

## PAUL'S PRAYER FOR ISRAEL

**TEXT: ROMANS 10:1-4**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Romans 9—11 are parenthetical, and deal largely with Israel's rejection of the Gospel (9:1-4; 10:1; 11:1).
2. Today, God deals with the Jew the same way He deals with Gentiles. The Bible says, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35).
3. Today, God's program is the local church. In this dispensation, it is the church which is God's channel of blessing for mankind.
4. Nationally God has set aside Israel, but God is still saving individual Jews (cf. Romans 10:13).
5. And though God has set them aside, God is not finished with the nation Israel (cf. Romans 11:1, 2).
6. There will be a restoration of Israel, and those who teach that the church has replaced Israel ("replacement theology") are wrong (cf. Romans 11:26).
7. The apostle Paul prayed fervently for his fellow Jews, that they might be saved (10:1). A.C. Gaebelien wrote, "What an example he has given to us believers of the Gentiles. We owe a great debt to Israel; but how little prayer there is among Gentile Christians for the salvation of the Jews!"
8. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "Paul loved the Jew, and, although we have not the same kinship of blood, there should be a love in our hearts for God's people Israel, and the desire for their salvation" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).

### **I. THEIR MISPLACED ZEAL**

### **II. THEIR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS**

### **III. THEIR REJECTION OF CHRIST**

## **I. THEIR MISPLACED ZEAL**

1. A zeal for God is good as long as it is properly directed, but it is a terrible thing if it leads away from the Word of God.
2. Paul could understand their misplaced zeal, for he himself was the same way before he met the Lord on the road to Damascus. He said in Acts 22:3, "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day" (cf. Acts 26:9-11).
3. Their zeal was "not according to knowledge" (10:2). Sincerity is not enough. Many religious fanatics are sincere, but their religious views are contrary to the Word of God.
4. For example, many Muslims are very zealous but their religion is opposed to the Bible.
5. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "A locomotive engine has enormous power of usefulness as long as it is running on the track, but once it is off the rails it becomes a power for destruction" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).
6. Albert Barnes said, "Sincerity does not of itself constitute true piety," and then he refers to our Lord's statement in John 16:2, "The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."
7. Zeal without knowledge is very dangerous. It caused Saul of Tarsus to persecute Christians. It gave the world the Inquisition. It is behind all of the Islamic terrorism.
8. Religious zeal, combined with ignorance of the Bible, is a dangerous combination.
9. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

## **II. THEIR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:3)**

1. The Jews were "ignorant of God's righteousness"(10:3). They preferred seeking to establish their own righteousness, and were not willing to submit to God's righteousness (cf. Phil. 3:9).
2. It wasn't that the Jews were indifferent to righteousness. The problem was they sought it by their own efforts, rather than by faith. This is the problem with most religious people, whether they be Jew or Gentile.

3. Israel's deplorable condition was marked by ignorance, works-righteousness, and failure.

- Ignorance – “not according to knowledge...ignorant of God's righteousness” (10:2, 3).
- Works-righteousness – “going about to establish their own righteousness” (10:3), by good works.
- Failure – they are lost, and need to be saved (10:1). Whenever a man opposes the Word of God, failure will be the result.

### **III. THEIR REJECTION OF CHRIST**

1. They attempted to establish their own religion, and this religion is based upon a rejection of Jesus the Messiah,
2. Their religion is based upon their own man-made doctrines and traditions.
3. They insisted they were upholding the law of Moses, but “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (10:4; cf. 8:3, 4).
4. “End of the law” means, Christ is the object to which the law points, the goal, the completion, the termination.
5. Christ is the fulfilment of the law. He said in Matthew 5:17, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”
6. All of the Old Testament sacrifices and types pointed to Christ. That is why when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).
7. “End of the law” means, the termination of the law. Paul is contrasting two materially exclusive systems. The Jews built up a system based on doing, Christianity is based on believing. “For ye are not under the law, but under grace” (6:14b).
8. The Jews repeatedly insisted they were upholding the faith of Abraham and Moses, etc. but our Lord repeatedly refuted their claims.
9. The New Testament teaches that we are saved by God's grace through faith in Christ.
10. Paul said to the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, that by Christ, “all that believe are justified from all things,

from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).

11. Paul had been a devout Pharisee. He referred to himself as "an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee" (Philippians 3:5).
12. When Paul was saved he rejected Judaism, referring to it as "the Jews' religion" (Galatians 1:13, 14). Not God's religion. Just "the Jews' religion" – a man-made system based on the rejection of Jesus.
13. "Christ is the end of the law" (10:4) in the sense that our obedience to the law is no longer the basis for our relationship with God.
14. But the law has not come to an end in the sense of no longer reflecting God's standard, or no longer showing us our need for a Savior.
15. That is why Paul says, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully" (I Timothy 1:8).

## **CONCLUSION:**

Applying Romans 10:1 to our burden for lost souls, whether they are Jewish or Gentile, Albert Barnes said, "Ministers have no pleasure in proclaiming the truth that men must be lost. Even when they declare the truths of the Bible that some will be lost; when they are constrained, by the unbelief and wickedness of men, to proclaim it of them, they still can sincerely say that they seek their salvation."