

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 29

I. Exposition of Chapter Ten. (Continued)

A. Verses 14-15 - The Necessity of the Preaching of the Gospel.

1. Verse 14 – “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?...” – In the context of this, we’ve already established how one might be saved. Verse 13 quotes from Joel 2:32 and states clearly that anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. We see here that believing (in the heart [verses 9-10]) precedes calling.
2. “And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”
 - a. If I’m going to call, I need to believe.
 - b. If I’m going to believe, I need to hear.
 - c. If I’m going to hear, I need a preacher.

Conclusion: Preachers are Good and Necessary!!

d. This emphasizes and affirms the need of preaching the Gospel! When we preach, people are saved who would not have been otherwise.

3. A Look at the word “Preacher”. It’s actually better translated here as, “one who preaches.” So to “preach” means; “to proclaim”; “to announce publically”¹; “to be a herald”; “always with the suggestion of formality, gravity and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed.”²

“Preaching must include the presence of the Holy Spirit, apart from whom preaching is worthless, indeed, injurious. So then preaching necessarily involves content in the form of a biblical message, a preacher, an occasion, listeners, and the Holy Spirit.” – Jay E. Adams.

“The preacher is not an author reading his own manuscript. He is a voice, a fire, a herald, bold and eager in his sacred work, an orator speaking in heaven’s name and strength.” – Joseph Parker (1830-1902) English Minister.

4. Verse 15 - “And how shall they preach unless they are sent?”

- a. The word “sent” means; “to send out” and “to send forth on a special mission.”³ to cause someone to depart for a particular purpose⁴
- b. To be “sent” suggests at least two things, first, that one operates under a higher authority and secondly that his message does not originate with himself but is given him by the sending authority (God). The prophets were men who were sent in these two respects as was even the Lord Jesus (John 3:34; 7:16).
- c. Jesus, in turn, sent forth His disciples – Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18.
- d. All of Jesus’ disciples have been sent to a certain extent.
- e. “As it is written...” – Quote from Isaiah 52:7.

- 1) The original context of Isaiah 52, is that God was prophesying that after Judah was taken captive by the Babylonians, they would eventually be released. Paul is using it to refer to the Gospel preachers who bring good news of release from the captivity of sin.
- 2) Scholars suggest two possible meanings of the word “beautiful.” First, it carries the idea of “seasonal” or “ripe”. Sometimes it’s used to refer to an appropriate time or an “opportune point of time” describing something as happening or coming at just the right time. This seems to denote the idea that the preacher bringing the Gospel message to those who are captive is bringing it when it is needed most. Others propose that it’s simply a figurative way of expressing gratitude for the obedience of the messengers who have brought good news.
- 3) “Feet” are mentioned because that’s the way the message was sent! People traveling and taking the good news.

¹ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

² Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

³ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*

⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 190.

B. Verse 16 – The Gospel can be heard and still not Obeyed or Believed.

1. **“But they have not all obeyed the gospel...”** - The word **“gospel”** means; **“good news”** or, **“news of victory.”** (cf. **Part 1 of series**).
2. The word **“obeyed”** means; **“to listen”** or **“to hearken to a command.”** – Sometimes the New Testament uses the word **“obey”** in the place of **“believe”** which denotes that idea that when you really believe on Him, you will obey Him! (cf. **Acts 6:7; II Thessalonians 1:8**).
3. Paul quotes from **Isaiah 53:1** – **“Lord, who has believed our report?”** – This is the beginning of a series of Old Testament quotes to show that Israel’s unbelief is not new. Just as the Jews of the Old Testament rejected God’s message, so the Jews of Paul’s day rejected it.

C. Verses 17-21 – Israel has no Excuse.

1. As we’ve seen before, Paul anticipates some hypothetical questions or challenges which could be made by an unbelieving Jew and then answers those questions.
2. **Verse 17** – **“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God – Verse 16** declared the fact that Israel has not believed the Gospel. This verse states the fact that faith is produced by hearing the Word of God (the Gospel).
3. **Verse 18** - Paul starts off with one of his questions; **“But I say, have they not heard?”** Paul answers this by answering; **“Yes indeed”**. Then Paul quotes from **Psalm 19:4** to prove his point that the word has gone forth, and Israel has heard it, making them more accountable. (cf. **Romans 2:18-20**)

“Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” – Psalm 19:4 (See also verses 1-4)

“Of course this psalm is referring to revelation in nature. ‘Their sound’ and ‘their words’ refer to the testimony of the heavens, the orderly passing of day and night, the sun, and all the rest of creation’s marvelous display of the Creator’s power. Israel had – like all the world- heard the gospel of nature. But Paul is probably not thinking primarily of nature; more likely he is borrowing these words about natural revelation and giving them a new application. What he means is that Israel has just as truly heard the gospel as has all mankind heard natural revelation.”⁵ – Dr. Robert Picirilli

4. **Verse 19** – **“But I say, did Israel not know?”** – The word **“know”** here is better rendered **“understand.”** So the challenge is basically, **“Well, if Israel heard, maybe they didn’t understand what they heard.”** Paul follows this by quoting **Deuteronomy 32:21** told Israel that God would use other nations to give Israel a desire to return to Him (provoke her to jealousy) by blessing another people. This is what had happened since Jesus Christ had died. God had opened the door of the church to the Gentiles. This should have made Israel more desirous of returning to God and experiencing God's blessing. However this had not happened, as the record of the church's growth in Acts proves. As time went by, fewer and fewer Jews responded to the Gospel whereas even more Gentiles accepted it. This response was not due to ignorance but to deliberate rejection.
5. **Verse 20** – Paul continues to prove his point by quoting **Isaiah 65:1**. This passage also told Israel that God would be **“...found by those who did not seek Him...”** This prediction of the gospel going out to the Gentiles and its fulfillment again makes Israel more accountable. Picirilli adds; **“The implication is that the Gentiles did not know how to seek Him, and that Israel did understand how.”⁶**
6. **Verse 21** – Finally Paul quotes from **Isaiah 65:2** – **“But to Israel he says: ‘All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people.’”**
 - a. Israel is said to be **“disobedient”** and **“contrary”**. The word **“contrary”** means; **“to speak against, gainsay, contradict; to oppose one’s self to one, decline to obey him, declare one’s self against him, refuse to have anything to do with him.”**
 - b. But God states; **“All day long I have stretched out My hands...”** – This shows God’s compassion and patient longsuffering.

⁵ Robert E. Picirilli, *Romans*. (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 212.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.