

# Two Kinds of Righteousness

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**Introduction:** In chapter nine Paul, under inspiration, reveals things that being a descendent of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will not save anyone. Men were saying that God's prophecies failed or were nullified because Israel did not receive or embrace her Messiah. To this Paul replies....

**Romans 9:6-8** <sup>6</sup> .... *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; <sup>7</sup> nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." <sup>8</sup> That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

To soften this blow to the Jewish ego Paul begins chapter nine by expressing great affection for Israel with these words....

**Romans 9:1-3** I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, <sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

In chapter ten God's Word goes on to explain how Israel entirely missed and even refused the righteousness that God offered them in favor of their own human righteousness. This is another hard truth and we can already hear the accusation that "Paul hates the Jewish people." So The Apostle also begins chapter ten with a strong profession of his deep affection for Israel. Let's read the first ten verses now:

**Romans 10:1-10** Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation. <sup>2</sup> For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. <sup>3</sup> For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. <sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. <sup>5</sup> For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. <sup>6</sup> But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), <sup>7</sup> or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." <sup>8</sup> But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; <sup>10</sup> for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

"God's righteousness versus man's" is still a vital topic in our day. Obtaining righteousness before God is in the heart of almost every human. This week mankind celebrated [the Latin word for worship] the Earth. If there is a worldwide religion it is

the worship of the earth. And...it started long before "Earth Day." Nietzsche said over a century ago, "Once the sin against God was the greatest sin; but God died, and these sinners died with him. To sin against the earth is now the most dreadful thing."

Pope Francis recently wrote, "This is our sin: exploiting the land and not allowing it to give us what it has within it."

David Clowney in his book "Earthcare" wrote, "Injury to the earth is like striking, cutting, maiming or killing a blind man...knowing this, a man should not sin against the earth or cause or permit others to do so."

I recently read a confessional statement on an evangelical website that said...."we acknowledge our sin against the earth by not caring properly for it."

Humanity.....all of mankind.....seeks to establish its own righteousness before God. This was Israel's problem, but it is not limited to them. Politicians who lie, steal and prey on others regularly express their sense of personal moral superiority over others who do not agree with their policy.

So like Paul I am not preaching to condemn Israel. I love Israel and desire their salvation. We are preaching this text to drive home the Gospel message which says to Israel and the entire world.....

**Romans 10:8-9** <sup>8</sup> ..... "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART "-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

These ten verses reveal three important things about righteousness that you need to know.

- Self-righteousness will condemn you
- Christ's righteousness will save you
- Christ's righteousness is freely available to you

### **SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL CONDEMN YOU! [10:1-3]**

**Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation.**  
[1]: Paul is writing to believers in Christ, but he knows his words will be heard by Jews. It is important when we preach Christ that we are not anti-Jewish. God is not anti-Semitic! He knew all things before time began and yet sent His Eternal Son into humanity as a Jewish man. God is not anti-Jewish. Christ is certainly not anti-Jewish. Paul is not anti-Jewish and we should be anything but anti-Jewish. God warns us of this very tendency. Speaking of the idea that the gentile church had replaced Israel Paul says in Romans 11.....

**Romans 11:17-18** .....But if some of the branches were broken off, and you [a gentile], being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them [Israel] of the rich root of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup> do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you.

Israel's salvation is also the desire of The Father and The Son.

**Luke 13:34** "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

As Paul wrote Scripture was the Holy Spirit unaware that God had forsaken Israel definitively.....if in fact.....as some say today.....He has? Does Paul know about and believe in Election? Absolutely! He is the source of much of its teaching in the New Testament. So why is he praying this way? Why is he pleading with God for this?

“Paul was not making a hopeless plea that he did not expect God to answer. He prayed because he fully believed God could save all Israel, that, no matter how seemingly unlikely, the people of Israel could be saved if they would place their trust in their Messiah and Savior.” *John MacArthur*

**For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God [2a]:** Now here is a statement that most Christians in our age struggle with. To us, a zeal for God is equivalent to being a Christian believer, but this can trip us up. So many believers have said to me throughout the years....”I am sure the Adventists, JW’s or Mormons must be okay. They have a real fervor for God. Look at how they go out to witness.” Or “I know a catholic who goes to church every single day...sometimes twice a day...Surely such a person is right with God and saved.”

**But not in accordance with knowledge. [2b]:** Scripture here....NOT ME.....but Scripture says that zeal cannot trump knowledge. Knowledge is a word meaning more than doctrine or intellectual assent to it. It speaks of personal, experiential knowledge. It is knowing not knowing about. We all know about Donald Trump or Abraham Lincoln, but we do not know them. This is the idea of knowledge. Jesus described people just like this that would come to Him in the final judgement...

**Matthew 7:21-23** <sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.  
<sup>22</sup> "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' <sup>23</sup> "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.**'

So it is possible to be very religious, very devout and very moral and be entirely lost. Why? Because all roads do not lead to heaven! Sincerity is not enough! Devotion, religion, morality and even zeal can never save when men and women do not know God. The Pharisees were like this! Millions of men and women in our day are like this. They

seek God's approval in every conceivable way. Religious and non-religious, both go to great lengths to establish their righteous standing before God. Paul, the converted zealot was qualified to speak about this.

**Galatians 1:13-14** <sup>13</sup> For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; <sup>14</sup> and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

**For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own [3a]:** It is possible to be zealous and be entirely lost and this is because of ignorance of two things. The true nature of God's righteousness and the thorough going unrighteousness of the human heart. The heart of the gospel and your own salvation swings on this hinge. Let's carefully look at both.

The besetting sin and fatal error of Israel, like all other religions and cultures was ignorance of God and His righteousness. Jeremiah had warned the Lord's people about this centuries before. His admonition was preserved in Scripture.

**Jeremiah 9:23-24** <sup>23</sup> Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; <sup>24</sup> but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.

"But most Jews of that day did boast in their own righteousness and considered themselves pleasing to God simply because they were His ancient chosen people. For that same reason they thought the many rabbinical traditions they had substituted for God's Word were perfectly acceptable to Him. Not only were they willingly ignorant of God's Righteousness, but they also had no understanding of their own unrighteousness. They thought they were more holy and righteous than they were and therefore fully believe that any deficit in their own merit could be met by their own good works---measured by their own standard of righteousness." *John MacArthur*

**They did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God [3b]:** They thought, like men today, much higher of themselves than they should and held God to be much lower than they should. Their righteousness was good enough and God could take it or leave it. When the gospel proclaims that God will leave it, reject it and even refuse it....it makes men angry! Paul has made a career out of the Gospel. He is hated and persecuted for it, especially, like Jesus Himself, among the self-righteous. The Preaching of the Cross is locked in mortal combat with self-righteous religion, works and even morality.

**Romans 1:16-17** <sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

The Gospel is that there is a righteousness that comes from God and is given to men who will forsake their own and trust only in it. After proving that the law cannot save anyone, but only reveal their hopelessly loss condition, Paul reveals this righteousness of God clearly.

**Romans 3:19-22** <sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; <sup>20</sup> because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

**Romans 5:19-21** <sup>19</sup> For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup> so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS CAN SAVE YOU! [10:4-7]**

**For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes [4]:** Now an even fuller explanation. The man Jesus Christ [not doctrine about Him or mental assent about Him] is the end of the law. "End" means termination or fulfillment. Paul has made it abundantly clear that the Law is not sin.

**Romans 7:6-7** <sup>6</sup> But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter. <sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? **Is the Law** sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

The problem with the Law is that it cannot make you righteous. And yet...Israel had taken that precise view of it. Religious people today do the same thing. I have lost track of how many people have responded to my gospel witness with..."I keep the ten commandments." "I don't need to put my trust in Christ." This tragedy is current. I have spoken to many members of evangelical churches who tell me that they never knew that they can only get to heaven because of Christ's perfectly righteous life. They are sitting in evangelical churches and yet trying to establish their own righteousness before God. Other church members have told me that they have never ever thought of themselves as sinners and did not think any of Christ's comments about sinners applied to them. Things like....

**Luke 15:2** And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

**Luke 5:32** I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

The Law can and does condemn us for our sin and leave us hopeless. Christ is the "END" or "fulfillment" of the Law. Jesus broke its power to condemn men in two ways: He is the one who kept it perfectly and who is without sin. He did what Adam failed to do. Secondly, He stepped in front of the Law's executioner's judgment on sin and absorbed in His own body every just penalty that should have gone to you! The Bible says it in one verse.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**The end of the law for righteousness:** Means that Jesus has ended the Law's delusion of righteousness. Until Christ, men imagined that they could establish their own righteousness. Christ dispelled this entirely. The most legally righteous, hated, rejected and murdered their own God rather than submit to a free righteousness through faith.

"Paul is saying that Christ is the end to the law as a way of attaining righteousness. This does not mean the abolishing of the law, for Paul claims that he is establishing it [3:31]. And he claims value for it [7:7]. What Paul is emphasizing is the decisive end to all such claims as those of the Jews. The saving work of Christ has brought to a close any attempts to attain righteousness by way of law." *Leon Morris*

**To everyone who believes:** This righteousness of God entered humanity as the man, Christ Jesus. Clearly it can only be obtained by faith...by trust in The Sinless Life and The Cross Work of Jesus! It is not for Jews or Gentiles! IT is for everyone who believes.

**For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness [5]:** This is not a new idea, Paul insists. He has found it, as can we, in the Old Testament Scripture. Paul quotes Moses who is saying that anybody who relies on their obedience to the Law for salvation is going to have to live by that standard of righteousness. In Galatians Paul quotes Moses again and this time makes his understanding of Moses pretty clear.

**Galatians 3:10-12** <sup>10</sup> For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." <sup>11</sup> Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." <sup>12</sup> However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM."

**But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?'" (that is, to bring Christ down), [6]:** This is another loose quote from the Old Testament.

**Deuteronomy 30:11-12** <sup>11</sup> "For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. <sup>12</sup> "It is not in heaven, that you should say,

'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?'

This is the context of Deut. 30:11. "What God is saying to you is clearly said. It is not hidden from you. It is not that cryptic. You do not need to send someone up to heave to get it so you can hear it and observe it.

**'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." [7]:** This is the opposite thought supporting the same idea. What God is saying here is not hidden in the grave or the realm of the dead where someone needs to go to find it and bring it back for you.

Making Paul's application is pretty straight forward. Christ already brought it down from heaven for you and He brought it back up from the grave. The righteousness of God is Christ Alone! And the obtaining of it is through saving trust [faith] in Christ ALONE!

### **CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS AVAILABLE TO YOU! [10:8-10]**

**But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART "-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching [8]:** The Gospel of Salvation by Christ alone is right in front of your eyes. It is not hidden. IT is as near to you as if it was in your mouth and heart. It is available to you. Why? Because God sent His Own Son into the world to bring it to you. Christ is as available to you as the Law was to Moses' listeners. BUT...it is even more so. This Righteousness is not merely an external one like the Law...It penetrates to the inner man. Knowing man's inability to establish his own righteousness even then, God told Israel to look for another day....a day when God would do everything for them.

**Jeremiah 31:31-34** <sup>31</sup> "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup> "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup> "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

**That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord [9a]:** Paul is not giving us two conditions for salvation. He has made it repeatedly clear that Faith Alone is the criteria. What he is doing is some literary parallelism. He has just quoted Deut. 30..."The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart." Now he wants to make an application to Christ. Who is the Righteousness of God! Jesus who is God become a man. Jesus Christ who is the Word of Faith that Paul is preaching. "Christ is near you! In your mouth [confess Him]....In your heart [believe or trust Him]"

Believers confess that “Jesus is Lord!” It comes from heart transformation. From one who has gone from an enemy of God to a slave. They confess Him as their Sovereign Lord and ruler. And this is done through the inner miracle of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 12:3** <sup>3</sup> Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 14:9** <sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

In Acts Jesus is twice called Savior, but called Lord 92 times. In the rest of the New Testament he is called Savior 10 times and 700 times He is called Lord. Can you see why some of us object to believers saying that you do not need to believe in Jesus as Lord....only Savior.

**And believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved [9b]:** Again.... Proof and heart trust that Jesus is God. That He has the authority to do and teach the things He did.

**John 2:18-19** <sup>18</sup> The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" <sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

*Morris* says, “Paul does not contemplate an inner state that is not reflected in outward conduct. If anyone really believes he will confess Christ, so it is natural to link the two.”

“Belief in the heart is clearly the crucial requirement, as Paul makes clear even in this context...

**Romans 9:30** <sup>30</sup> What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;

**Romans 10:4** <sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

**Romans 10:11** <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Confession is the outward manifestation of this critical inner response.” *Douglas Moo*

**For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation [10]:** In verse nine Paul follows the pattern of Deut. 30. Mouth first and heart second, but here he reverses them and puts them in the correct order. In verse nine he acknowledges the existence of both of these in the life of a true believer. MacArthur makes this observation:

“Righteousness has to do with what we become, and salvation has to do with what we escape. The first has to do with the eternal life we receive but do not deserve, the second with the eternal punishment we deserve but do not receive. The first relates to entering into blessedness and the second relate to escaping cursedness.”

**CONCLUSION:** There are two kinds of righteousness. One will render you hopelessly proud and lost before God. It is the righteousness that you seek to establish. It can be religion, morality, ritual, heritage, language or nationality. It the case of Israel it was all of these. This thinking is rampant in the world and even within the evangelical church.

The second is the righteousness of Christ. It is possessed through faith....ONLY Faith, because it belongs to Him Alone. Only He left the throne room of the Father and entered the womb of Mary. Only He eternally changed His own nature to become one of His own creatures so that He could save them and make them His eternal family. Only Christ was The sinless God of creation with the total power over death. He conquered death. He is the Lord of the Universe and He died for you and lived for you! So.....

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31** <sup>26</sup> ..... consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; <sup>27</sup> but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, <sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no man may boast before God. <sup>30</sup> But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, <sup>31</sup> so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."