

## **Israel's Rejection of the Gospel Romans 10:18-21**

July 28, 2021

### **Review and Context**

*Theme of Romans:* The gospel of God (1:16-17)

Chs 9-11 The gospel and Israel

- In 9:1-5, the apostle in a very personal way introduced the problem (from the human standpoint) of Israel's unbelief (rejection of the Messiah)
- *Thesis:* 9:6a "But it is not as though the word of God has failed."
  - The OT's numerous promises to the nation of Israel, of spiritual salvation through the Messiah
  - Examples include Deut 30:6; Eze 36:24-28; Jer 31:31-36; Zech 12:10-13:1
- The apostle proves that the word of God has not failed, using five arguments.
  - The first argument centers on God's sovereign election of some individuals and not others (9:6b-29)
  - The second argument centers on Israel's reliance on works rather than faith (9:30-10:21).
    - Israel is responsible for their failure to believe in Christ

### **The problem is not that Israel has not heard (18)**

Hearing the word of Christ is necessary for salvation (**vv 13-14, 17**)

The apostle affirms that Israel has heard the word of Christ

Paul quotes Psalm 19:4a, drawing an analogy between the extensiveness of God's general revelation and the extensiveness of the proclamation of the gospel

- Paul's analogy contains hyperbole emphasizing the great extensiveness of gospel proclamation in the parts of the world inhabited by Jews at the time Paul wrote (56/57 AD)

The point is that it cannot be lack of hearing that explains why so few Jews have received the salvation God gives in Christ.

### **The problem is not that Israel has not understood (19)**

**19** “But I ask, did Israel not understand? ...”

1. As in verse 18, the implied answer is that Israel did.
2. They understood the word of Christ sufficiently to be angered that it was being proclaimed to, and believed by Gentiles

**19** “...First Moses says,

‘I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation;  
with a foolish nation I will make you angry.’”

1. Quotation of Deuteronomy 32:21b (context is **vv 15-22**)
2. “a foolish nation”
  - **NASB** “a nation without understanding”
3. What God is doing that provokes Israel is indicated in **9:23-26**
4. Israel’s anger over the gospel going to Gentiles is seen in the following passages:
  - **Acts 13:44-50**
  - **22:17-22**

*James Montgomery Boice*: “If Paul’s countrymen did not understand the gospel of salvation by grace through the work of Christ—if it was utter foolishness to them—why would they have had such an emotional reaction when it was proclaimed among the Gentiles? It would have been just another example of Gentile foolishness in religious matters. ‘Who cares what the Gentiles believe?’ they would say. ‘Let them believe anything they like, as long as we have our Judaism, which as we know, is superior in every way.’ But that was not the reaction Paul was seeing. Instead of detached indifference and smug superiority, there was jealousy and anger on the Jews’ part. This indicated that they understood very well what was happening. They knew that the message being received by the Gentiles was a message of salvation by the grace of God apart from keeping the law and that it was being taught not as a contradiction of Judaism, but as a fulfillment of it. That is what made it so offensive.”<sup>1</sup>

### **The problem is that Israel is disobedient (20-21)**

**vv 20-21**

Quotes Isaiah 65:1-2 (context is **64:8-65:3**)

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<sup>1</sup> Boice, *Romans*, 3:1274.

verse 20

1. Paul applies Isaiah 65:1 to Gentile salvation by Christ
2. Connects with **9:30-32a**

verse 21

1. The Lord continuously offered Israel salvation
2. **Matt. 23:37** “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!
3. “contrary”
  - NASB “obstinate”
4. They were disobedient to the gospel (10:16)

### **Conclusion**

This passage solidifies Paul’s point in 9:30-10:21 that it isn’t the Word of God that has failed, but Israel who has failed.

They have no excuse for not believing the word of Christ. They have heard it, understood it, and stubbornly rejected it in disobedience.

Christ depicted this in some of His parables

- **Luke 14:15-24**

The good news is that this isn’t the whole story, as we will see in Romans 11!

Paul does not highlight Israel’s failure in order to turn us away from evangelizing Jews (**10:1**)

Paul’s big point is that God’s Word prevails!

We should be moved by our text to...

1. thank God for His mercy toward us Gentiles!
2. to pray for the salvation of unbelieving Israel!