

## Ignored and Misunderstood Scriptures (Romans 10:5 to 13)

Dear Friends,

How much confusion we could avoid if we faithfully read and believed the words of Scripture rather than creating our own belief systems and trying to read our beliefs back into the Scriptures. The Lord gave this wonderful thing called prayer to His children for their personal needs and for their intercession for each other. Paul freely exercises it in [Ro 10](#), the foundation of his teaching in this chapter.

Too many believers see the word "saved" and ignore the context, never asking that context the two enlightening questions we discussed in the last study, 1) saved from what? and 2) saved to what? If we take the time to read Paul's description of the people for whom he prayed in [Ro 10](#), along with his further description of them in [Ro 9](#), we readily see that they were not lost, not-yet-born-again sinners. He also described these people in [Ro 3](#). The two passages clearly describe two distinct classes of people, one saved and the other not. In [Ro 10](#), Paul prayed for "Saved" people (Eternally saved, born again) to be saved from their own self-willed ignorance and zeal. He further prayed for them to be saved to the truth of Jesus and the gospel. Our present study of the communicating truth of the speech of the "Righteousness which is of faith." This working of the righteousness of faith, Paul affirms, presently resided in the hearts of those people for whom he prayed. The Holy Spirit already indwelt them and was working faith's influence in them. His prayer was that they would listen

to that "Speech" and believe its message. We need to hear and believe that same speech of faith's righteousness as those people did.

Lord bless, Joe Holder

## **Ignored and Misunderstood Scriptures**

### **(Ro 10:5-13)**

*For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach. ([Ro 10:5-8](#) KJV 1900)*

“Righteousness” is measured by a person’s conduct when favorably weighed against a prescribed behavior, often set forth in a body of laws, rules, or regulations. In this context, Paul has already stated a basic premise of the gospel.

*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. ([Ro 10:4](#) KJV 1900)*

For first century believers, “the law” was a specific reference to Moses and the “Law” God gave to him for Israel on Mt. Sinai. They regarded this law as a perpetual rule of conduct and worship for the Jewish people. That it could end was

unfathomable for them to consider. Many devoted believers still regard Moses' law, especially the Ten Commandments, as applicable to them no less than it was to Old Testament Jews. To be clear, God has never left His people void of moral direction—and commandment—including us. Paul did not suggest that Christ ended any moral commandment for believers, but that He ended the law as that commandment. When you tell a “Legalistic” believer today that you believe Christians are no longer under the law of Moses, he will likely immediately call you antinomian and immoral. No, we simply believe the New Testament, and we strive to measure our present moral conduct by God's higher—and far more personal—code, the life-example and teachings of Jesus. Isn't that what Paul states in this verse? Twice he also stated in [Ro 6](#) that we are “***not under the law.***” In response to the antinomian accusers, Paul did not write that we are not under any law, but that we are not under “the law,” an obvious reference to the Old Testament Mosaic law.

Often folks who try to keep themselves under that law will claim that God subdivided Moses' law, the law God gave to Moses, into subsets. Typically, they will offer something similar to the following divisions; 1) the moral code (The Ten Commandments), 2) the civil code that was to govern Jewish society during the Old Testament era, and 3) the priestly code that governed sacrifices and worship. They believe the priestly and governmental portions of that law ended, but that the moral code continues. However, they cannot offer a single passage in either the Old or the New Testament that makes

such a division. In contradiction to their artificial subdivision of the law, Scripture describes it as one unified whole.

*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. ([Jas 2:10](#) KJV)*

In this single verse, James refutes the whole idea of a subdivided law. It was all one code, beginning to end. That code ended with the coming of Jesus.

*The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. ([Lu 16:16](#) KJV)*

Please notice, however, that none of these passages in any remote way suggest that God freed His people from any ethical obligation whatever. Keep firmly in your mind; His moral character was accurately expressed in the Ten Commandments. In ways we may not know specifically, we see His moral government at work from the Garden of Eden forward till Moses and the giving of the law. So we should welcome and accept His moral government over us in the New Testament. When the legalistic folks respond with anxiety at the thought of not being under the Ten Commandments, I am inclined to suggest that they study—study carefully—Jesus’ teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, only three chapters out of the New Testament. (Matthew, chapters 5-7) Did Jesus indicate to the disciples that He intended to leave them in an amoral world void of moral direction and obligation? Hardly. In fact, He

repeatedly reminded them that His moral and behavioral requirements for them were greater, not less than the old law.

[Mt 5:20](#) (KJV)

*For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. ([Mt 5:20](#) KJV)*

Jesus didn't give the disciples a free moral pass; He rather reminded them of the sobering reality. His moral rule for them was more demanding than the old.

In Romans, especially the tenth chapter, Paul develops a truth regarding faith that most modern Christians do not grasp, that faith itself imposes a moral "Code" or systematic body of ethical mandates onto all who profess to "Believe" in Jesus.

Our study passage begins with Moses and the law, "*For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.*" If you claim Moses' law, live by it. Don't create endless exceptions and avoidances to rationalize claiming it, even severely imposing it onto others, while not practicing it yourself. In [Ro 2](#), Paul indicts contemporary Jews for this habit. If you claim Moses, you obligate yourself to live by the rule of Moses and the law, all of it, not one artificially segregated portion of it.

But do not forget. In Verse 4, Paul wrote that Christ is "*...the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*" If we live by the faith of Jesus, if we believe in Him fully and

rightly, we must practice a measure of righteousness other than the law. In fact, Paul specifically shows us that other measure of righteousness. It is Jesus. He will expand this thought richly in the verses following.

According to Paul, “Faith” is a rich and clear communicator. First, he will remind us what “*the righteousness which is of faith*” does not say.

*But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)*

Even as faith-righteousness tells us what not to say, she affirms an insoluble link between her ethics and Jesus’ Incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension back to glory. A “Right-minded faith” does not look for another Savior, a substitute or a supplement Jesus. She wholly embraces and believes in Him and His secure accomplishment of our salvation. Faith-righteousness doesn’t seek to reduce Jesus to a common or everyday godly man. She sees Him as God’s one and only unique Son, who alone came down. We can’t bring Him down. And she holds fast to this perspective. We also can’t raise Him from the dead. He came down of His own will, and according to the Father’s will; both wills agree. And He arose from the dead and ascended back to glory by His own will and power. ([Joh 10:17-18](#))

Even as this “Speaking” righteous faith cautions us what not to say, she affirms her anchor in Jesus alone. She does not have faith in herself; she has faith in Jesus. So should we.

*But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.* Do not overlook Paul’s point. The word of faith, her communicated message to us, already resides in the heart of the people Paul described in these words. It presently resides in both their mouth and in their heart. These are not unsaved people in terms of their ultimate or eternal relationship with Jesus. They are born again, blood bought, heaven bound children of God. Faith already resides in them and is communicating her message to them **“in thy heart.”** The same word of faith that Paul preached he asserts was presently resident in their heart and mouth.

Wise Bible study always weighs our interpretations or conclusions of a passage’s meaning with the actual words of the text. If our interpretation either forces those words to say too much or too little, more or less than they actually say, we have a wrong interpretation, and we need to change our interpretation to agree with the words of Scripture. In this passage, Paul teaches us much about the spiritual state of the people for whom he prays. The same word of faith that he preached also resided in the heart of the people for whom he prayed. These people are not lost sinners, alienated from God. Read Paul’s description of the wicked lost in [Ro 3:10-18](#). Compare his description of that wicked class of people with his description of the people for whom he prays in Chapter 10, as

well as his description of them in Chapter 9. There is no similarity. They are not people of the same class. The people in Chapter 10 needed his prayers. They needed the gospel that he preached. In short, they needed to “Listen” to the message of the *“Righteousness of faith”* that was speaking to them at this time. So do we. How often do you and I hear this voice of faith, but ignore it or refuse to believe its message? Oh yes we do. Is this state of self-will wise or good? Not at all. Have we forgotten Jesus’ words on more than one occasion to the twelve disciples? ***“Where is your faith?”*** ***“O ye of little faith.”*** And even, ***“...how is it that ye have no faith?”*** We do not accuse the twelve of not being born again because of these words, so why impose such a judgment onto the people whom Paul describes in our study passage?

One grand design of the gospel is to nudge believers, including you and me, to grow our faith stronger and more consistent. How often have you gone to church and heard a powerful sermon that stirred your spiritual senses to be more faithful in your daily life? How well did you follow through with that conviction? Did you ever slip right back into your old careless habits? Ever? Whether the faltering Jews of [Ro 10](#) or you and me, I suggest that our greatest spiritual adversary is ourselves, and our greatest need is often to save ourselves from ourselves. And ***our best hope for that deliverance we each discover in the clear voice of “the righteousness which is of faith.”***

Elder Joe Holder

