

Romans Part 28 (10:12-10:21)

--"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'" (Romans 10:12-13)

--in Paul's explanation of the gospel throughout Romans, he keeps pointing to the fact that God's plan of salvation is for the whole world, both Jews and Gentiles alike.

--most of the Jewish religious leaders believed that God's plan of salvation restricted to Jews only.

--"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" (10:14-15a)

--Paul continues his pattern throughout the book of Romans and presents rhetorical questions that represent the objections of Jewish religious leaders.

--in other words, the Jewish religious leaders would ask, if God's plan of salvation included Gentiles then why was Scripture (the Old Testament) given to Israel only? How can Gentiles be saved without knowing about God's revelation in Scripture?

--"As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!'" (10:15b)

--the first point of Paul's response to the rhetorical question is that the Gentiles hear through people preaching the gospel, as Paul himself was doing.

--a couple sentences later Paul will address how people learned about God before they came in contact with Scripture, which was the main objection of the Jewish argument, as most of the world throughout Jewish history never came in contact with Scripture.

--"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'LORD, who has believed our report?'" (10:16)

--another objection of the Jewish religious leaders was that if Jesus truly was the Messiah then why didn't all Israel embrace Him? And if Gentiles were really a part of God's plan of salvation why didn't every Gentile embrace Him?

--the Jewish religious leaders had taken faith out of the equation, and in this verse Paul points out that there has always been unbelief in Israel... not all Jews and not all Gentiles embrace Christ because not all have faith.

-- By the time of Christ, many Jewish religious leaders viewed circumcision as a kind of free ticket to heaven and that no uncircumcised male could go to hell. They called Gentiles the "uncircumcision" signifying that they were outside the scope of God's plan of salvation. God commanded Abraham and his descendants to circumcise every male child on the 8th day after birth simply as a sign of God's covenant with Israel as a nation.

--Paul turned the Jewish tradition upside down when wrote, "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter..." (Romans 2:28-29)

--the true children of God are those "who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised." (Romans 4:12)

--Galatians 3:26-28: "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

--"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (10:17)

--at this point the unbelieving Jew would be thinking, so you've just proven that people are saved through hearing the word of God... throughout history most Gentiles never came in contact with the word of God, so again, how could God's plan of salvation include Gentiles when the means of salvation was not available to Gentiles?

--this verse is often quoted by Christians without understanding the context of Paul reasoning with unbelieving Jews... out of context this passage can leave Christians with the same question the unbelieving Jews were raising... how can people have faith without having the word of God... what about the person in the jungle who has never come in contact with the word of God...what about most of the human race throughout history and before Christ?

--in addition to the context, the Greek phrase translated "the word of God" (which we'll address after the following verse) gives us insight into the meaning of this verse .

--"But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.'" (10:18)

--in quoting Psalm 19:4 Paul is saying that God, in a limited sense, can reveal Himself to anyone even if they never had an opportunity to learn about Him through Scripture; and based on this limited, general revelation anyone can have saving faith in Him.

--Psalms 19:1-6: "**The heavens declare the glory of God**; and the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 **There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard.** 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race. 6 Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat."

--if a person responds in genuine faith to the general revelation of God's creation then they will embrace the specific revelation of Scripture (a kind of follow up to general revelation).

--after talking about general revelation, Psalm 19 talks about revelation through Scripture... "7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." (Psalms 19:7-10)

--in Romans 1 Paul gives us further insights into limited revelation through nature: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because **what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.** 20 **For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse..." (Romans 1:18-20)

--the reality of anyone being able to have saving faith without knowing anything about Christ is a mysterious, but it helps to think about Abraham... **Abraham knew very little about God and He knew nothing about Christ, yet he is the one that Paul presents in Romans as the model of saving faith.**

--Greek phrase translated "word of God" in verse 17...

--verse 17: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

--without considering the context, verse 17 could be used to help make the case that in order to be saved you have to hear the gospel, which would leave a large portion of the human race outside the reach of salvation.

--in addition to the context, the Greek phrase translated "word of God" gives us a clue to the meaning of verse 17...

--two Greek words (rhema and logos) are translated "word" in English...

--*rhema* simply means words or speech

--*logos* means the thought or substance behind the word and is used to represent Christ – "in the beginning was the Word... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..."

--the phrase "the word [*rhema*] of God" is used least frequent in the New Testament and represents words spoken by God in a general sense. Examples:

--"For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to

give their kingdom to the beast, until the **words of God** are fulfilled." (Revelation 17:17:)

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--Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is **the word of God.**"

--Acts 11:16-17: "Then I remembered the **word of the Lord**, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'"

-the phrase "the word [*logos*] of God" is used most frequently in the New Testament and is often associated with evangelism and revelation about Christ. Examples:

--Revelation 19:16: "**His name is called The Word of God.**"

--Acts 12:24: "But **the word of God grew and multiplied.**"

--Acts 13:4-5: "So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit... **they preached the word of God** in the synagogues of the Jews."

--1 Peter 1:23: "...**having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God** which lives and abides forever."

--2 Timothy 4:1-2: "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 **Preach the word!** Be ready in season and out of season..."

--contrast between *rhema* and *logos* in the same sentence...

--Acts 10:43-45: "...To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.' 44 **While Peter was still speaking these words [*rhema*]**, the Holy Spirit fell upon all **those who heard the word [*logos* – the meaning behind the words]**.

45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also."

--so the statement "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word [*rhema*] of God" is most likely the logic of unbelieving Jews as they only focused on the words (the *rhema*) without seeing the true meaning behind them (the *logos*) - **they were fixated on the words (the *rhema*) of the law without seeing how they pointed to Christ, the Logos!**

--it would be out of character for Paul to personally reason that faith comes through the "word [*rhema*] of God" when the Logos was the focal point of His evangelism – "Him we preach..."

(Colossians 1:28) ... "for I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified..." (1 Cor. 2:2) ... and his exhortation "Preach the Word! [*the Logos*]" (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

--**the fact that God can reach people in the absence of Scripture is in no way an excuse to discount evangelism...** Ever since Christ gave the Great Commission to His disciples it has been God's will for the message of Scripture about Christ to be preached to the whole world: "Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that **repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations**, beginning at Jerusalem..." (Luke 24:46-48)

--Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen." **...this can only occur through Scripture.**

--in verses 19 through 21 Paul uses three Old Testament passages to make three more successive blows to the Jewish argument about God's plan of salvation being only for Jews...

--"But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: 'I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.'" (10:19)

--a subtle reference from the heart of the Jews' sacred Torah about God's plan including nations other than Israel.

--"But Isaiah is very bold and says: 'I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me. But to Israel he says: 'All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.'" (10:21-22)

--Paul points out where Isaiah writes about God reaching out to Gentile nations while Israel rebelled... the Jewish religious leaders were straining at the speck in the Gentiles eyes while ignoring the log in their own eyes.