

Unsavable People pt.2
The Plan of God for Israel and the Nations Pt. 3
Romans 9:30-33

Romans 9:30–10:4 (NKJV)

³⁰ What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; ³¹ but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. ³² Why? Because *they did not seek it* by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. ³³ As it is written:

*“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense,
And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”*

10 Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Introduction

Something strange is happening in our land. There seems to be a coldness and a callousness that has become pervasive in our culture and our churches.

I am hearing of less and less conversions. Very few men and women coming to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

I've noticed this specifically in the last 25 years. What is amazing is that it parallels the introduction of the Seeker, church growth movement. About the same time that the churches moved away centrality of preaching and prayer, that focused more on entertaining the sinner, we have see a decline in church attendance of most churches and increase in mega, entertainment self centered worship.

So as the the priority of preaching has gone down and the value of me centered worship has gone up, the salvation of souls has plummeted. There are other factors that I believe have contributed to this.

1. Bible Belt saturation.

Here, I am referring to the fact that our culture has had years of churches on every corner, particularly in the South, and a very basic

understanding of God, Ten commandments, Jesus and being born again. It's like anything, the more you have of it the less precious it is. Familiarity has bred contempt. The expression of this is, "Oh yea, I've heard about that", or "Oh yes, I'm saved, I was raised in church". It is bumpersticker evangelicalism

2. Redefining of Sin

This is a huge problem. This is a polar shift in our culture and has contributed to many seeing no need for salvation. This comes from the increasingly repetitive indoctrination of the redefining of sin as a disease or a disorder. Something you cannot help. Something you were born with like a medical deformity or anomaly. It is no longer wrong, it is weakness. It's no longer sin, it is sickness. It's not depravity, it's just my decision. We have psychology and psychiatry to thank for this.

But more tragically, we have undiscerning Christians teachers and preachers that have brought this trojan horse into the church under the title of "Christian Psychology".

Men like Larry Crabb, James Dobson and Focus on the Family. In the earlier years, the Minirth-Meire clinics, and there are "Christians Counseling" groups that train counselors with a merging of Christianese

doctrine with psychobabble. Only eternity will show the huge effect this has had on the confusion and the redefining of sin in our culture.

3. Generation being raised without the law of God.

The Law of God has been banished from our Government controlled schools and as a result we have a generation being raised subjective morality. It's whatever you think is right. There are not absolutes. God is out of the picture altogether. Add to this that there is a large population, over 90% of Christian parents send their children to these schools to be indoctrinated with this Godless philosophy. They are told God matters and his Law matters for one hour maybe on Sunday morning, if the church they attend even teaches it, but then for the rest of the week, either directly or indirectly, they are told, it does not matter and has no affect on your life.

4. A sense of moral goodness.

The first 3 have contributed to a mass feeling of moral goodness and no need for salvation.

1. Bible Belt saturation.

2. Redefining of Sin

3. Generation being raised without the law of God.

This is a serious problem, and has been and will continue to be a major stumbling block for self-righteous people. The more you think of yourself as a good person, the less you will see your need for forgiveness or salvation. The less you think of the law of God and his standards and the less you think of sin, the less you see a need for salvation.

Also, there are more and more people who say they have done some bad,.....but not that bad. We use the word struggle a lot these days. We don't sin we struggle. While you and I may understand what is meant by that, we are, by the words we use, being desensitized to our sin and our evil. The church and the culture have been lulled into a deep sleep, and when someone stands on a street corner and preaches repent of your sin, for judgment is coming, we roll over and yawn. Or we hear a preacher make a very clear gospel call to a sinner, we look at our watch and wonder what we are having for lunch, and can't wait for the ball game to start.

5. A lack of gospel clarity.

This is the reason that the “Shocking Youth Message” that Paul Washer preached in 2002 to a group of 5000 youth was so shocking.

<https://illbehonest.com/the-background-of-the-shocking-youth-message-paul-washer>

For years the Gospel had been watered down to be a easy-believism altar call. Repentance had been redefined as a change on mind about Christ rather than a change of direction regarding sin.

Salvation had been reduced down to an emotional event after a sermon at a church service or evangelism conference or youth rally. 1000s had been converted to a Christless, sinless, non saving Christianity.

A few years before Paul’s sermon, John MacArthur wrote “The Gospel According to Jesus” which was as a clarion call back to the Biblical gospel. It was an attempt to clarify what the Gospel is and that it includes a clear call to repentance from sin, a commitment of life to Jesus as LORD which leads to a changed life and a refutation of easy-believism.

It was a refutation of the gospel that has led so many in our culture and the church church to believe they are saved when they are not.

This has altogether created an unsavable generation. A self righteous generation that sees not need for Jesus or salvation, because they are basically good. (as defined by themselves and society.) Or have walked the aisle at a church service or youth service and prayed to receive Christ.

So as a result of,

1. Bible Belt saturation.
2. Redefining of Sin
3. Generation being raised without the law of God.
4. A sense of moral goodness.
5. A lack of gospel clarity.

We are in a drought of untold proportions for souls being saved in North America. Apart from a God sent revival, and the power of a move of the Holy Spirit, we are decades away from digging ourselves out of this hole evangelicalism has buried itself in.

Preachers and evangelist will have to return to the Biblical Gospel and the prevailing Arminian, seeker entertainment, me focused church services will have to die.

In our text, we find a clear and very tragic example of a Nation of people who had fallen into the trap of self-righteousness. And unsavable situation. A stumbling block of epic proportions. The Jews had embraced a salvation based on works of righteousness. Highly deceptive and damning to the soul but very seductive to the pride of man.

This was so engrained into the mind of the Jew, that when Jesus came, some would embrace Jesus without repenting of there self-righteous law keeping.

They where OK with you having Jesus, just so long as you did not give up keeping the Law to be saved.

This is the Galatian heresy that Paul confronts.

Galatians 1:6–9 (NKJV)

⁶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As

we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Galatians 5:1–5 (NKJV)

5 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. ² Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. ³ And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. ⁴ You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. ⁵ For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

This was so hard for the Jews to let go of. They had been taught their whole life that it was righteousness through the Law that saves. And when Jesus came along and told them, No, that is not it, and the New Testament writers supported and expounded those truths, Israel Stumbled. They could not get past it

And this is why Paul brings this self righteousness through the law, up.

In answer to the question “Has God’s word failed?” Romans 9:6, Paul says that God’s covenants and promises to Israel have not failed for a number of reasons

1. All Israel is not Israel — A true Jew is one who is one inwardly

2. God’s Elective purpose never included all Israel.

It was Isaac, not Ishmael

It was Jacob, not Esau.

This was God’s Sovereign right and decision and purpose of how best to glorify himself as indicated by Romans 9:14-24

3. It was also God’s sovereign choice to make Gentiles part of true Israel. Israel is the Root but God has chosen to graft in the Gentiles too.

These first 3 reasons are from the viewpoint of God’s Sovereign purpose
That His purpose with Israel and there apparent unbelief and rejection of their Messiah does not violate

1. God’s Promise

2. God's Person
3. God's Plan

Following right on the heels of God's Plan is Lesson:

4. God's Pronouncements

1. God's Pronouncement regarding the Gentiles
2. God's Pronouncement regarding the Jews

This is looking at from the human perspective more than the Divine perspective. Paul is telling us that the Gentiles are included because they believed the gospel, while the Jews are not included because they did not believe the gospel.

1. God's Pronouncement regarding the Gentiles

Romans 9:30–33 (NKJV)

³⁰ What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;

Romans 10:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ But Isaiah is very bold and says:

*“I was found by those who did not seek Me;
I was made manifest to those who did not ask for
Me.”*

This is a most amazing statement.... the very ones that never pursued God, desired righteousness, got it. They weren't looking for it and had no inclination toward it. Yet these are the ones that got it.

That
Gentiles, who did not pursue
righteousness,

Original Word: διώκω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: dióko

Phonetic Spelling: (dee-o'-ko)

1377 dióko – properly, **aggressively chase, like a hunter pursuing a catch** (prize). 1377 (dióko) is used positively ("**earnestly pursue**") and negatively ("**zealously persecute, hunt down**"). In each case, 1377 (dióko) means pursue with all haste ("**chasing**" **after**), earnestly desiring to overtake (apprehend).

Romans 9:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have **attained** to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὅτι ἔθνη τὰ μὴ διώκοντ_ **κατέλαβεν** δικαιοσύνην, δικαιοσύνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως·

Attained (κατελαβεν [*katelaben*]). **Second aorist active indicative** of καταλαμβάνω [*katalambanō*], old verb, to grasp, to seize, to overtake

Robertson, A. T. (1933). [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#) (Ro 9:30). Broadman Press.

Paul is not saying that the Gentiles somehow attained or found the righteousness on their own.
NO— —

The Bible is explicit

Romans 8:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷ Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Romans 3:11 (NKJV)

*¹¹ There is none who understands;
There is none who seeks after God.*

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

John 6:44 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ **No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.**

The point Paul is making is that they did not have the obstacle of self-righteousness in the way.

Acts 13:38–50 (NKJV)

³⁸ Therefore let it be known to you, brethren,(Jews) that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; ³⁹ and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.....

⁴² So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.⁴⁴ On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. ⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.
⁴⁸ Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Self-Righteous People are not savable. They don't see the need for it and their pride will forbid them to lay it down and admit that they are unworthy sinners.

But the Gentiles did not have this barrier. Their issues and sins were with idols. Lots of false gods and much of their worship for their false gods contained all types of immorality and debauchery.

Participation in drunkenness, sexual immorality and temple prostitutes where a common practice in temple worship of the Greek gods. They needed to be confronted the laws of God and shown their sinfulness and the serious nature of their fallen relationship with the True God and called on to repent and turn from their idols to worship the One True God.

They did not have the barriers of self-righteous law keeping like the Jews.

The Jews relied on their birthright as Jews, and Abraham as their Father. They were the chosen of God and where given the law of God and they obeyed it, they believed and that settled it.

1 God's Pronouncement regarding the Gentiles

2 God's Pronouncement Regarding the Jews

31 but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.

Here we find from a human perspective why God's Israel is in a state of unbelief. This is another reason why God's promise and Word has not failed. God has not failed, they have refused to believe. They are self-righteous and see themselves as not needing salvation. They are unsavable.

31 but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.

law of righteousness — the principle, or standard of righteousness

Ἰσραὴλ δὲ **διώκων** νόμον δικαιοσύνης εἰς νόμον οὐκ ἔφθασεν.

P.A. Part.

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Ἰσραὴλ δὲ διώκων νόμον δικαιοσύνης εἰς νόμον οὐκ **ἔφθασεν.**,
Aorist Act. Ind.

phthanó: to come before (another), anticipate, arrive

Original Word: φθάνω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: phthanó

Phonetic Spelling: (fthan'-o)

③ **to come to or arrive at a particular state, *attain***

Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 1053). University of Chicago Press.

They continually aggressively pursued righteousness in the law but Failed. result of pursuit, complete, utter, final failure.

What a tragic commentary on a wasted effort. God's righteousness cannot be achieved by man's works, because they are always sin-tainted and fall short of

*God's perfect and holy standard. By his own effort,
no person can **arrive at that law.***

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). [Romans](#) (Vol. 2, p. 50). Moody Press.

Romans 3:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight,

Galatians 2:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Galatians 5:4 (NKJV)

⁴ You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Titus 3:5 (NKJV)

⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done,

Ephesians 2: 9 (NKJV)

⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

James 2:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

So that leads us to this question asked by Job.

Job 25:4 (NKJV)

⁴ How then can man be righteous before God?
Or how can he be pure *who is* born of a woman?

Job 15:15–16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ If *God* puts no trust in His saints,
And the heavens are not pure in His sight,
¹⁶ How much less man, *who is* abominable and filthy,
Who drinks iniquity like water!

Job 25:5–6 (NKJV)

⁵ If even the moon does not shine,
And the stars are not pure in His sight,
⁶ How much less man, *who is* a maggot,
And a son of man, *who is* a worm?"

Psalms 130:3 (NKJV)

³ If You, Lord, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?

Psalm 143:2 (NKJV)

² Do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For in Your sight no one living is righteous.

So why did Israel, that tried so hard to be
righteous, miss it. Why did they not arrive at it
with all the effort?....

Paul's answer— —

32 Why? Because they did not seek
it by faith, but as it were, by the
works of the law.

Romans 4:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

Romans 10:3–4 (NKJV)

³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

⁴ For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Romans 4:5 (NKJV)

⁵ But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

Romans 3:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Galatians 2:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified

by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Acts 13:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Romans 3:21–22 (NKJV)

²¹ But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

Titus 3:5–7 (NKJV)

⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Romans 10:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Why did thy seek it by works, and not by faith??

32..... For (gar) they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

some manuscripts have “gar”, some do not.

Who or what is the stumbling stone?

33 As it is written:

*“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense,
And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”*

This is a quotation of Isa 28:16

1 Peter 2:6–8 (NKJV)

⁶ Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

*“Behold, I lay in Zion
A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,
And he who believes on Him will by no means be
put to shame.”*

⁷ Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious;
but to those who are disobedient,

*“The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone,”*

⁸ and

*“A stone of stumbling
And a rock of offense.”*

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to
which they also were appointed.

Who is the “He” in the text, Who is the stone

1 Peter 2:1–4 (NKJV)

² Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy,
and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure
milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you
have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

⁴ Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious,

1 Corinthians 1:22–23 (NKJV)

²² For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a **stumbling block** and to the Greeks foolishness,

σκανδαλον

Why was Christ such an offense and a stumbling stone to the Jews.

1. Who He was
2. What He said
3. What He did

1. Who He was — — God.

John 5:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”

¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

John 8:56–59 (NKJV)

⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.”

⁵⁷ Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

⁵⁹ Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

John 10:30–33 (NKJV)

³⁰ I and My Father are one.”

³¹ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. ³² Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?”

³³ The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

1. Who He was

2. What He said

Matthew 7:28–29 (NKJV)

²⁸ And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

John 7:45–46 (NKJV)

⁴⁵ Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why have you not brought Him?”

⁴⁶ The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!”

Matthew 5:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

John 3:3 (NKJV)

³ Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

John 3:14–18 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

1. Who He was
2. What He said
3. What He did

The Miracles that are irrefutable

The resurrection that is not erasable

Acts 4:1–2 (NKJV)

4 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, ² being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

The Religion that was removable

Luke 18:10–14 (NKJV)

¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ ¹³ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The good news however is.

33 As it is written:

*“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling
stone and rock of offense,
And whoever believes on Him will not be
put to shame.”*

και πας ο πιστευων επ αυτω ου
καταισχυθησεται

exact phrase for John 3:15-16

Matthew 5:1–6 NKJV

5 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

- 3** *“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- 4** *Blessed are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.*
- 5** *Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.*

6 Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,
For they shall be filled.