

Romans 9:30-10:13

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[0 : 0 0] 9 verse 30 through chapter 10 verse 13 page 920 would you please stand with me for the reading of god's word what shall we say then that gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it that is a righteousness that is by faith but that israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law why because they did not pursue it by faith but as if it were based on works they have stumbled over the stumbling stone as it is written behold i am laying in zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame brothers my heart's desire and prayer to god for them is that they may be saved for i bear them witness that they have a zeal for god but not according to knowledge for being ignorant of the righteousness of god and seeking to establish their own they did not submit to god's righteousness for christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes for moises writes about the righteousness that is based on the law that the person who does the commandments shall live by them but the righteousness based on faith says do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven that is to bring christ down or who will descend into the abyss that is to bring christ up from the dead but what does it say the word is near you in your mouth and in your heart that is the word of faith that we proclaim because if you confess with your mouth that jesus is lord and believe in your heart that god raised him from the dead you will be saved for with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved for the scripture says everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame for there is no distinction between jew and greek for the same lord is lord of all bestowing his riches on all who call on him for everyone who calls on the name of the lord will be saved this is the word of the lord you may be seated well just let me add my own pastoral word of gratitude to god for what he's doing in our midst uh it's a wonderful thing to see uh young men leaving our presence preaching the gospel wherever god will call them just as it is a great thing to see adults and their children coming to faith and being baptized all on the same day god is at work and we just pray that he is at work in us that we would not miss what he has for us in the coming year well it was jacob newsner an american academic but a powerful writer as well who helped us understand the central issues that separate christianity from judaism 1993 he published a work you ought to read entitled a rabbi talks with jesus and in it he begins to lay out the central differences between judaism and christianity more particularly why it is that jews would not hold jesus to be the promised

messiah the question of course is not new newsner does it in a very imaginative way he presents himself the author in character as a rabbi at the time of jesus of nazareth and his teaching on the plain or the mountain as it were and his delivery of the sermon on the mount and so as you begin to read you're following a rabbi who's listening to jesus in a day in his ministry but he concludes as the sun sets that this one is not the one for him for him to follow he rejects him and returns to the law the torah as that which mediates relationship between god and his people the question about judaism and christianity or more particularly why jews do not receive jesus as their messiah is not new in fact the divide goes back as far as i can tell to the earliest of apostolic moments in galatians we get hints that when paul was converted he felt clearly that the gospel as he understood it had universal consequences and felt particularly called if you remember the words given to him on the road to damascus that he will bear the name of christ before the gentiles as well as those of israel james confirms this as does peter in his cornelius way with this vision coming down and there is an early moment an apostolic moment where the gospel of grace come through the promises to israel were for the gentile world and yet they met oh what a meeting it would have been they decided paul we love this gospel and yours isn't that different than ours in fact it is the same and we have nothing to add to you and we know your zeal prior to coming to faith we'll give you the gentile world we'll take the circumcised world we'll call ours the apostolic project israel we'll call yours the apostolic the apostle born out of time project to the rest of the world and they went their separate ways by the time he writes romans the apostolic project to israel is a complete failure it's an absolute disarray it hasn't worked nobody's coming to faith in at least any numbers of any significance under the ministry of peter or all the other apostles combined there's been flat-out rejection and the question is certainly surfacing why now here's my own personal understanding that even at this point paul was accused by some as being the reason for their rejection at least in part after all paul turned his back on the jews in a sense shook his feet off and went to the gentile world paul in his

gospel proclamation was known to be rather bombastic in his exchanges with jews in his attempts to have them come to understanding paul is actually spoken of as having been pursued by jews from town to town paul in his gospel even in romans has said things about the law that would make one wonder is he not completely undone judaism and is there any relevance for the jew so ironically here we are romans the central moment of the gospel the gospel of according to romans 9 through 11 and paul himself gives a defense gives a defense for the reason for which the jews have rejected the gospel interestingly i think he puts himself personally in the middle of his defense as you see there in 10 1 brothers my heart's desire and prayer to god for them is that they may be saved you need to ask yourself why paul why are you so prominently in this argument think of it back to the way he opened in chapter 9 i'm speaking the truth i'm not lying my conscience bears me witness i have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart for i could wish that i myself were accursed and cut off from christ for the sake of my brothers why paul why are you so prominently displayed in this message unless of course you need to vindicate your own heart for israel as well as validate the reasons for israel's rejection of your word and so these are linked and he sets out out to answer the question why verse 30 what shall we say then the gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it that is righteousness that is by faith but that israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law why there's our question why and here's paul's response his response is intricate it's in verse 32 through chapter 10 and verse 4 and i want you to see how they play in parallel on either side of his own personal statement about his heart and desire that they would be saved so here's the first reason verse 32 they did not pursue it by faith that's a b but as if it were based on works the result of a and b would then be c they have stumbled over the stumbling stone as it is written behold i am laying in zion a stone now look at the parallel argument on the other side of his personal word for his desire that they would be saved chapter 10 verse 2 i bear them witness that they have a zeal for god a but not according to knowledge why are they not coming to christ paul two reasons a they don't pursue it by faith put differently they are not pursuing it according to knowledge b verse 3 of chapter 10 for being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from god and seeking to establish their own do you see how that mirrors the moment above as if it were based on works

and then see the consequence they did not submit to christ's righteousness so the result is they are stumbling over jesus they are not submitting to jesus they were seeking to establish their own righteousness according to the law their zeal was not in accordance with knowledge indeed for they did not pursue it by faith this is paul on why israel rejects the christian message the reasons for the failure of the apostolic project to israel because they do not pursue it by faith and they pursue it as if it were by works now i need to say something here about nt right and the new perspective on paul even if it's just three or four people here who are wrestling with this monumental new testament scholar and the work that's been done over the last 30 years and i i'm aware of it but i want to at least let you know that this this hurdle for me is is strong is strong when it says in verse 3 of chapter 10 that they were seeking to establish their own that that seems to be very different that seems to be meritorious in nature not merely the manner in which they contain themselves in and in the law through food customs and otherwise otherwise now for the rest of you here the other 115 people well you're just like what was that about and it's an absolute waste of your time and that's why i'm not going to spend any more on it but there are significant hurdles here for the new perspective on paul for me the reasons for the failure the consequence then is you stumble think of it this way god is not to be known by israel through their abiding law-keeping righteousness he was to be known by israel through faith faith you don't work your way into a relationship with god nor do you work your way into maintaining that relationship with god according to paul it is all by faith that your righteousness does not help you enter into relationship with god indeed there is a righteousness that comes from god that enables you to be related to him and that is accessed through faith faith this turns everything that we have ingrained in us on its head for we are convinced that when you put out a certain effort you earn a certain you earn a certain currency paul says the gospel doesn't work that way think of luke 19 the rich young ruler comes to jesus paul says paul says jesus tells them it doesn't work that way peter says to jesus well what am i going to get for following you and he gets that enigmatic parable about everybody gets the same pay at the end of the day in other words he says to a peter it doesn't work that way with god we come to him him and he says to him interestingly he then uh think of this this text here that he quotes it's a fascinating one and it requires some explanation

he says in verse 31 that they've stumbled over the stumbling stone as it is written behold i am laying in zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame that's very positive in orientation it's really the beginning and the end of that quote behold i'm laying in zion a stone and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame this great positive rendition but he steals two phrases from isaiah 8 and throws them in the middle of his quote a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense and he brings them together because in israel there was a history of the stone and how it mediated relationship think back to daniel and nebuchadnezzar's dream there was a stone that would be cut out of a mountain not made with hands and the stone would strike all the world and it would create a kingdom this stone would that would last forever isaiah picks up on the stone that would that would be that which transforms the world the psalms in psalm 118 speak of that stone jesus of nazareth the itinerant preacher comes and claims all of that imagery which was reserved for israel for jerusalem for mount zion for the temple and he claims it for himself he claims to be the stone that strikes all the kingdoms of the world and from him god's eternal kingdom goes forth so what paul is arguing why do the jews of his day reject jesus as the christ because they are pursuing something a righteousness of their own but not in accordance with faith and so jesus becomes this big rock in the middle of the path that they stumble over or have to walk around or not submit to in other words they would build their life on another rock that is the rock of the law mooses's words a righteousness that they are to complete on their own i mean imagine that that is the great offense of the gospel and newsner points this out the reason people reject jesus jews even in our neighborhood today which is a large jewish population is there something about jesus that he claims to have authority even over the law he is higher than that in the end he mediates they don't mediate and that his followers are the light of the world not the torah and that is why so many walk away even today paul says my heart's desire my prayer for them is that they would be saved for indeed verse 4 christ is the end or the telos he's the completion of the law that all the law was leading to and arrives at christ the righteousness of god found in christ for everyone who believes and so then he goes on having in verse 30 through 10 for laid out the reasons for the failure

[20 : 15] of the project of the gospel of the gospel of the gospel of the gospel of the gospel within judaism to lay out the reasonableness of the gospel of his gospel from what moises himself wrote the reasonableness of faith verses 5 through 13 for moises he says writes about the righteousness that is based on the law that the person who does the commandments shall live by them in other words moises does indeed speak of a righteousness that god requires of us from us but paul has already argued that the law itself while it sets the standard of what god requires from us in the book of romans has said that law in the end of the day does not have the life-giving source and power within it to actually enable you to keep it so that in chapter 3 and in verses 19 and 20 we see that by the works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight since through the law comes the knowledge of sin so while it might give us the knowledge of sin it does not give us the life to live it out so moises writes of it but according to paul there is a righteousness that actually comes from god by faith which is why he picks up on this deuteronomy 30 issue in verses 6 and following but the righteousness based on faith says do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven that is bring christ down or who will descend into the abyss that is to bring christ up from the dead but what does it say that's rather fascinating use of the scriptures the way i understand it he's saying look if you think that your job to be rightly related to god is to climb the staircase to heaven to find your ladder and climb your way and get all the way up to christ and bring him down to you through all the things you do that's not what faith does if you think that your job is to get all the way down to be the the the lowest of all the low to be the servant among all the servant to descend even into the depths where christ died to die and to lay hold of christ in the grave that you might bring him up to you that's not what faith does faith does not reach up into the heavens to grab hold faith does not go down into the depths to grab hold faith according to paul is so near you it almost reminds me of the athenian discourse in act 17 where god is spoken of as being very near how near how near is god to you in this moment as near as my voice falls upon your ear as near as faith rises in your heart as near as transference from your own work your own desire your own zeal your own effort your own lunging your own grabbing a relinquishing of it all and the embracing of what you've heard that christ is the righteousness of god you don't have to go get him he came down you don't have to lift him up the power of the gospel did so you don't have to work how freeing is this you don't have to labor you have to rely that is rest upon his work

work that's how near god is to you for some today i pray that you will know god that's how near god by receiving these words as they are the very words of god that's being born again i was thinking of uh simeon did i leave simeon in my pew big dark black book somebody's got to bring me chuck simeon um charles simeon passed away in 1836 lived in a university setting came to university out of relationship with god and very early on came to know him through faith listen to what happens to him as he was preparing for the lord's supper quote i met with an expression to this effect that the jews knew what they did when they transferred their sin to the head of their offering he's reflecting on the sacrificial system that when you slayed a lamb you were transferring the blood guilt that belonged to you for your sin upon that offering he says the thought rushed into my mind i mean this is a beautiful thing he's probably 18 19 years old when this happens as i pray it will happen for some of you here today of equal or lesser age the thought rushed into my mind what may i transfer all my guilt to another has god provided an offering for me that i may lay my sins on his head then god willing i will not bear them on my own soul one moment long longer accordingly i sought to lay my sins upon the sacred head of jesus and on wednesday began to have a hope of mercy and on thursday the hope increased on the friday and saturday it became more strong and on the sunday morning easter day april 4th i awoke early with the words upon my heart and lips jesus christ is risen today hallelujah hallelujah from that hour peace peace flowed in rich abundance into my soul and at the lord's table in our chapel i had the sweetest access to god through my blessed savior that's paul's glorious gospel that just as they transferred their guilt upon the head of a sin offering so too you enter into a relationship with god not by your righteous acts but by his righteous sacrifice and you transfer your sin on his head and he gives you his righteousness by faith may it be yours and if you if you possess that may you possess it with greater strength strength this is the gospel as paul and all the apostles declare it look verse seven or eight the word is near you

in your mouth and in your heart that is the word of faith that we proclaim because if you confess with your mouth that jesus is lord and believe in your heart that god raised him from the dead you will be saved for with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved notice the difference in the text then it's not about what your hands do that will bring you to god it's not about where your feet run in service to god it's about what your heart your will will decides about god that i will transfer all my sin on his perfect righteous sacrifice and he will give me all his righteousness that i might be properly related to him and i've never been properly related to him before and i'm saved the foolish message of the gospel saving people even in this hour you know i'm interested in uh romans 9 to 11 uh what's happened to me as we're preaching through it i used to think romans 9 to 11 was all about this kind of narrowly this narrow description of the gospel well and in some sense for good reason because i had heard that chapter 9 had all that stuff about election some and not others and all that stuff about the hardening of pharaoh and all this stuff about the rejection of the gospel but as i'm actually preaching through it with you what it is really doing for paul he it's all about the the universal scope of the gospel that god has mercy on anyone he wants not just his own people it's about the global goal of properly relating people to their creator it's about everyone these words are to be launch pads for the universal scope of the claims of the gospel which is why he closes as he does well he doesn't close we're in the middle of his argument but i'm going to apply it anyway but look at verses 11 and following for the scripture says notice this word everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame verse 12 for there is no distinction between jew and greek if you are here today and not born an ethnic jew that is just one of the greatest verses you'll ever read because in god's eyes even though the promises came through israel and to israel first they are also to anyone you you can be someone who's 28 years old 35 years old 57 years old 12 years old lived all your life never pursuing righteousness had no desire to know god just living for yourself and you can be properly related to him to today even though you never had the promises before how great is that do you get how great that is it's that big everyone no distinction look at the same thing the the same lord is lord of all look at the next line bestowing his riches on all who call on him next line for everyone who calls on the name of the lord will be saved everyone no distinction all all everyone i ask you this

why not you why not you don't talk to me anymore but why you reject jesus i know he's been a stumbling block to you and i know you'd rather climb climb the staircase so when you get to god you got something to give him or you'd rather descend into the depths of merciful service as if some way he might be pleased accept him and the righteousness of god will be yours now i wish i could preach the rest of 10 but i won't but it's the natural consequence that flows the natural priorities that flow from someone who begins to understand that they are loved in christ through faith it will be nothing less than the prominence and the priority of proclamation our heavenly father this chapter which is restrictive in many senses i thank you for the ability for us to see it in its universal scope so many of us putting out so much effort that somehow we would please you lord take our take our efforts and help us just to stop and to give our lives to you in christ save and strengthen to the glory of your name amen well let's stand let's sing i've been talking long enough i'm sure you're