **Romans 8:3-4** . . . God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son . . . he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us . . .

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**\*\*\*We are not saved by faith in faith. We are saved by faith in Christ. Based on 10:5-13, what does a saving faith believe and do?** Those who have a saving faith are convinced Jesus is Lord and believe it so strongly they are not ashamed to confess it out loud. They also put their faith into action by calling on the Lord to save them. (We'll take this apart as we study this paragraph).

**According to 10:5, what did Moses write about righteousness based on law?** The person seeking law righteousness must do the works of the law. Moses said this in Leviticus 18:5.

ESV **Leviticus 18:5** You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.

**How good must a person be in order to be righteous by law?** It requires absolute perfection (good luck with that!).

**8. There is a contrast between 10:5 (righteousness based on law) and 10:6-8 (righteousness based on faith). What does faith believe in 10:6-8 that those of the law do not (10:5)?**

Clearly 10:5 is teaching works (doing something). The quote of 10:6-7 is from Deuteronomy 30:12-14 and Paul uses it to illustrate that faith believes Christ has already come from heaven (those of the law think Christ is yet to come) and faith believes Christ arose from the dead (those of the law deny the resurrection of Jesus).

**Application:** Salvation is very near. We do not need to make a pilgrimage to Mecca or to a Mormon temple or to do anything. Salvation is as close as your heart (many people miss heaven by 18", the distance between head and heart).

**Notes: 1)** In Deuteronomy 30:12-14 it was God's law that had come and was near. Paul allegorized the passage to refer to Jesus (Barclay, p. 148). Since Jesus is the fulfillment of the law (10:4), Paul is here applying it to Christ (Coleman and Peace, p. 93). **2)** The abyss (10:7) is the realm of the dead (Sheol).

**9. How is it that a person must confess with his mouth Jesus as Lord in order to be saved (10:9-10)?** See *Mark 8:38, Matthew 10:32-33*. Salvation is by faith, not by speech making. However, what is expressed here is a quality of faith. A true saving faith is so strong you are willing to admit to it, like a confession in a court room. There must be a link between the heart and the mouth.

ESV **Mark 8:38** . . . whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

ESV **Matthew 10:32-33** . . . everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

ESV **Romans 1:16** . . . I am not ashamed of the gospel . . .

**Example:** Back in the 1970s heard a to India missionary speak at First Baptist Atlanta. He recounted how an unbeliever he was witnessing to on a train had attempted to disprove Christianity. The unbeliever said aloud, “Jesus Is Lord” and then quoted the text, “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in Holy Spirit” (1Co 12:3). Since he said it as an unbeliever, the Scriptures were obviously wrong. The evangelist stood up and asked for the attention of the entire train car of passengers. He said, “My friend here has an announcement he’d like to make” and then asked him to say it loudly for the passenger. Of course he man refused.

Confession is faith turned inside out. Confession shows possession. Confession means agreement (you admit to it; you fess up).

**10. What does it mean to believe Jesus is Lord (10:9)?** There are many different lords. For instance, the Beatles song “My Sweet Lord” was a reference to an Indian guru, not Jesus!

- 1) At its most base level, lord is simply a title of respect (like mister or sir). Clearly it means more than that here.
- 2) On another level it is an acknowledgement that the person is above you in authority (just as a land “lord” has authority over his property). Certainly as God’s Messiah Jesus would be worthy of the title Lord. Yet arguably it means even more than that.
- 3) The Jews translated the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek several hundred years before Jesus was born. This translation is called the Septuagint. Out of respect for God’s name, Jehovah, they refused to either translate or transliterate it. Instead then replaced God’s name with the Greek word for lord (*kurios*). Over 3,000 times in the Septuagint, the word lord (*kurios*) was used to replace Jehovah. Thus to declare Jesus is Lord is to express a belief that Jesus is God in human form.

It has been said that Jesus is either Lord, liar or lunatic. He clearly claimed to be God in human form. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New Testament. The cult of emperor worship developed within the Roman Empire. To show loyalty to the state, citizens were required to offer a pinch of incense and say “Caesar is Lord.” Because of texts such as Romans 10:9, the Christians would not do that since they considered it to be idolatry/blasphemy.

**11. What does it mean to believe something in your heart (10:9-10)?** In Greek thinking, the heart is the seat of the mind, will and emotions. It is the center of the totality of your being. To believe something in your heart means you really and truly are persuaded it is true. It is not just a mental assent to something.

**12. Why is it necessary to believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus to be saved (10:9-10)?** We don't worship a ghost; He is alive! Jesus' resurrection from the dead is proof He is who He claimed to be (God in human form, sacrificed on the cross as payment for our sins).

**Cult Alert!** The Jehovah's Witness claim Jesus' resurrection was only spiritual, not bodily. They teach the body of Jesus "was disposed of by Jehovah God, dissolved into its constituent elements or atoms" (*The Watchtower*, 1st October 1955, p. 518).

". . . the man Jesus is dead, forever dead . . ." (*The Atonement Between God and Man, Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 5, 1899, p. 454).

". . . the bodies in which Jesus manifested himself to the disciples after his return to life were not the body in which he was nailed to the tree" (*The Kingdom is at Hand*, 1944, p. 259).

(Quotes taken from <http://www.spotlightministries.org.uk/jwjesusres.htm>)

**13. What is the significance of the shame promise made to believers in 10:11? See 5:5, 9:33.** On judgment day we will not be put to shame (as will unbelievers) and cast into hell.

**According to 10:12-13, in what sense is there no distinction between Jew and Greek?** There is no distinction as regards salvation. Both are saved by faith, not pedigree.

ESV **John 12:32** And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. (This refers to all people without distinction, not all people without exception).

**What does it mean to call upon the Lord to be saved (10:13)?** It is to look to Him for salvation, to actively trust in Christ and not self effort or the works of the law. It is the difference between believing in a chair and sitting in the chair. It is applied faith.

**14. In the Bible, what does a person's name stand for (10:13)?** A name represented the person, who he was, all he stood for and all his characteristics. In 10:13, Paul quoted from Joel 2:32. In the Hebrew of Joel 2:32, the word for Lord was Jehovah. We are to call on the Lord (Jehovah) to be saved and we are to believe that Jesus is the Lord (Jehovah).

### So What?

**15. What personal applications can you walk away with from 9:30-10:21? 1)** Salvation is rooted in faith, not works, 9:30-32. **2)** Pray for the lost to be saved, 10:1-4. **3)** A true, saving faith is not ashamed to admit it, 10:5-13.

\*\*\*\* = ask this question before reading the text aloud. Doing so will cause focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session and are based on the text of the ESV.
- You can hear this lesson being taught at [www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF](http://www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF).

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