

Believers Can Call Upon Him to Be Saved

📖 Romans 10:9-13

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Again we are studying Romans 9-11 and these passages are answering the question, "What about Israel?" "Is God's plan for the nation Israel as defined in the covenants off the table because they rejected the Messiahship of Jesus?" The short answer is, "No."

Last time we did a detailed verse-by-verse exposition of Romans 10:9-10. These verses are commonly used in gospel tracts in a very abstruse way. I say abstruse because the gospel is believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved but these say believe and confess. What I've tried to show is that these are separate and that is in agreement with the great Greek grammarian A. T. Robertson who said of these verses, "Faith precedes confession, of course." Paul's big concern in this section is God's plan for the nation Israel and only occasionally does he depart from that to speak of individual Jews and Gentiles in the present age. The initial expression in 10:9, "if you confess," is a third class condition. It is the condition of possibility. It controls the two actions, "*confess* with your mouth Jesus as Lord and *believe* in your heart that God raised Him from the dead." Upon those two conditions being fulfilled the guaranteed result is "you will be saved." The first condition, "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord" refers to the nation Israel making a public proclamation that Jesus is God in the flesh, the doctrine of the incarnation. A. T. Robertson rightly says, "No Jew would do this who had not really trusted Christ, for *Κυριος* [*Kurios*] in the LXX is used of God."¹ And verse 10 gives the true order, "with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." Only after one has believed can they confess. Verse 10 is the principle verse in the passage and it applies to the nation Israel in verse 9 and to individual believers in verses 11-13. In both cases faith precedes confession. When applied to the nation Israel they must confess that Jesus is God. The other condition stated in verse 9 is "believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead." This refers to the nation Israel believing in their mind that God raised Jesus from the dead, the doctrine of resurrection. Again, verse 10 gives the true order, first they will "believe" and later they will "confess."

Believe and confess are not the same thing. The problem is people throw this in a gospel tract and this is very confusing because over 150 verses say believe alone and this one verse says believe and confess. These garbled gospel tracts remind me of the instructions for something you bought at Wal-mart and whoever wrote those

instructions knew what they were saying because they knew the product but they assumed you knew the product like they did but it's confusing. This is how people give the gospel all the time. It's very confusing. They assume way too much and the person doesn't have a clue what you are talking about. Two weeks ago a tract that uses this verse got handed to me. It says... Yet the verses never use the words forgive or eternal life. How am I, Mr. Unbeliever, supposed to understand what this verse is talking about? No way. I can only understand what you tell me and if what you tell me is garbled I don't understand what you are saying.

I would never use these verses in a gospel presentation because they are not a gospel presentation. Believe and confess are referring to two different conditions that must be met for the nation Israel to enjoy ultimate deliverance into the kingdom. Of course the nation must first believe unto righteousness and then they will be in a position to confess and be saved and verse 10 is giving the proper order. After we get through this today we'll see that Paul makes an application to us in verses 11-13. So Romans 10:10 is a hinge verse because it's giving a principle truth which Paul applies to both the nation Israel in end times and individual Jews and Gentiles in the present time.

We've made lots of points relative to the nation Israel up to this time, we showed that heart and mouth are not the same instrument, that believe and confess are not the same action and that the resurrection and the incarnation are not the same doctrine, but we still have to make the point that Paul does not confuse righteousness with salvation in the Book of Romans and for that I gave you some homework, turn to Romans 5:9 and 13:11. It's interesting that commentator John Murray "sees some distinction between righteousness and salvation here." The older commentator "Godet thinks that righteousness is a benefit conferred in this life, with salvation referring to eschatological deliverance." We're not the first people to see this. Romans 5:9 is the first verse I mentioned that shows that "righteousness" and "salvation" are not equated by Paul in the Book of Romans. As we look at this, isn't it interesting that in Romans 3:21-4:25, where Paul taught the doctrine of justification or righteousness by faith alone, that he never once used the word salvation? Not even once. Then in 5:1-11, where Paul turns to the results of justification he says in 5:9, "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." In other words, one of the results of having now been justified, past tense, is that "we shall be saved," future tense. Obviously being justified is not the same as being saved. Saved from what? "Saved from the wrath." What is "the wrath?" The wrath is the future wrath of the Tribulation time that is reserved for those who are not justified in this present age. So Romans 5:9 is one example of how in Paul's mind, being justified or counted righteous is not the same as being saved, but instead is the basis for a future deliverance away from temporal wrath in the future Tribulation time.

Now turn to Rom 13:11, the second verse I mentioned as homework that shows that "righteousness" and "salvation" are not equated by Paul in the Book of Romans. Here we see that the word salvation used in Romans is not always used of what happens when we first believed. "Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed." What does he mean

salvation is nearer to us now than when we believed? I thought we were saved when we believed. Well, obviously Paul is using salvation to refer to something subsequent to being justified when we first believed. Salvation in this sense is a temporal rescue from the world. Each day that passes us, that salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed.

Having looked at Rom 5:9 and 13:11 you see that Paul uses "righteousness" or "justification" to refer to the legal declaration that God makes of us when we first believe and he uses "salvation" to refer to a future rescue away from the temporal wrath of God that is coming upon the world in the Tribulation. So "righteousness" and "salvation" do not equate in Romans. The problem is people don't read the Bible on its own terms; they read or listen to some preacher and their theology, which is not always wrong, but if it hinders you from being able to read the Bible with understanding it is wrong. That is why when I teach I am probably less categorical than some people would like. But if I square everything away in nice, neat categories I run the risk of leading you away from being able to read the Bible for yourself and understand what you are reading. What I do is try to use the biblical words and show you the usage in a given context. As you see how it is used in various contexts you see that as you come across that word in Scripture you have several options for what it means and by reading in context you can determine what meaning it has in that context. "Salvation" is a very broad word in the Bible. Just as an example, while I've shown you here in Romans 5:9 and 13:11 that it can refer to a temporal deliverance, think of the fact that when Jesus does a healing miracle it often says that the person was "saved." The translators translate it "healed" but the Greek word is "saved." This is because they were saved from their blindness or sickness or whatever. And when you reflect on the fact that the healing miracles are saving in the physical realm you start to understand one of the purposes of miracles is to show that only Jesus can save in the spiritual realm. They're physical but they point to the spiritual, which is why Jesus on one occasion didn't say pick up your mat and walk but your sins are forgiven. He was trying to teach through saving people from physical maladies that He can save them from spiritual maladies. Go think about that and you'll actually learn a lot about salvation and how broad it is. Righteousness is a broad word too; not as broad as salvation but it is broad, it can be used legally or behaviorally, there are all kinds of usages. And how we know the particular use is to look at the context.

The bottom line is that in the context of Romans 10:10 it is very clear that "righteousness" and "salvation" are not the same. When a person believes with the heart it results in "righteousness," that is being counted righteous, and subsequently, when a believer confesses with the mouth it results in "salvation," that is being rescued from some temporal difficulty.

I look at 10:10 as a hinge verse that is stating the principle in the proper order. In verse 9 Paul is applying the principle to the nation Israel who in the future must believe that God raised Jesus from the dead in order to be counted righteous and fit for the kingdom and then must confess Jesus as Lord in order to be saved from their Gentile enemies and taken into the kingdom. In verses 11-13 Paul is applying the principle to individual Jews and Gentiles who in verse 11 must believe and then in verses 12-13 can call upon Him to receive the riches of

divine grace in times of difficulty. But whether the nation Israel is in view or individual Jews and Gentiles the principle is the same; belief resulting in righteousness must occur first and only then can confession occur resulting in salvation. Verse 14 makes this perfectly clear, "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" One must first believe in Him before they can have the legal rights to call upon Him for deliverance in some difficulty. Call is the semantic equivalent of confess in this context.

Here's J.B. Hixson. Hixson was a DTS grad several years ago and he did his dissertation on the gospel and he based a book on his dissertation called *Getting the Gospel Wrong: The Evangelical Crisis No One is Talking About*. In his extensive footnote on pp 155-156 which I will now quote because it is so excellent he says, "The suggestion that one must confess Christ publicly in order to gain eternal life is usually based upon a misunderstanding of two particular passages of Scripture. Most often, appeal is made to Romans 10:9-10....Paul does *not* use *mouth* and *heart* to indicate two distinct actions necessary for eternal salvation. The terms *righteousness* and *salvation* refer to two separate realities. In Romans, Paul's favorite way to describe man's eternal salvation is with the words *justification* (*dikaioisin*) or *righteousness* (*dikaioisune*). In this passage and throughout Romans, Paul explains that *righteousness* (i.e., individual eternal salvation) comes by faith: "It is with the heart man believes unto righteousness" (Rom. 10:10; cf 5:1). The salvation Paul speaks of in this passage refers to temporal deliverance, specifically national deliverance for Israel into the future Messianic kingdom. This is in keeping with the meaning of the term *sozo*...and seems clear when one examines the broader context of Romans 9-11, in which Paul is answering the question, "What about Israel?" Paul's quotation of Joel 2:32 in Romans 10:13 helps frame the discussion. Ultimately, Paul says all Israel will *call upon* (i.e. confess) the name of the Lord and be *delivered* (i.e., saved) into the Kingdom (cf. Rom. 11:26). But before Jews can experience national deliverance, they must first experience individual justification by faith. "How can they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" (Rom. 10:14). Thus, *righteousness* (i.e., individual eternal salvation) comes by faith; *salvation* (i.e., national deliverance) comes by corporate confession.... "Confess with your mouth" is the semantic equivalent of "call upon the Lord" in this context and refers to Israel's ultimate confession, "Hosanna, Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," which Israelites will proclaim in unison at the second advent of Christ (Matt. 23:39; Joel 2:32; Ps. 118:22-26). Given everything Paul had taught to this point in Romans, it would be unlikely for his original readers to have missed the point that justification is *solely by faith*. Paul's quotation of Isaiah 28:16 in verse eleven reiterates this point. In summary, Romans 10:9-10 does not teach that public *confession* is a required companion of faith in order to receive individual justification. Rather, it is required for temporal deliverance, which in this context is viewed primarily from the national perspective of Israel."² I could not agree more and his statement is so well-stated that I shared it with you. The Nelson Study Bible also nails it for those who are interested.³

So is it strange what we see in Romans 10:10? Not at all, it is the normal way Paul speaks. One believes and it results in imputed righteousness; one confesses and it results in temporal salvation. No problem, Paul has spoken this way throughout Romans. But what do commentators typically say when they come to Romans 10:9-

10? First, "true" belief will always result in confession. This is the view of John MacArthur and others who hold to Lordship Salvation. He says in his book *The Gospel According to Jesus* that Romans 10:9 is one of "The two clearest statements on the way of salvation in all of Scripture..."⁴ One may wonder how this can be when the verse says we must confess and believe whereas the rest of the NT claims over 150 times that we must believe alone. The way he resolves this tension is by inventing the idea of true faith vs false faith and including confession as a necessary characteristic of true faith. He says, "If the heart truly believes, the mouth will be eager to confess." In other words, true saving faith is always accompanied by an eagerness to confess. He says it this way, "The confession is human work; it is prompted by God, subsequent to the act of believing but inseparable from it. Again, it is a characteristic of true faith, not an additional condition of salvation."⁵ What MacArthur has done is invented the idea that there are different kinds of faith. The only kind of faith that saves is the one that has the characteristics of faith such as confession, obedience, perseverance, et. al. as outlined in his writings and teachings. The invention of the idea that there are different kinds of faith has confused millions of Christians and left them questioning their salvation. His solution is to encourage them to look inward at their own works and motives in order to find assurance rather than look outward to Christ and His work on the cross. It is very harmful to turn people's eyes away from Christ and to themselves. The passages used by MacArthur and others to prove that there are different kinds of faith simply prove nothing of the sort. We can't detail them all but, for example, his book *True Faith* is an analysis of James 2:19-26. In this passage he quotes verse 19 where it says, "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder." From this he concludes that since demons have the wrong kind of faith then people can have the wrong kind of faith too. The insurmountable problem with his interpretation is that James is not the one speaking these words but an opponent of James. This is clear from verse 18 where James used the common phrase used in the ancient world to introduce a hypothetical opponent in a debate, "But someone will say..." and concludes the opponent's words in verse 20 with the words, "...you foolish fellow." In other words John MacArthur builds his concept of false faith on words that come out of the mouth of a foolish fellow who opposed James.⁶ It would be akin to taking words out of the mouth of Satan and building your doctrinal system on them. His doctrine of true and false faith is invented not discovered. The Bible does not teach anywhere that there are different kinds of faith. It teaches that faith is confidence in someone or something and that there may be different objects of faith and that for eternal life we need to put our faith in the right object, Jesus Christ alone, because only He saves. John MacArthur preaches another gospel, which really is not another because there is no other.⁷ In conclusion, the first view, that "true" belief will always result in confession," is erroneous. The text says that belief will result in righteousness and confession will result in salvation. There's no confusion in Paul, only in Lordship Salvation.

The second view is that "belief and confession are simultaneous, one inward and the other outward." For example, Charles Ryrie in his study Bible says, "These are simultaneous actions: one inward (*heart*) and the other outward (*mouth*)." In other words Ryrie believes that "confess" is a synonym for "believe." In confirmation of this he says in his otherwise good book, *So Great Salvation*, "Does the New Testament use other words

interchangeably with believe? Yes, it does. Receive is one (John 1:12); call is another (Romans 10:13); confess is one (Romans 10:9; Heb 4:14); take is another (Revelation 22:17).⁸ While some of these are truly used as synonyms for faith, such as receive in John 1:12, neither call nor confess are used as synonyms. The Pillar New Testament Commentary makes the same claim saying, “we should not think of faith as leading to righteousness and confession as a different act that leads to salvation... These are but two parts of the same saving experience.”⁹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary holds the same position saying, “these are not two separate steps to salvation. They are chronologically together.”¹⁰ This is entirely unfortunate for many reasons. First, as we have seen, righteousness and salvation are not the same in Paul’s Book of Romans. Righteousness is the legal declaration that results from faith and salvation is temporal deliverance that results from confession or calling on the Lord. Second, Rom 10:10 makes perfectly clear that this verse is an explanation of verse 9 and that a heart believes unto righteousness and a mouth confesses unto salvation which are events involving two different instruments; heart and mouth; two different actions; believe and confess and two different results; righteousness and salvation. They cannot be equated in meaning or time. Third, verse 14 shows explicitly that one cannot call upon Him in whom they have not believed. One must first believe and then call upon Him. A. T. Robertson agrees in verse 10 saying, “The order is reversed in this verse and the true order (faith, then confession).”¹¹ He is absolutely correct that this is the order in the original Greek text. They are not simultaneous actions. While I think Ryrie’s view is fatally flawed he does hold to a future deliverance for Israel after they have believed and so the interpretation I am holding to would be acceptable to his eschatology.

The third view is that “belief results in righteousness of justification and confession results in temporal deliverance from trouble.” This is the view best stated by J. B. Hixson whom I quoted at length earlier. It is stated by the Nelson Study Bible this way, “The condition for **righteousness**, that is for being justified, is internal faith. The condition of **salvation**, meaning deliverance from wrath and from the power of sin, is external confession (see v. 1; 5:9, 10), which is calling on the Lord for help (see vv. 12, 13).”¹² Zane Hodges holds a form of this view when he says, “Many readers of Romans 10 have thought that the text talks about how a person could be saved from hell. But this completely ignores the fact that in the New Testament “calling on the name of the Lord is a *Christian* activity. It also ignores the precise statements of the Pauline text”¹³ in Rom. 10:14. These are excellent statements. I think it is best said this way, “Calling upon Him is a distinct privilege of one who believes in Him.” Whether it’s the nation Israel that calls upon Him to be saved from their enemies at the end of the Tribulation or the individual believer that calls upon Him to be saved from trials difficulties the act itself is a distinct privilege belong to those who believe.

We now turn to Paul’s application in 10:11-13 to the individual believer and his privilege to call upon Him. Verse 11 makes clear that Paul has in view an individual person who believes in Him. **For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”** This is a quote from the OT. Where does it come from? Isa 28:16. In the context of Isa 28:16 Isaiah is speaking of Israel in exile and how in the midst of exile the one who believed in Him would not be disappointed because at the appointed time the Lord would do His task, His

unusual task; His work, His extraordinary work...of decisive destruction on all the earth in establishing His kingdom. And the one who believed in Him would ultimately take part in this kingdom. Paul quoted this same verse earlier in 9:33 making application to those Jews who believe and become a part of the present remnant. He now makes application to all who believe, whether Jew or Greek at the present time. Anyone who believes will not be disappointed because ultimately they have a right standing with God and will be part of the kingdom.

In verse 12 Paul explains the expanse of his application to Jew and Greek because the Lord is sovereign over all. **For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;** When it comes to those who have believed, **there is no distinction** or privilege of **Jew over Greek**. As far as being counted righteous we are all on equal footing and have at our disposal the same **Lord**. As Paul says, **for the same LORD is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him. All who call on Him** are all believers as the previous verse made clear. By saying that **the same Lord is Lord of all** Paul means that the same God of the Jews is the God of all believers, whether Jew or Greek. The expression **abounding in riches** is an interesting and valid translation of the concept in the original Greek. Literally it says that the Lord is wealthy and this wealth is directed toward all believers who call upon Him. He has an infinite wealth of resources that He is ready and willing to release toward you if you **call on Him**. This is believers calling on Him in time of need.

Verse 13, **for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."** This is a quote from Joel 2:32. In that context it is the remnant of Israel calling on the name of the Lord to be delivered from their enemies at the end of the Tribulation and being saved. However, Paul makes application to all who believe whether Jew or Greek in the present time and relates it to the present difficulties and trials that we all face. The glorious truth is that because we have believed we can call on the name of the Lord at any time in order to be delivered from our difficulties. This calling is a distinct privilege of believers only. If you are a believer and facing difficulty, trial or defeat, you can call upon Him in whom you have believed and enjoy His so great salvation anew. Here we meet the saving of the saved! As Zane Hodges says, "Those who had been justified by faith were uniquely positioned to experience God's "deliverance" in their lives...Of course, Paul knew only too well that this did not mean the removal of all problems. What it really meant was victory in and over those problems, as one lived the Christian life by faith in God's son." As those counted righteous before God we still need to be saved from the death dealing effects of sin in our lives, from those who persecute us, from those tragedies and weaknesses that beset us all. Who is there to save us from these things? Only one. Jesus Christ is His name. We call upon Him as Lord, that is, as YHWH Himself, incarnate. He is our Savior, our Advocate, our Redeemer, our Reconciliation, our Propitiation, our Everything. All Paul is teaching is that if He did the greater thing of rescuing us from the penalty of sin, will He not do the lesser thing of rescuing us from the power of sin in life's trials and troubles? It's a great truth that whenever we need to call upon Him for deliverance He is there and will deliver us.

If you are not a believer in Him today but you would like to be able to call upon Him to be saved from life's troubles, all you have to do is believe in Him. You will not be disappointed. You don't have to confess your sin or commit your life to Jesus or promise to do better, all you have to do is believe, put your faith in Jesus Christ as the one who has done everything once for all and is risen from the dead and gives you eternal life as a possession. Righteousness before God is yours today as a free gift and then you can call upon Jesus Christ to deliver you from life's troubles.

¹ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Ro 10:9.

² J. B. Hixson, *Getting the Gospel Wrong*, fn 46, pp 155-56.

³ "**For** indicates that this verse explains v. 9. The condition for **righteousness**, that is for being justified, is internal faith. The condition of **salvation**, meaning deliverance from wrath and from the power of sin, is external confession (see v. 1; 5:9, 10), which is calling on the Lord for help (see vv. 12, 13)."³

⁴ John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, p 28.

⁵ John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, p 199.

⁶ See his note in *The MacArthur Study Bible*, p 1930.

⁷ A slight modification of this view is held by Tom Constable who denies Lordship Salvation. On 10:9 he says, "Paul was speaking of belief in His resurrection as an evidence of saving faith, not as a condition for salvation." He then makes the very odd claim that while the resurrection is part of the gospel message one does not have to believe it in order to be eternally saved. This is a result of not being clear on the context of what is being taught here.

⁸ Charles Ryrie, *So Great Salvation*, p 122.

⁹ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 386.

¹⁰ John A. Witmer, "Romans," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 481.

¹¹ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Ro 10:10.

¹² Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997), Ro 10:10.

¹³ Zane Hodges, *Absolutely Free!*, p 195.