

THE BOOK OF ROMANS
"Universal Gospel Disregarded"
Romans 10:16-21

INTRODUCTION

1. God's righteousness comes by grace (unmerited favor) through faith (taking God at His word). Unfortunately, the Jewish people (the Bible uses them as a national example) did not accept this principle (rule).
2. The Mosaic Law (all 613 of them) was not designed to give righteousness (Gal. 3:21). Rather, it was designed to shut up people to faith on Christ for righteousness (Gal. 3:23-24).
3. Moreover, God's righteousness was available to be believed on (v. 8). The heart that did believe got righteousness and the mouth was to say so (vv. 9, 10). Gloriously, this kind of salvation was to be universal (vv. 11-13).
4. To get a universal proclamation of faith—righteousness, the plan is given (vv. 14-15). But given the plan and the blessing of the feet which carry the Gospel, what are the results? Listen to the Word--

1. REJECTION v. 16

Here is something astonishing--Israel refusing to accept God's good news! All who heard did not hearken. The "hear" of v. 14 corresponds to not "hearken" in v.16. Those who did not believe were those who did not hear. Proof is given by a quote from Isaiah 53:1 (N.B. Paul believed Isaiah wrote the whole book. There is no support given here to a Deutero or Trito Isaiah!). Word "report" here is same as "hearing" in v. 17. Belief is necessary to hearing. Consider how many did not believe and therefore did not hear (Num. 16:3; Ezk. 20:49; Amos 7:10-13; Jer. 13:15-17; 44:16-19; Mt. 13:15).

2. PROCLAMATION v. 17

The call that brings salvation demands faith and this faith comes from the Word of God sent through His messengers (cf. v. 13-15). The faith that saves is that which "hears" saving doctrine. The verse can be summarized: "Genuine faith comes by a message heard, and the message heard is by means of the Word of God (or Christ)." The authority of the Word (message) is emphasized over against the unbelief of some. This prepares the way for the application to the responsibility of the Jewish people.

3. QUESTION vv. 18-20

- a. Did Israel Hear? v. 18

The question in Greek expects a negative reply-- they did hear, but they did not hearken, hence have no excuse. The quote is from Psalm 19:4. It demonstrates that the opportunity to hear was as wide as the star-studded heavens. Thus, no lack of hearing, but lack of obedience. The chorus which the world, including Israel, heard was plural-creation, Mt. Sinai, prophets, Son, apostles, Holy Spirit. So Israel had heard. What a condemnation!

b. Did Israel Know? vv. 19, 20

Of course they knew and the Greek question supports this. Moreover, two quotations are given to confirm the truth that Israel knew the Gospel would go to all the earth. Moses is quoted (Deut. 32:21) and secondly Isaiah (15:1; 65:1). Thus while Israel rejected, the nations accepted. The "no-nation" became a "nation" which believed. How tragic for Israel, the chosen nation!

4. CONSIDERATION v. 21

What a metaphor in this verse! God is seen with outstretched hands "all day long" to invite Israel to embrace Him. But Israel is a people who disobeyed and talked back (gainsaying) to God. Incredible! See Isa. 65:2.

CONCLUSION

THE GREAT UNKNOWN

*WHY dost Thou pass unheeded,
Treading with pierced feet
The halls of the kingly palace,
The busy street?
Oh marvellous in Thy beauty,
Crowned with the light of God,
Why fall they not down to worship
Where Thou has trod?
Why are Thy hands extended
Beseeching whilst men pass by
With their empty words and their laughter
Yet pass on to die?*