

# Believe Unto Righteousness and Confess Unto Salvation

📖 Romans 10:9-10

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Last week we gave an exposition of Romans 10:5-8 which are the verses that lead into Romans 10:9-10. In verses 5-8 Paul explains that there were two ways that Israel could try and live a righteous life before God under the Law. In 10:5 they could try and live a righteous life before God based on law-keeping; that would be by legalism, self-effort, human works trying to please God because they had to. We found that this is actually a quote from several OT passages and when we turned to them we found that when Israel tried to live a righteous life before God by self-effort they blew it every time. Consequently they did not enjoy life because God disciplined them. By contrast, in 10:6-8, they could try and live a righteous life before God based on faith; that would be trusting in Him that His law was good for them and their obedience would come from the heart. In this way they might live and prolong their life in the land. This living by faith under the Law is characterized in 10:6 from the negative standpoint; faith does not say in the heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down)." That is an expression of doubt that Christ had already come in the incarnation. Since doubt is the opposite of faith then faith would not say this. "Or" similarly, in 10:7, neither does faith say, "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." That is an expression of doubt that Christ had already been resurrected from the dead. Again, since doubt is the opposite of faith then faith would not say this. In 10:8 living by faith under the Law is characterized from the positive standpoint; what does faith say? Faith says, "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart." This is an expression of faith in the heart. One who lived by faith in Christ's incarnation and resurrection had it readily accessible in their mouth by way of conversations and in their heart by way of thoughts. Christ's incarnation and resurrection were very near and dear to them. At the end of 10:8 Paul says that the incarnation and resurrection are "the word of faith which we are preaching." All the nation Israel needs to do is believe this message unto righteousness and call on the Lord to be saved as described in Romans 10:9-10.

We're working with exceptionally difficult material in Romans 9-11. The key is to recognize that Paul is dealing with a question that a Jew would ask based on chapter 8. Paul concluded chapter 8 with the idea that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. If that is so then what about Israel? It seems like the nation Israel has been separated from God's covenant plan. Is that true? So Paul is dealing with God's plan for the nation Israel as

defined by the covenants and he is explaining what has happened to that plan in light of the nation's rejection of their Messiah. The answer is that the plan is still there but the nation Israel has been temporarily set aside until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in and after that God will complete His plan for the nation Israel. So as long as you keep the plan of God for the nation Israel in mind as we work through these chapters and as long as you see that what Paul has in mind is Israel's national salvation or deliverance away from their enemies you can understand what Paul is saying. Unfortunately, not many commentators are able to do this. What we're going to see today is that commentators hit grease on Romans 10:9-10 and some of them slide so far they actually say the opposite of what Paul says and yet somehow they get away with it and people keep listening to these morons. The key is to keep the national focus in mind and keep salvation as a physical deliverance in mind.

Let's look at the verses before and after. This gives us context. Before we see Romans 10:1 and it definitely has a national focus and national salvation in view. Seen against the background of 9:28 we know Paul is talking about the time of the future Tribulation. "Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation." Paul's desire and prayer was for the nation Israel to be saved or rescued from certain annihilation by Gentile kingdoms during the Tribulation. Now a verse after. Romans 10:13, Paul is quoting Joel 2:32 which is in a great tribulation context, "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." That passage is talking about Israel calling upon YHWH in order to be rescued from certain annihilation in the future great tribulation. Of course it presupposes they are already a believing nation. Now within this we read Romans 10:10 where Paul is giving the proper order, "believe, resulting in righteousness...and confess resulting in salvation." So first the nation Israel will believe and later they will confess or call on the YHWH in order to enjoy national deliverance from their enemies. Every mention of salvation in here is a reference to the physical deliverance or rescue of national Israel. None of them have to do with going to heaven. It's not recognizing this that leads commentators to slip and slide when they hit Rom 10:9-10. They just don't know what to do with this. Some of them try to equate believing with confessing because they're trying to protect eternal salvation being by faith alone.<sup>1</sup> But that is a flagrant violation of many points of grammar that make entirely clear that belief and confess are different actions. Righteousness and salvation are different results. Mouth and heart are different instruments. Repeatedly the Greek text destroys that idea. Others see correctly that 10:10 is giving the proper order - first believe and then confess. But they corrupt the grammar by concluding that if a person has really believed the evidence that they are really saved is they will confess.<sup>2</sup> But the text says the opposite, if you confess you will be saved. Others conclude that in order to be eternally saved there is a two-step process; first you must believe and then you must confess by walking an aisle. Yet 98 times the Gospel of John says faith alone. 50+ times the rest of the NT says faith alone so confession has nothing to do with eternal salvation. All these men, many of whom I highly respect, who have come up with these views are completely out to lunch. I wouldn't say that so strongly if it wasn't so obvious. They should know better. And it is a marvel to me that many of them are willing to just change the text to fit their presuppositions rather than just letting God have the floor. Why can't we just let God speak? Especially when what He has to say here is not that difficult when we look at this in context. In context

Paul has in view the fact that in the end times the nation Israel must believe resulting in righteousness and then they must confess Jesus as Lord, or as verse 13 says, call upon the Lord, in order to be saved from their enemies. The bottom line is this is simple. In the Tribulation time the veil will have been lifted and the 144,000, 12,000 from each tribe, will come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah. They will be sent out to preach this to the rest of the nation. The rest of the nation will hear what they are preaching. They will believe what they are preaching. They will call upon the Lord to be saved or rescued from their enemies. Verses 14-15 show this entire sequence of what will happen in reverse so let's read it and then reconstruct it in the right order. "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent?" See the sequence of things that have to happen? First, someone has to be sent to preach the message. It's going to be the 144,000. Second, someone has to preach the message. They will preach it. Third, the nation has to hear the message. They will hear it. Fourth they have to believe the message. They will believe it. That will be a key. Fifth, they have to call on Him to be saved from their enemies. They will call on Him. So they are calling upon Him to be saved as a believing nation. This is the sequence of things that will take place in the nation Israel in the Tribulation time so that Paul's prayer of verse 1 will finally be answered and God's covenant plan for Israel will be fulfilled. Of course we can make an application of this sequence to individual salvation in our own day but the main idea is the nation Israel in the end times and what has to happen in order for them to enjoy their ultimate deliverance from their enemies.

That's the track I'm going to follow so what I'm going to do now is show you how I got there by following the contextual, grammatical, historical interpretation of these verses as they relate to the nation Israel and how they can come into their covenant promises and then I'm going to refute the abuse of these verses by most theologians and gospel tracts.

You have to come at this from the context. The first thing you'll notice is that verse 9 is a conditional statement. **If you confess...** In the grammar it is *εαν*, if, with the subjunctive mood which signals a third class condition. The third class means maybe you will, maybe you won't, it's set out as a 50:50 situation. The **if** controls both **confess** and **believe** so that there are two conditions stated. First, **if you confess**, second, **if you believe**. This, of course is not the proper order, verse 10 gives the proper order which is **believe** and **confess**. But verse 9 is stating the two conditions that must ultimately be met for the nation Israel to be **saved**. I realize that it is in the singular but Paul started verses 1-3 in the plural, referencing "them" and only moved to the singular because of his quotes of Deut 9 and 30 in vv 5-8 and finally, later in verse 15 he will return to the plural. Of course, there is also an individual application and we will make that in vv 11-13, but here the main interest is the nation Israel which, when you think of it, really is a singular in that they are one nation. In any case, you notice that in verse 9 the condition **if** controls both **confess** and **believe** such that when these two conditions are fulfilled the nation Israel goes into the kingdom.

The second thing you will notice is that in verses 9-10 Paul uses **heart** and **mouth** and that he carried these words over from the previous verses. In verse 6 he spoke of what someone says in their “heart” which is a quote from Deut 9:4 and in verse 8 he uses both “mouth” and “heart” which is a quote from Deut 30:14. So the language **heart** and **mouth** in verses 9-10 are not new but carried over from the previous verses which Paul carried over from Deuteronomy.

What does Paul mean by **heart** and **mouth**? Both are instrumental datives and should be translated **with your mouth** and **with your heart**. This is perfectly clear in the Greek and beautiful (*εν τω στοματι σου...εν τη καρδια σου*). A. T. Robertson, one of the greatest Greek grammarians of all time agrees completely saying, “Both καρδι [*kardiāi*] (heart) and στοματι [*stomatī*] (mouth) are in the instrumental case.”<sup>3</sup> What this means is that the **mouth** and the **heart** are the instruments through which confession and belief occur.

What does Paul mean by **mouth**? The **mouth** is the instrument through which one speaks. By it one makes an audible proclamation. In verse 9 it is the instrument through which one confesses **Jesus as Lord**. In verse 10 the **mouth** is also the instrument through which one “confesses.” So the **mouth** in both verses only does one thing; it confesses. We must be emphatic in saying that it does not believe, nor is it simultaneous to believing. Then we come to the **heart**. What does Paul mean by **heart**? By **heart** Paul is speaking of the instrument through which one thinks. **Heart** is most commonly used with reference to the mind, the thinking center. In verse 9 it is the instrument by which one believes that **God raised Jesus from the dead**. In verse 10 the **heart** is also the instrument by which one “believes.” Again, we must be emphatic that the heart does not confess, nor is it simultaneous to confessing.

Four observations are in order. First, there are two different actions in view. Paul could not be clearer in the original text that confession and believing are not the same action and since confessing is parallel to calling in verse 13 and verse 14 makes calling clearly subsequent to belief. It is impossible from every possible angle for them to be simultaneous. Belief comes first and only after one has believed can he confess or call upon the Lord.

Second, there are two different instruments in view. The mouth is not the same as the heart. There is no way you can correlate these. They are different instruments and they do different things; one confesses, the other believes.

Third, there are two different doctrines in view. Confessing Jesus as Lord is professing that Jesus is God in the incarnation. Believing that God raised Jesus from the dead is the doctrine of resurrection. There is no way that the doctrine of incarnation is the doctrine of resurrection. The doctrine of incarnation is a necessary precursor to the doctrine of resurrection.

Fourth, there are two different results in view. In verse 10 believing results in righteousness and confessing results in salvation. Righteousness and salvation are not the same in the Book of Romans as I will show you clearly from other references in Romans.

These are two distinct actions made with two distinct instruments concerning two distinct doctrines with two distinct results. These four observations show emphatically that there is no way in any universe that what we see here all happens simultaneously or is just a figurative way of describing the same thing about how a person goes to heaven or what kind of belief results in someone going to heaven. If one does not respect what God actually says in this text then He will confuse the entire plan of salvation, destroy the gospel and create mass confusion. So it is absolutely critical that you see that there are two distinct actions in view, confession and believing; two distinct instruments in view, the mouth and the heart; two distinct doctrines in view, the incarnation and the resurrection and two distinct results in view; salvation and righteousness.

We've looked at **mouth** and **heart**. Let's look at the third thing, **confess**. **Confess** is the Greek word *ομολογεω*. In a sin context, like 1 John 1:9 it means "to concede that something is factual or true, *to grant, to admit*."<sup>4</sup> When we confess our sins we are admitting that we sinned against God and it is a private confession. Rom 10:9-10 is not a sin context. It's a positive proclamation context. Here it means "to acknowledge something, ordinarily in public."<sup>5</sup> Since it is coupled with the **mouth** as the instrument then it is clear that it is a public confession. Public confession of what? That **Jesus is Lord**.

Let's deal with this public confession that will have to be made by the nation Israel. **Jesus is Lord**. The word **Lord** is *κυριος* in the Greek. *Κυριος* is universally recognized by scholars to be the Greek word that is substituted in the epistles for the Hebrew YHWH in the OT LXX. When the epistles say **Jesus is Lord** they are saying that Jesus is God incarnate. John MacArthur wants to take it further than this to say that it means that the person believing is also submitting to Christ's Lordship, that is, making Jesus Lord of their life. He goes so far as to say that "the signature of saving faith is surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ. The definitive test of whether a person belongs to Christ is a willingness to bow to His authority." This misses the entire point of the context. The issue with confessing Jesus as Lord is confessing that He is God. This has a particular relevance within this context as we will show. Before we show it we need to recall that Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons deny that Jesus is God incarnate. Verse 9 coupled with verse 13 are some of the most important verses to point out to them because *κυριος* is used of Jesus in verse 9 and of YHWH in verse 13. It follows that if Jesus is Lord and YHWH is Lord then Jesus is YHWH. Unless words have ceased to mean what they say there is no other conclusion than to say that Jesus is God. The good thing is, last time I checked, their translation teams had not caught this yet because when they catch them they change them, and this one they still haven't changed so you can use it from their own translations of the Bible and still show that Jesus is God in their own version of the Bible.

Now we've said what this means to confess Jesus is Lord is to say that Jesus is God and that this has a particular relevance within this context. What people group of all people on earth have a difficult time publicly confessing that Jesus is God? Outside of Mormons and JW's there is one nation on earth that struggles with this: Israel, the very people in view in this context. Judaism has consistently denied that the Messiah would be God incarnate since the Jewish rabbi Rashi in the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. The claim that Jesus is the Messiah and that Jesus is God has

been and remains a huge stumbling block to the nation Israel. Why have they denied this? Not because the OT doesn't teach it. The OT teaches that God incarnated Himself multiple times; Gen 18 when God appeared to Abraham and showed him Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen 32 when Jacob wrestled with a man whom he called God, Exod 24 when they sat to eat and saw a man enthroned above all who was God, Josh 5 when Joshua met a man wandering in the camp who was God, 1 Sam 3 when God appeared to Samuel as at other times. Over and over we see this in the OT. God appears as a man. When we come to the NT are we surprised that John 1:14 says Jesus is God in the flesh? No, it simply brings the OT revelation to culmination by designating that God comes as flesh as the second person of the Trinity. What we are reading here is that the nation Israel must come to the point and will come to the point where they confess that Jesus is God incarnate, God in the flesh.

Now I've always thought it was interesting that the apostles didn't struggle with Jesus being God in the flesh and we can only reason that they didn't because they knew that the OT predicted God would come in the flesh. They viewed Jesus as the same One who appeared to Abraham and to Moses and the elders of Israel and to Joshua and to Samuel, et. al. And for anyone who stays with the text of Rom 10 they have no problem seeing the incarnation in verse 9 because we already saw it in verse 6. There the expression, Christ come down, is an explicit statement of the incarnation. So to confess that **Jesus is Lord** is to state that God incarnated Himself as Jesus. For the nation Israel to do this is of great magnitude because it requires saying they had been wrong for century after century about Jesus. Jesus did not have a demon as their leaders charged but Jesus is very God of very God come in the flesh.

Now as I mentioned, Rashi, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century after Christ, was the one who directed Judaism to re-interpret the OT so that the Messiah was not viewed as God in the flesh. What happened was he got tired of Christians arguing that Jesus was the Messiah, God in the flesh, who came and died and suffered for our sins and fulfilled Isa 53. So he reinterpreted that chapter of the Bible to say that Israel is the Messiah who suffers for the sins of the world. And still today Judaism abhors the idea that God Himself would ever come in the flesh as a man even though I contend that repeatedly the OT taught this clearly and the NT apostles who were Jewish and faithful to the OT had no problem with it. It was only later that Judaism rejected this and forever since they have turned to the great *shema* of Deut 6:4 to defend against the idea that God is Trinity. What's Deut 6:4? Twice a day, every day every orthodox Jew says this verse. "Hear O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" They key in on the word "one" and they say that this means God is one in every respect, that God is a solitary being with no diversity of persons in Himself and this One God is Spirit so it is impossible that God incarnate Himself in human flesh. But if you read in the context of the great *shema* Moses is speaking about avoiding idolatry. He's saying YHWH is our God, YHWH alone, He is our only God. He's not saying God is an absolute oneness with no diversity within Himself. The Hebrew has two words for one, one is *yachid* and it means absolute one. The other is *echad* and it means one but with diversity in the one, as with the two shall become one flesh. And guess which one is used in Deut 6:4, *echad*, one with diversity in the one. But it doesn't matter, they're not going to listen to this at this time because they are partially hardened. In their thinking God is an absolute and He is Spirit who does not incarnate,

the Messiah in Judaism is a mere human. So for the Jews to admit that Jesus is God incarnate is a huge change of mind. That change of mind is the national repentance of Israel. And Rom 10:9 is saying that the nation must and will finally come around and confess that Jesus is God incarnate. And verse 10 is saying that when they do the result will be salvation. It's second in the sequence which is given in verse 10.

Now just to reinforce how difficult it is for a Jew to accept that Jesus is God I point to Arnold Fruchtenbaum. Arnold, as many of you know, is a Messianic Jew, he has a ministry called Ariel Ministries which has as its purpose teaching the Bible from a Jewish perspective, meaning from a Jewish context and background. I was at a conference last October in Duluth, MN, and they had a panel Q & A time. In that panel one of the questions asked was "What are the biggest problems facing the church today?" Every panelist was answering from a general perspective and so Arnold took the time to answer from a Messianic Jewish perspective. In other words, "What are Jewish believers struggling with?" Number one struggle, that Jesus is God. And why? Because all these Jews were raised in Jewish homes and in Judaism there is strong opposition to the Messiah being God. So it's just something lodged in their national conscience and it's very difficult for them to accept that God could become a man. Mitch Glaser at Chosen People Ministries has put together a little article to deal with this where he cites explicit OT passages that show that the Messiah would be God and would come in the flesh; passages like Isa 9:6-7; Micah 5:2 and a couple of others. My point is, to get the nation to publicly "confess" Jesus to be God is going to be a tremendous shift in that nation. And I would say dogmatically that the only way they could ever make that confession is if they are already in belief as a nation. And I would say that emphatically because verse 10 is giving the true order, with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

The fourth thing in verse 9 is **believe**. What does it mean to **believe**? **Believe** is from the verb πιστευω and it means "to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust," to be "convinced." **Believe** or be convinced of what? **That God raised Him from the dead**. What particular people on earth have struggled with this more than any other people on earth? Israel again. Now if you turn to Matt 28 you see the first attempt to explain away the resurrection of Jesus and it was made up by none other than who? Jews, in particular the chief priests and which sect dominated the priests? The Sadducees. Did the Sadducees believe in the resurrection? No way. The Pharisees did but not the Sadducees. Here's how it went down. Verse 11, "Now while they were on their way..." The reference is to "the women" in verse 5 who had by this time seen Him and were on their way to the Galilee to alert the others. Continuing verse 11, "...some of the guards came into the city," these were Roman soldiers, "and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers," money talks, "and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble. And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day." It's a convincing story. People don't rise from the dead and so just say the body was stolen. And, if the governor finds out, we've got your back.

There is very little that has changed in the political scene. It's the same schemes, the same antics, the same cavalier high school mentality. And this theory, what is called the theft theory, was not only prevalent until Matthew's day but is prevalent in our own day. There are other theories that have been developed to explain this event, unbelief always has to reinterpret the data; the Hallucination Theory, the idea that the apostles merely thought they saw Jesus; the Swoon-Plot Theory, the idea that Jesus' body was removed according to a pre-arranged plan and that a conspiracy was arranged to simulate resurrection appearances. It can all be very convincing to unbelief but what 10:9 is saying is that the nation Israel must and will come to the belief that God did raise Jesus from the dead. And verse 10 is saying that when they do the result will be righteousness. It's first in the sequence which is given in verse 10.

As far as this sequence is concerned and the events in the future, the nation Israel will come to heart belief that God raised Jesus from the dead and this will happen sometime around the mid-point of the Tribulation. At the end of the Tribulation they will confess that Jesus is God and as verse 13 is pointing out, call on Him to be saved and they will be saved, rescued, delivered safely from their enemies and brought into the covenanted kingdom.

That verse 9 and 10 could ever be considered a gospel presentation is to entirely miss the context. For John MacArthur to say it is one of "The two clearest statements on the way of salvation in all Scripture..."<sup>6</sup> is borderline insanity. For Charles Ryrie to say "These are simultaneous actions: one inward (*heart*) and the other outward (*mouth*)..."<sup>7</sup> is grammatically ludicrous. This passage is talking about national Israel and the necessity that as a nation they believe that God raised Jesus, the one they crucified, from the dead, resulting in righteousness, and then confess that Jesus is God Himself, the equivalent of which is verse 13, calling upon Him, resulting in salvation from their enemies. There is an application to us all and that is, we believe unto imputed righteousness and after this when we need help to get through a trial we call upon Him to be saved from the difficulties. But to say this is the gospel is nonsense. These verses never were given to be used in a gospel presentation. Acts 16:31 has always been sufficient for that, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved..." Next week we'll deal with the false gospels that come out of this passage and also show how in Romans Paul never equates salvation and righteousness, that these are always kept distinct and for your homework assignment, read Romans 5:9 and 13:11 to see that this is so.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Ryrie Study Bible, p 1806.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, p 199.

<sup>3</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Ro 10:10.

<sup>4</sup> BDAG, p 708.

<sup>5</sup> BDAG, p 708.

<sup>6</sup> John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, p 28



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<sup>7</sup> Ryrie Study Bible, p 1806.