

Romans 10 (2017)

- Let's rejoin Paul's defense of God's faithfulness to Israel in Chapters 9-11
 - I've summarized Paul's topic in these three chapters with the question, "What about Israel?"
 - Specifically, how do we explain Israel's rejection of Jesus?
 - God promised Israel a Messiah, and He sent Israel a Messiah
 - Yet only a few Jews in Paul's day recognized Jesus as Messiah and became His followers
 - Paul had just declared in Chapter 8 that our eternal future was secure and our glory assured because God has given us His word
 - But given Israel's circumstances maybe God's promises were not so certain after all, some might wonder
 - So now Paul must defend God's faithfulness by explaining how Israel's unbelief is consistent with God's promises
 - In Chapter 9, Paul began his defense by explaining that throughout Israel's history, the Lord selected some for His mercy while passing over others
 - Paul used various examples from Israel's past to illustrate the Lord at work in choosing
 - God selected one son of the patriarchs to receive His promises while rejecting the over
 - God selected a man, Pharaoh, to be defeated in his confrontation with Moses hardening his heart to ensure that outcome
 - Finally, for Jew and Gentile Paul says God selects some among humanity for glory while preparing others for destruction
 - And Paul says this pattern is consistent with God being perfectly just and holy in all He does
- At the end of teaching last week, Paul had given us the ultimate reason for His selectivity
 - God saves only some to ensure we who received His mercy may fully appreciate what we have

- God maintains a contrast between those destined for glory and those destined to destruction
- For without that contrast, we could never appreciate all God has done on our behalf and glorify Him for it
- So in Chapter 9, Paul explained Israel's rejection of Jesus as an outcome determined by God's choice
 - God was not unfaithful to His promises in rejecting Israel
 - God simply selected a minority of Israel to receive His mercy, a group the Bibles calls the "remnant" of Israel
 - Paul quoted Old Testament passages that made his argument for him
 - Let's pick up there again briefly as our bridge into Chapter 10

Rom. 9:25 As He says also in Hosea,

"I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,'
And her who was not beloved, 'Beloved.'"

Rom. 9:26 "And It shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,'

There they shall be called sons of the living God."

Rom. 9:27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be like the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved;

Rom. 9:28 for the Lord will execute His word on the earth, thoroughly and quickly."

Rom. 9:29 And just as Isaiah foretold,

"Unless the Lord of sabaoth had left to us a posterity,
we would have become like Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah."

- We looked at this verses last week, so let's just review them again quickly
 - First, Paul quotes Hosea who foretold that there would be a day when God would elect Gentiles to know Him and receive His mercy
 - These people would step into Israel's place for a time
 - But later the Lord promises to extend His mercy to Israel again

- Secondly, Isaiah 10 promised that God will maintain at least a few believing Jews within the nation
 - This minority is called the remnant, those the Lord chooses for His mercy
 - Isaiah was among the remnant God preserved during the attack of the Assyrians against Israel
 - And Paul says this will always be God's pattern
 - God will always appoint some of Israel to receive His mercy, so that He doesn't completely reject them
- Finally, Paul quotes again from Isaiah 10 in v.29 that God brings destruction upon all those in Israel who are not His remnant
 - As assuredly as He destroyed the ungodly in Sodom and Gomorrah, so will unbelieving Israel be
 - God preserves only a remnant of Israel, Isaiah says, even as the rest of Israel is left outside God's mercy
- From here, Paul moves into a discussion of Israel's present circumstances following their rejection of the Messiah

Rom. 9:30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;

Rom. 9:31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.

Rom. 9:32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

Rom. 9:33 just as it is written,

“Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

- Paul asks a final question to conclude the chapter: what shall we say then?
 - We could rephrase Paul's question this way:
 - What shall we say about Israel?
 - Or maybe, how do we explain Israel's rejection of Jesus?

- Paul leads us to the answer by contrasting the effect of Jesus' arrival on Gentiles vs. the Jews
 - Gentiles attained or took hold of the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus
 - While the Jews ignored Jesus preferring to seek for a righteousness of their own
- That outcome is so unexpected, so improbable that it can only be evidence of God transferring His mercy away from one and toward the other
 - The Gentile world was largely ignorant of God and His word concerning salvation or a coming Messiah
 - Gentiles were pagans, pursuing all manner of evil and debauchery
 - So naturally, the Gentiles were not pursuing righteousness
 - Meanwhile, the Jewish nation had actively pursued righteousness for generations
 - They treasured the word of God and were attending to its requirements with great care
 - Furthermore, they knew a Messiah was coming and they longed to see His day and His Kingdom
 - Yet against all odds when the Messiah finally arrived, the Gentiles ran to embrace Jesus while the Jewish people rejected their Messiah
 - Paul says Israel did not receive what they were pursuing because they pursued it in the wrong way
 - They sought to become righteous by keeping Law rather than accepting God's righteousness by faith in Jesus
 - In human terms, Israel was blinded by their own pride
- So Paul says Christ's arrival was a stumbling stone to Israel
 - Paul's choice of words suggests two runners in a race
 - The Gentile runner isn't even aware a race is happening

- He's moving around the track with no urgency, oblivious that there's a finish line and having no interest in the prize of righteousness
- On the other hand, the Jewish runner is giving the race everything he's got
 - And he's intently focused on the finish line
 - He's striving with all his might to obtain the prize of righteousness
- But then a large rock falls from heaven onto the track directly in the path of the Jewish runner
 - Tied to this rock is the very prize the runners are competing to win
 - The Jew is so intently focused reaching the finish line that he neglects to notice the rock and the prize attached to it
 - And so he stumbles over it, and lands on his back in the middle of the track
- Meanwhile, the Gentile runner continues to saunter down the track blissfully unaware of the race or the finish line
 - Soon he happens upon the rock, he stops and notices the prize attached to it
 - Gladly, he claims the prize never having worked to obtain it
 - So Jews who were trying to obtain righteousness, stumbled over the means by which to obtain it
 - The Jewish people were pursuing righteousness in the wrong way, by works of the law rather than by faith in God's promises
 - While Gentiles, who had no interest in pursuing righteousness, obtained it because the Jewish people stumbled
- So Israel's present circumstances were the result of prideful, self-deceived hearts
 - In Isaiah, God foretold that His people would make this mistake
 - In v.33 Paul quotes Isaiah saying the Lord lays a stone of stumbling and rock of offense before Israel

- These are labels for Christ, of course
- The prophet's point is the Lord brought Jesus to Israel just as He promised
 - God has kept His promise to Israel
 - He did exactly as He promised, so we can't fault God's faithfulness to His promises
 - The problem was Israel's hard heart
 - They stumbled over Jesus rather than receive Him
- Nevertheless, Isaiah foretold this would be the result
 - So clearly the Lord knew Israel would reject Christ
 - Moreover, the Gentiles were receiving a Messiah they weren't looking for
- So we must conclude the Lord has shifted His mercy in favor of the ignorant Gentile over the stubborn Jew
 - So Israel's rejection of Jesus was according to their own sinful choice
 - But it was also an outcome God predetermined for His people by withholding His mercy
 - We cannot say God was unfaithful to Israel, as they received what God promised
 - But God exercised His sovereign right to leave Israel in their sin while extending His mercy to another group instead
- So the record of Israel's past establishes two important principles that carry us into Chapter 10
 - First, the Lord is sovereign over how He dispenses His mercy to everyone, whether Jew or Gentile
 - Secondly, Israel's rejection of Christ was foreknown and predestined by God as part of a plan to save Gentiles
- So with those concepts in hand, let's move to Chapter 10 – Israel's present circumstances
 - Given what has happened, what should we expect for Israel today?

- Specifically, is God dealing fairly with His covenant people during this time?
- Once again, Paul moves to defending God's faithfulness and character by answering a series of questions
 - First, wasn't Israel's zealotry proof they deserved to receive their Messiah?
 - Secondly, had God tricked Israel by failing to explain His plan to His people?
 - Did He make it easy for Gentiles to receive His mercy while sending Israel on a wild goose chase?
 - Finally, is God unfairly keeping Israel in the dark now even as He opens the door to Gentiles?
 - These are questions Paul addresses in the course of Chapter 10
 - And once again, Paul begins his defense by reassuring his audience he is in Israel's corner

Rom. 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.

Rom. 10:2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

Rom. 10:3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

Rom. 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

- It's entirely likely that at this point, Paul's Jewish audience was questioning his objectivity
 - So Paul reminds them that he truly desired to see his people saved
 - Paul calls his audience "brethren," meaning fellow Jews, and like them he laments Israel's rejection of Christ
 - In fact, Paul says he prayed to the Lord that Jews be saved

- When Paul says he prays for Israel's salvation, we're reminded that God's sovereignty in the affairs of the heart doesn't preclude us from making appeals
 - Paul prayed that God might save as many Jews as possible
 - While at the same time accepting that it was not in God's will to bring the entire nation of Jewish people into faith
 - At least not in Paul's day
 - So while Paul sympathized with the plight of Israel, he also accepted God's plan to hold Israel outside His mercy for a time
- That's the perspective we should take as well concerning any person or group of people we wish to see receive God's mercy
 - We may pray earnestly for the Lord to save a person or a group of people
 - While at the same time acknowledging that God's will for both nations and individuals will be done
- Let's not set these two truths against one another
 - Don't allow the truth of God's sovereignty to become excuse for not engaging in intercessory prayer or evangelism
 - And likewise, you don't have to deny His sovereignty in order to pray with an expectation of influencing future outcomes
 - Remember, in Chapter 9 Paul taught that the Lord predetermined Israel's stumbling
 - While in Chapter 10, Paul said he prayed for Israel's salvation
- From there Paul dives into the first question of whether Israel deserved to have their Messiah, given their earnestness
 - In v.2 Paul says he testifies (or agrees) that the Jews have a zeal for God
 - Paul is acknowledging what his readers would have been thinking at this point
 - Israel was trying really hard
 - The history of Israel under Greek and Roman control testifies to the zeal of the Jewish people

- Israel fervently defended God and His Law, refusing to engage in idolatry and often facing death instead of conceding
- Israel was so famously zealous for God that they won the only religious exemption in the Roman Empire
 - When Rome conquered a people and made them part of the empire, they eradicated any competing religious observances
 - The Romans required all subjects to pledge allegiance to the Caesar
 - But when Rome tried to enforce this rule in Judea, the Jews objected so violently that Rome relented
 - The Senate gave Jews the right to continue in their own worship practices, the only such exemption in the entire empire
- Certainly, no one could fault the sincerity of the Jewish people in pursuing God
 - But Paul says that sincerity wasn't their problem; it was knowledge
 - In other words, you can be very sincere in your pursuit of God
 - But if you don't pursue Him according to the truth, you're just sincerely wrong
- Our world is filled with sincerely religious people, many of whom are as devout and zealous as the Jews of Paul's day
 - But their sincerity and zealousness will gain them nothing in the end if it's not in accordance with knowledge
 - Don't ever mistake sincerity for inspiration
 - Remember, the enemy has his disciples too, and many of them are just as willing to die for their god as we are for our God
 - They too can make strong arguments from their religious books
 - They devote countless hours to prayer, make great sacrifices, attend weekly services, do many good works, etc.
 - But displays of piety are worthless in the quest for righteousness

- In v.3 Paul says Israel's zealousness lacked the understanding that salvation comes only by God's righteousness
- We know from our study of earlier chapters that only a righteousness equal to God's righteousness may enter Heaven
- God's righteousness is perfection so if we are to enter His glory, we must obtain His perfection
- No matter how many hours we pray or sacrifices we make or good works we do, we can't erase a single sin
- And one sin is enough to disqualify us from Heaven
- That's why we must obtain God's righteousness
 - God's righteousness refers to Christ, Who is the righteousness of God according to 2 Cor 5:21
 - In their pride, Israel didn't recognize that only God could accomplish the Law perfectly
- Instead, Paul says they sought to establish their own righteousness
 - Paul is teaching that these two paths are mutually exclusive
 - You can either seek to make yourself righteous
 - Or you can give up on that path, turn and accept the free gift of God's righteousness available by faith in Christ
 - You can't choose both paths, because they go in opposite directions
 - No more than you can choose to be both single and married, or to be both asleep and awake
 - One negates the other
 - Paul expresses this mutual exclusivity in v.4 saying Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes
 - He means that for the one who accepts the righteousness of God (i.e., Christ), the law ceases being a path to righteousness
 - Obviously, the law was never truly a path to righteousness
 - He means that for the one willing to receive the righteousness of God by faith, the law no longer holds any attraction

- Once you have obtained God's righteousness, you give up trying to earn your own
- Because you realize you can do no better than God's perfection
- So to the first question, Paul says Israel's zealotry for the Law wasn't cause for God to reward them but rather it's the very reason for their downfall
 - Israel has not subjected themselves to Christ
 - The proof being that Israel even now remains still committed to the Law as a means of righteousness
 - Therefore, God has been just in denying them salvation
- Which moves Paul to the second question: did God withhold this important detail from His people?
 - Did God lead Israel into misunderstanding the purpose of the Law, thinking it was a means of obtaining righteousness?
 - Paul addresses this question in the next passage

Rom. 10:5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.

Rom. 10:6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), **Rom. 10:7** or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."

Rom. 10:8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" – that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,

Rom. 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

Rom. 10:10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Rom. 10:11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed."

Rom. 10:12 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;

Rom. 10:13 for "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

- Paul answers this concern by quoting repeatedly from the Law itself
 - He starts saying “for Moses writes...” referring to the author of the first five books of the Bible, which Jews consider collectively to be “the Law”
 - In v.5 Paul begins with a quote from Leviticus 18:5

Lev. 18:5 ‘So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the Lord.

- The phrase “My statutes and My judgments” refers to the entire Law, all that God required of Israel
- A person may live if he or she does all of them
- Conversely, failing to keep them all will mean death, which refers ultimately to an eternal outcome
- This is an impossibly high standard for anyone
 - The Law itself set perfection as the minimum standard for obtaining eternal life
 - One error, one failing is enough to disqualify someone
- Paul’s reminding us that Israel heard from the beginning that observing the Law was not a viable means of becoming righteous
 - The Law wasn’t intended to trick Israel
 - The Law itself warned Israel not to misuse it
- Furthermore, the Law told Israel that righteousness wasn’t outside their reach
 - In Deuteronomy 30 Moses told the people of Israel that accomplishing the Law wasn’t too difficult for them, though it appeared that way

Deut. 30:11 “For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach.

Deut. 30:12 “It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’

Deut. 30:13 “Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’

Deut. 30:14 "But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.

- Moses said no one needed to go to Heaven to obtain the righteousness required to keep the Law
- Nor do we need someone to search to the ends of the earth for such perfection
- Paul adds his own applications in vv.6-7
 - Israel didn't produce the Messiah's arrival from Heaven by keeping the Law perfectly
 - Nor did Israel make possible Christ's resurrection through their own righteousness
 - On the contrary, those things happened to compensate for our inability to keep the Law
- Paul says in v.6 that the righteousness that is based on faith never says these things
 - If you understand how God appoints righteousness, you don't ask these questions
 - Because you understand that the solution isn't found in our personal efforts or merit
 - You realize that keeping the Law is fruitless
- Instead, Paul says that true righteousness acknowledges that the solution to keeping the Law's requirements is near, in our mouths and hearts
 - And in vs.9-10, Paul explains that Moses was describing a confession of faith in the Gospel
 - Paul refers to the Gospel message as the word of faith that he was preaching
 - It's a word or message that declares faith is the means of righteousness
 - Then Paul describes two parts, one for the mouth and one for the heart
 - Paul is just mirroring the two ideas Moses proposed, in the same order Moses presented them

- So Paul addresses confessing first, followed by believing, to parallel Moses' description of mouth and then heart
- Obviously, these two steps work in unison
 - To confess means to agree with what others say about some idea or belief
 - And to believe means to hold to a perspective based on conviction rather than proof
- Paul says that true righteousness says what others say about the identity of Jesus, and believes what others believe about His work
 - We agree He is Lord, that is He is God incarnate
 - And we believe He died and rose again to prove His claims
- In v.10 Paul explains that these two things work together in the one being saved
 - But because of the way Paul maintains unity with Moses' words, some get confused by this verse
 - Paul says our heart of belief results in our justification and righteousness
 - While the confession of our mouth results in our salvation
 - Clearly, being righteous and having salvation are one and the same thing
 - You can't have one without the other, unless you choose to define each word in an unusually narrow way
 - Instead, we need to see Paul's choice of words as a poetic attempt to preserve the symmetry with Moses' words
 - Moses wrote in terms of a mouth and a heart working together to accomplish the Law
 - So Paul uses this construct to explain that a confession of faith is all that is necessary to be saved
 - He starts with a confession of the mouth followed by belief in the heart

- And then he reverses the pattern in v.10 starting with the heart first and then the mouth
- It's a chiasmic form, which is a type of Hebrew poetry
 - So we shouldn't assign undue emphasize to either part of the division
 - Paul isn't describing two discrete steps in a process
 - Rather he's describing two elements working together in a single moment
- Paul's main point is summarized in v.11, where Paul quotes from Isaiah
 - The one who won't be disappointed in eternity is the one who believes in the Messiah
 - The heart and mouth work together to express belief in the Messiah
 - And when we take that route, we receive what we hope to have: righteousness
 - We won't be disappointed, Isaiah says, unlike those who depend on their own righteousness
 - So how can we blame God for Israel's current state of unbelief when He told them what to expect beforehand, and kept His promise faithfully?
 - No one could claim that Israel was set up for failure
 - Their own Law declared that a man can't find righteousness in doing the Law
 - And that righteousness was simply a matter of a confession of faith
 - And Isaiah confirmed that belief in the Messiah was the key
- Furthermore, Israel had no less opportunity to know these things than did Gentiles
 - Paul says in v.12 that on this point, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile
 - The Lord is the Lord of both

- And God has uncountable riches available as an inheritance for everyone who calls upon Him in faith
- And God has always intended that the door be open to both groups
 - Paul quotes from Joel 2, where the Lord promises that whoever calls on the name of the Lord – Jew or Gentile – will be saved
 - There are not two systems for salvation
 - There is only one, and the Lord explained it to His people plainly in their scripture
- So God didn't hide the way to righteousness for Israel
 - Nor did He make it unnecessarily complicated
 - It was plainly explained in the word of God, and it was as easy as a confession of faith
 - This is far more advanced notice than Gentiles received, by the way
- So once again, we see that Israel's present circumstances are the result of their hard hearts, not because God failed to keep His word
 - It was His word to Israel that explained the path to righteousness
 - Yet Israel chose another path, a path of self-righteousness, instead
 - And so there they remain
- Which leads to the third and final question...perhaps Israel hasn't received adequate opportunity to know that Jesus was their Messiah?
 - Perhaps this is just a big misunderstanding
 - If only the apostles like Paul had explained these things to Israel, then the nation would have recognized their error and received Christ
 - So is God unfairly withholding this explanation from His people, thereby preventing them from coming to faith in Jesus?
 - Paul addresses this basic concern to end the chapter

[Rom. 10:14](#) 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?

[Rom. 10:15](#) How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!"

[Rom. 10:16](#) However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

[Rom. 10:17](#) So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

[Rom. 10:18](#) But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have;

"Their voice has gone out into all the earth,
And their words to the ends of the world."

[Rom. 10:19](#) But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says,

"I will make you jealous by that which is Not a nation,
By a nation without understanding will I anger You."

[Rom. 10:20](#) And Isaiah is very bold and says,

"I was found by those who did not seek Me,
I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me."

[Rom. 10:21](#) But as for Israel He says, "All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."

- To key to understanding this passage is recognizing that Paul has assumed his audience's perspective, but he doesn't agree with it
 - Paul's audience has just learned that Israel still had opportunity to be saved as Moses directed
 - It was a good news–bad news story
 - The good news was that Israel's rejection of Jesus didn't close the door on their opportunity to be saved
 - Like Gentiles, Jews still had opportunity to be saved if they too confessed Christ
 - This would have come as great relief to Paul's Jewish readers who longed to see the Jewish nation receive their Messiah

- But the bad news was that despite how easy it was to find salvation, very few Jews were choosing to follow that path
 - That disconnect naturally lead a believing Jew searching for reasons to explain Israel's persistent unbelief
 - Many of the reasons they might propose held potential to place the blame on God
- So Paul makes his audience's argument for them so he can refute it, beginning with that series of questions in v.14
 - Why have the Jewish people failed to call upon the name of the Lord so as to be saved?
 - Well, how can the people of Israel call on the name of the Lord if they have not first believed in Jesus?
 - And how would we expect them to believe in Jesus if they have never heard about Jesus?
 - And how will they hear about Jesus if no one is preaching to them about Jesus?
 - And how will preaching take place if the Church isn't sending preachers to the people of Israel?
 - After all, God has declared in Isaiah that His good news will be delivered by men whom the Lord sends to His people
 - Notice the progression of logic in these questions
 - Paul's audience assumes that Israel sits outside God's mercy merely because of a communication breakdown
 - God had everything set up for His people's salvation, until at the last minute someone didn't get the memo
 - Preachers weren't sent to the right places, and for a lack of information, God's people were forsaken
 - And yet God promised to send His good news to Israel
 - Therefore, it's God's fault again
 - He failed to keep His promise to Israel to tell them about the good news of their Messiah's arrival

- Is this analysis were true, we'd be looking at the biggest fiasco in the history of mankind
 - Only the introduction of New Coke would be comparable
 - Of course, it's a ridiculous suggestion
 - Which Paul demonstrates as he responds with scripture, beginning with another quote from Isaiah
 - In v.16 Paul says plainly that not all Israel has heeded the good news
 - Some heeded the news, certainly, that is the remnant God promised to preserve
 - But the majority of Israel rejected what they heard

**Is. 52:15 Thus He will sprinkle many nations,
Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him;
For what had not been told them they will see,
And what they had not heard they will understand.**

**Is. 53:1 Who has believed our message?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?**

- Isaiah says that the message of the Messiah's arrival will be heard and seen by those who had no preparation to receive it
 - Meanwhile, Isaiah asks who has believed the prophets' message?
 - Isaiah is lamenting that Israel always ignored the words of their prophets
 - There was no more thankless job in Israel than prophet
- So even though Paul's audience assumed Israel could yet be convinced if only the message went out to them, Paul says no they wouldn't
 - When the message of the Messiah was delivered as God promised, most ignored it
 - Just as the Lord said would happen
- Paul then says this outcome in Israel reinforces the truth he presented back in Romans 9

- That faith comes from hearing
 - God prepares a message of salvation
 - And He delivers the message to us
 - And as we hear it, we believe it and confess it
 - We call upon the name of the Lord and we are saved
- In human terms, saving faith is a simple thing anyone can understand
 - But how do we explain Israel's rejection of this good news?
 - What explains an entire nation of God's people, prepared by centuries of God's revelation, failing to accept such a simple message?
- Paul says hearing the message depends on the word of Christ
 - He's saying that the capacity to hear, that is to heed, the Gospel is determined by the word of Christ
 - Heeding the message of the Gospel depends on the word of Christ
 - It doesn't depend on our mechanics or our presentation
 - The outcome of any Gospel presentation depends on God to either grant our audience ears to hear or to deny them the same
 - Remember, He has mercy on whom He chooses and He hardens whom He chooses
- So in human terms, faith comes by hearing a Gospel presentation
 - But in spiritual terms, a person's potential to heed what they hear is determined by the word of Christ
 - Or we could say, the Lord's will determines who truly hears the message of the Gospel
- So then in v.18 Paul's audience might ask, surely Israel never heard the message? Maybe there's still a chance they could hear and receive Christ?
 - To which Paul shuts the door on this excuse
 - In v.18 he quotes from Psalm 19 when David declares that the Creation itself reveals the truth of God

- Paul's point isn't that Israel should have deciphered the message of the Gospel from staring at the night sky
- Rather Paul's drawing a comparison between general revelation and specific revelation
 - The psalm testifies that God is so intent on communicating with mankind that He speaks to us through the very Creation
 - Therefore, how much more did Israel have opportunity to hear about Christ through the specific revelation of the word of God?
 - The Jewish people were entrusted with the word of God, so they of all people should have known what was coming
 - They knew it far better than the Gentiles, who received Christ despite only having access to general revelation like Creation
- Then his readers might ask in v.19 that perhaps the people just didn't know (or understand) what their scriptures were telling them about Jesus
 - They were confused, mistaken and therefore unable to comprehend Jesus as the fulfillment of the scripture's promises
 - But Paul says nope...quoting first from the Law again in Deuteronomy 30
 - Moses declares that God's plan was to bring understanding to Gentiles who had no reason to know or care about the Messiah
 - While leaving Israel outside grace so that they might become jealous of the Gentiles
 - Jealousy doesn't infer that Israel will see us worshipping Jesus and that will make them jealous wishing to know Jesus too
 - Obviously, that's not happening within Israel
 - Jews are not drawn by jealousy into a relationship with Christ
 - Instead, Moses means the Jews will increase in their desire for a Messiah as they see and hear Gentiles declaring they have found one
 - In other words, the desire for a Messiah will be kept alive within Jewish culture by a world of Gentiles claiming Jesus as Messiah

- But of course, the main point is that the problem wasn't a lack of knowledge
 - Israel did hear enough to recognize Jesus when He came
 - And they understood perfectly well what Jesus was claiming to be
 - In fact, they killed Him because He claimed to be Messiah
- No, the reason Israel hasn't received the Messiah is because God has not granted them mercy to receive Him
 - Paul puts the final nail in his readers' coffin of hope (to badly mix my metaphors) by quoting from Isaiah again
 - Isaiah foretold that God would make opportunity for Gentiles to know Him, though Gentiles were not inclined to seek Him
 - He manifested Himself to them though they didn't ask to know Him
 - Now imagine if God could manifest Himself to people who didn't want a Messiah in such a way that they embraced Jesus, then certainly He could have overcome Israel's objections
 - Had God wanted His people to receive their Messiah, He surely could have brought about that outcome
 - They had everything they needed, in contrast to Gentiles who had nothing
 - They were looking, they heard, they understood the prophecies
 - And God fulfilled all His promises to them openly and without deception
 - Paul emphasizes the magnitude of the opportunity God offered in v.21 quoting from Isaiah a final time
 - God says He held out His hand to Israel but they were disobedient
 - He's describing the degree of preparation God gave Israel
 - God literally spelled out what He would do for them
 - He told them where the Messiah would be born

- The time He would be born
 - The family line He would come from
 - Many of the miracles He would do and the way He must die for them
 - And God told Israel exactly how they could receive His righteousness, by a simple confession of faith
- Nevertheless, the people of God resisted the call of the Gospel and continue to do so
 - Has God been unfaithful to them? Did He fail to do anything He promised?
 - Did he trick Israel?
 - Did He hide something from them?
 - No, they were given everything they needed – far more than Gentiles – yet they were obstinate and disobedient
 - They preferred to pursue the Law rather than accept God’s righteousness in the way Moses instructed
 - And so apart from the remnant, Israel remains without Christ today
 - And as we reach the end of Chapter 10, we come to another unavoidable conclusion
 - The Lord didn’t give Israel ears to hear the Gospel
 - He sent them Christ as promised, but left the nation in its sins
 - He kept His promise to preserve a remnant, but he passed over the rest
 - As obvious as this conclusion may be, it still leaves us searching for a “why?” for everything we’ve learned
 - We know God chooses who receives His mercy
 - We know He has always chosen a minority, a remnant
 - We know He has been fair to Israel, giving them exactly what He promised to give them

- Every Jew since Jesus' day has had the same path to salvation and could call upon the name of the Lord like you and me
- And yet we know they mostly reject Him, being more interested in pursuing self-righteousness
- But we also know that the Lord could overcome their objections
 - He could extend His mercy to them and bring them into faith
 - In the same way the Lord is calling Gentiles to Himself, He could draw all Israel to Himself should He choose
 - So why hasn't He done it?
- That brings us to Chapter 11, Israel's future