

The Steps to Salvation

📖 Romans 10:14-17

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📅 September 27, 2015

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Last time we looked at Romans 10:9-13. Romans 10:9 is saying that there are two conditions that the nation Israel must meet in order to be saved temporally from their enemies in the future Tribulation when all the nations of the world have turned against Israel. Those two conditions are confess with their mouth the deity of Jesus and believe with their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead. 10:10 gives the proper order and explanation of 10:9 by way of a basic principle; first, with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness and second, with the mouth a person confesses, resulting in salvation. Belief with one's heart is always the condition for being justified before God. Confession with the mouth is the equivalent of calling on the Lord for help and is always the condition for a person who is already justified before God being rescued from some temporal difficulty. These principles are true for both the nation Israel in the future as well as for individual Jews and Greeks in the present. As far as the present is concerned, Paul says in 10:11, "the Scripture says, 'whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.'" This quote from Isaiah 28:16 concerns Jews in exile who could know that even though they may be disappointed in exile ultimately whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed because they are justified before God and will partake of the kingdom. Paul is applying it here to anyone who believes in the present age and saying they will not be disappointed no matter how difficult life may be in the present because they are justified before God and will also partake of the kingdom. 10:12 explains, "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all." That is to say that as far as the believer's status before God is concerned whether one is Jew or Greek is irrelevant. We are all justified before God and all on equal footing. Paul explains, "for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him." In other words, whenever we need to call upon Jesus as our God to save us from some temporal difficulty we can do so and expect to be saved. In 10:13 Paul explains, "for 'whoever will call on the name of the LORD will be saved.'" This quote from Joel 2:32 originally refers to Israel in the future Tribulation but Paul is making application to believers in the present age, whether Jew or Gentile and saying that they can call upon the name of the Lord Jesus in time of difficulty and be rescued. What is clear then is that one must first believe in Him to be justified and then having been justified can call upon Him to be saved from temporal difficulty. Being justified and being saved are not the same in this context.

This brings us to 10:14-17 which confirms this same truth. There are several observations we should make up front. First, 10:14-15 is what is known as an *ordo salutis*. An *ordo salutis* is the theologian's way of referring to the order of salvation or steps that are necessary to go from being lost to being saved. Clearly there are pre-salvation works that must take place in order to be saved. And, of course, what needs to be kept in mind is that "being saved" in this context refers to being saved from some temporal difficulty such as trials and tribulations, enemies and persecution, etc....It does not refer to going to heaven. The words "saved" and "salvation" can refer to going to heaven but the meanings are broader than that and simply mean "to be rescued, to be delivered from some danger" and the context always determines. In this context the steps Paul is referring to being saved from temporal difficulties. So the first point is that this is an *ordo salutis* and thus outlines the steps necessary to go from being lost to be saved. Second, the steps Paul lists are not exhaustive. Paul lists the necessity of someone being sent, someone preaching, people hearing, people believing and then those people calling on the Lord. This is a great list but it is not an exhaustive list. One may think of other things that could be added to the list such as praying. Jesus said in Matt 9:37-38, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." Another thing we might add to the list is the convicting ministry of the Spirit. Jesus said in John 16:8-11, "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." So the list is not exhaustive. There are other things we might envision from Scripture that go in to a person going from lost to being saved. Third, the steps Paul lists are logical. Logically it makes sense that for someone to go from lost to being saved that first, someone has to be sent, second, someone has to preach, third, someone has to hear, fourth someone has to believe and fifth, someone has to call on the Lord in order to be saved. That is a logical sequence that Paul is giving. Fourth, the list is emphasizing the human responsibility involved. Most of the steps relate to things that humans do. The only possible exception is the first one, sending. "How will they preach unless they are sent?" The quotation from Isaiah in verse 16 who said, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?" indicates that the Lord is the one who sent since He commissioned Isaiah. The mention in Matt 9:37-38 by Jesus of the necessity that we "beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest" indicates that He is the one who does the sending. However, the other four things in the list are all human activities; the one sent preaches, the audience hears, some of the people believe and those who believe can call on the Lord to be saved. That is to say that God involves humans in the process and as such we get to share in the joy of seeing people saved. So apart from being sent all the activities are human responsibilities and thus we see where that human responsibility is a part of God's plan to bring people to salvation. Fifth, Paul is trying to get us to think so that we will be influenced to enter into this process. This is shown two ways; first, we are forced to think by the reverse order of the steps listed. "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent?" This is the reverse order but what the reverse order does is prompt us to think through what is necessary to get to the

end goal of being saved. Some call this planning in reverse. In other words, if there is a goal then logically there are certain steps to reaching that goal and planning in reverse is one of the best methods, if not the best method, because it forces us to think about the goal and how we can achieve that goal in the most logical way. Second, we are forced to think by Paul's use of the deliberative subjunctives. Each of the five verbs; call, believe, hear, preach and send are what A. T. Robertson referred to as "deliberative subjunctives," the purpose of which is to get us to deliberate, to think. And through all of this Paul is trying to influence us to see the human responsibility God employs in order to save. Sixth, primarily Paul has in mind the end times salvation or deliverance of the nation Israel. This is Paul's primary concern in Romans 9-11. In 10:1 his "heart's desire" and "prayer to God for them is for their salvation." By "them" Paul is referring to the nation Israel. Ultimately Paul wanted them to be saved from their troubles under Gentile kingdoms and go into God's kingdom, but for the nation Israel to ever call upon Jesus as Lord and be saved there is a logical sequence of things that must take place. So the main concern is the end times salvation or deliverance of the nation Israel. Seventh, by application we can apply this logical sequence to salvation of individual Jews and Greeks in the present time. This same sequence of steps is very helpful for us to think through since we can all see that it is important that people be sent out, that those who are sent out preach and that those who are preached to hear and that those who hear believe and those who believe call upon the Lord to be saved from their difficulties. So in conclusion of these initial remarks, we might summarize by saying that God in the end times will send certain people out and those who are sent out have the responsibility to preach and those who are preached to have the responsibility to hear and those who hear have the responsibility to believe and those who believe have the responsibility to call upon the Lord in order to be saved. The same logical steps and truths apply to the present age; God sends a person out and they then have the responsibility to preach and those who are preached to have the responsibility to hear and those who hear have the responsibility to believe and those who believe have the responsibility to call upon the Lord to be saved during times of difficulty.

We start in the reverse order with 10:14, **How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed?** **They** in context is the nation Israel. **How then will the nation Israel call on Him...Him** is not in the original Greek text but the translators added it for clarity. It is properly added because it refers back to "the LORD" in verse 13. Who is "the LORD" in verse 13? "the LORD" is the Greek word *κυριος* but comes from the quotation of Joel 2:32 which in the Hebrew is YHWH. Since *κυριος* is used in verse 9 of Jesus then Jesus is being substituted for YHWH in verse 13. The point is that the nation Israel must call on Jesus as YHWH in order to be saved as verse 13 teaches, quoting from Joel 2:32. The saving is from their enemies in the end times. The deliberative subjunctive **call** implores us to think about how it's possible that **they will call on Him if they have not believed** in Him? Obviously the necessary precondition for calling on Him to be saved from their enemies presupposes that they have believed in Him for justification. The nation is in no position to call on Him to rescue them from their enemies unless they have already believed in Him for righteousness. Despite how clearly calling on Him and believing in Him are distinct in this verse commentators still try to combine the two. For example, the author of

Romans in the Bible Knowledge Commentary is clearly confused when he says, "Previously, to call on the Lord was equated with trusting Him or believing in Him (cf. vv. 11 and 13), but here it follows the believing. When one believes in Christ, he "calls" on Him."¹ To state that before they were equated but here they are sequential and then to conclude that they are equated is clearly confused, especially when the commentary goes on to state that each of the following items in the list is based one upon another. If they were consistent they would conclude that previously calling on the Lord and believing in Him were not equated but distinct just as here. Clearly verse 14 does not equate believing in Christ with calling on Him. Instead it says that they must believe in Him to be in a position where they can call on Him. Believing in Him is the basis for calling on Him. It's not really difficult but when people confuse believing in Romans with calling or being justified with being saved they are not able to accept the plain meaning of the text. When these are kept distinct Paul is very easy to understand. All Paul is asking is, "How can the nation Israel call upon Jesus as YHWH and expect Him to deliver them from their enemies when they haven't yet believed in Him and been counted righteous?"

We make a special point of stating again that in Romans believing or having faith always results in righteousness. Repeatedly in Romans 3:21-4:25 justification is always by faith alone. Justification is being counted righteous or declared righteous in God's court of law in heaven. When one believes the gospel they are justified, counted righteous before God, declared righteous in His court of law in heaven. It does not result in a change in the interior of the person. It only changes the person's legal status before God. I used the illustration of a pile of manure being covered with a fresh blanket of snow. When we believe we are still sinners but we are covered with the perfect righteousness of Christ. That is justification and it is always by believing or faith. The nation Israel must believe in Christ and be justified in order to be in a position to call on Him in order to be rescued or saved from their Gentile enemies in the end times.

The next logical step in reverse in verse 14 asks, **How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard?** The verb translated **will they believe** is another deliberative subjunctive. We are supposed to think about how the nation Israel could **believe in Him** if they have **not heard** about Him. **In Him** is not in the original text but the masculine pronoun is used and so it is right to add **in Him** in the sense discussed before as believing in Jesus as YHWH. The nation Israel does not currently believe that Jesus is YHWH or even that the Messiah Himself will be YHWH incarnate. However, they must come to believe this. How will they ever come to believe that Jesus is YHWH incarnate if **they have not heard?** The Greek word **believe** is from *πιστευω* and means "to be convinced something is true or reliable." People have to be convinced or persuaded that things they currently reject are true or reliable before they can change to believe them. This requires hearing. Later Paul will explain in verse 17 that "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Clearly the OT word of God has been used in evangelizing Jews and will continue to be used in the future. There are many OT passages that show that the Messiah would be YHWH incarnate and that the fulfillment of these passages in the NT is in Jesus. During the present age individual Jews of every generation have been convinced that YHWH did incarnate Himself in Jesus of Nazareth. He is the only person who has ever been viewed by Jews of every generation as being the Messiah.

However, the nation as a whole is partially hardened since they are under divine discipline and so only in the future, when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in at the rapture, will the partial hardening of Israel be lifted so that all Israel will have ears to hear this truth that Jesus is YHWH incarnate and believe in Him so as to be justified and then call on Him to be saved from their Gentile enemies. In any case they must **hear**.

Verse 14 then gives the next logical step in reverse order. **And how will they hear without a preacher?** The verb translated **will they hear** is another deliberative subjunctive. We are supposed to think about how the nation Israel could **hear** about Him or about the gospel concerning Him **without a preacher**. It is not clear whether Paul has in mind hear about Jesus or the gospel. In the previous questions it was clearly about Jesus. In the later questions it is clearly about the gospel. Verses 15 and 16 both mention the "good news." Yet it really makes little difference since Jesus and the gospel cannot be separated. Telling someone to believe in Jesus is equivalent to telling them they must believe the gospel. In another passage it is referred to as the gospel of the Christ, that is, the good news of the Christ. In view here, of course, is the nation Israel and how they can't hear and believe the gospel of the Christ unless there is **a preacher**. The word translated **preacher** is unfortunate since it implies to most English church-goers a pastor. Paul is not talking about a pastor. The Greek word for pastor is an entirely different word; it refers to the function of shepherding. The word used here is *κηρυσσωντος* and simply means "a proclaimer." It refers here to someone who publicly proclaims the gospel of the Christ. It may be any believer who makes this proclamation. Certainly the function of proclaiming the gospel is not the sole responsibility of a pastor. It is a responsibility of all who believe. Anyone and everyone here should be able to proclaim the gospel of the Christ. It is as simple as proclaiming that Christ is the eternal Son of God who died for our sins and rose on the third day. Of course, in context Paul is primarily talking about the proclamation to the nation Israel. He is simply saying, there is no way that the nation Israel will hear the gospel of the Christ without someone making public proclamation of the gospel of the Christ. In the end times the two witnesses will be the ones who primarily fulfill this role in the land of Israel and the 144,000 will be the ones who primarily fulfill this role outside the land of Israel. In the end many will proclaim the gospel to the nation Israel and they will hear and believe unto justification and then will call on Him to be saved from their Gentile enemies. Of course, the same holds for the need for us to proclaim the gospel of the Christ today.

In verse 15 the next logical step in reverse order, **How will they preach unless they are sent?** The verb translated **will they preach** is another deliberative subjunctive. We are supposed to think about how someone could proclaim the gospel of the Christ unless they **are sent** for that very purpose. I mentioned before that all of these are human activities except the sending. Repeatedly the Bible indicates under both Law and Grace that God is the one who sends out certain people. For example, there are prophets such as Isaiah quoted from in verse 15 and mentioned by name in verse 16. Also the twelve disciples were summoned by Jesus in Matt 10:1 and commissioned to be the twelve apostles in 10:2. The name "apostle" means "one sent" and on that occasion the twelve changed from merely being disciples, men in training, to being apostles, men sent out. They were sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Once Israel rejected their Messiah the Church began and the

apostles were told to go unto all nations making disciples. In the list of Eph 4:11 Christ sent apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for ministry and to build up the body of Christ. It is safe to say that apostles and prophets were the foundation of the church and started the equipping of the saints and so those gifted men are no longer being sent, but that evangelists, pastors and teachers are still being sent for the building up of the body of Christ. But how will evangelists, pastors and teachers proclaim the gospel of the Christ if they are not sent? That is Paul's question, even though primarily he is referring to the nation Israel and how ultimately God will send the two witnesses and the 144,000 to that nation, it nevertheless still applies in general to us today. People must be sent and it is my take that the men God is sending are men who for some reason want to know the truth, they have an insatiable thirst to know the truth and spend hours on end studying the truth and desire to share it with others. Tomorrow one of our own is being sent out. I won't name whom because this is being videoed and could put people in jeopardy but most of you already know. It is very encouraging to see that God is giving someone an insatiable thirst for truth at this church and that He is sending him out to proclaim the good news and disciple believers. There are not many men whom I think God is genuinely sending out anymore. Most who are evangelists, pastors and teachers do not have an insatiable thirst for truth. Rather than shepherd the flock among them they prey on them. We live in very difficult times, spiritually speaking.

Now Paul in verse 15 is referring to the nation Israel and so he quotes Isaiah. **Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"** The quote comes from Isaiah. What chapter and verse? Isa 52:7. What's Isa 52? It's hymn of praise to YHWH for His final deliverance of Israel in the end times. In verse 7 of that hymn it says, "How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news." **THE FEET** are a figure of speech known as metonymy. Metonymy is the part for the whole. The feet stand for the whole person, of course, but it is the feet that carry a person from one place to another. And in this case the feet of the person who carries the gospel." **HOW BEAUTIFUL** Paul says, **ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!** The good things relate to the kingdom and is therefore the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom is the announcement that the kingdom is "at hand;" that Israel's prophesied kingdom is on the verge of breaking into history. The gospel of the kingdom was proclaimed in connection with Jesus' first advent and will be proclaimed again in connection with His second advent. This time He will come and rescue Israel and establish the kingdom. **HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE** involved in this proclamation.

Verse 16 refers to the nation's response to this proclamation at Jesus' first advent. **However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?"** The word translated **heed** is sometimes translated "obey" as in the KJV and the ESV. The idea is sometimes that obedience is tied up in the faith response, that faith is obedience. The problem with this is that the Greek word here, *πτακουω* means "to hear with a positive response" which is captured by the NIV translation "accepted." Further, verse 17 explains that what is being referred to is faith. Faith may be described adequately as acceptance of a message or as hearing with a positive response. Not all Israel heard the gospel with a positive response. For Isaiah explains.

Here's another quote from Isaiah. What chapter and verse? Isa 53:1. Both Isa 52 and 53 teach about the Messiah as the suffering servant who suffers for Israel's sins and who is Israel's reigning king. How the Messiah could both suffer and reign was an irreconcilable contradiction according to OT theology. Those who suffer, by definition, do not reign. The NT resolves this by showing that the Messiah would come twice, first to suffer and die for our sins and then to reign in power and great glory. Paul's point is that at the first advent the whole nation did not believe, consequently not all Israel was justified. Paul quotes Isaiah to prove that this was predicted by the OT itself. **Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?"** The report in Isa 3 was that the Messiah would come, He would grow up from a boy, He would not have a stately form or majesty like a king, nor an attractive appearance. He would be despised and forsaken, a man of sorrows, despised and not esteemed by Israel and yet He would be pierced through for Israel's transgressions, crushed for their iniquities by His substitutionary blood atonement. Who of Israel believed that Jesus has fulfilled this prediction of suffering for Israel's sins? Not many. Nevertheless, verse 17 says, and this is a famous verse. **So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. Faith**, again refers to being persuaded or convinced that something is true and reliable. When someone has **faith** in the word of Christ they are justified. Justification is by faith alone in Christ alone apart from any works. This **faith comes from hearing** or by way of **hearing**. One must **hear** in order to believe as Paul said earlier in verse 14. And **hearing** occurs **by** way of **the word of Christ**. The Greek word **word** is *ρημα* which is a unique Greek word used earlier in verse 8 of "the preached word" and so refers to the proclamation. **Of Christ** may be a subjective genitive in which case it would mean preached word from Christ or an objective genitive in which case it would mean about Christ. In this case it is an objective genitive, the preached word about Christ.

This very simple verse sums up in short what Paul already said earlier in verses 14-15 about the *ordo salutis* or order of salvation. For someone to have **faith** they must **hear** and for someone to hear their must be preaching about Christ. We often use this verse as referring to how to be sanctified, how to live by faith, but it is used by Paul of how to be justified, how to first come to faith in Christ. Nevertheless, it is true that the ability to live by faith is a function of hearing the word of God. But what Paul means ultimately is that as a principle faith requires hearing and hearing requires preaching Christ and so there you are.

¹ 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.