

ROMANS 9:1-11:36 | GOD'S WORK FULFILLED THROUGH ISRAEL

*Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 38*

ROMANS 9:1-10:21 | PAUL'S PRAYER & GOD'S PLAN FOR ISRAEL IN THE DISPENSATIONAL CHANGE & BEYOND

*Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 38*

ROMANS 10:1-21 | GOD'S FUTURE WORK WITH ISRAEL

*Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 42*

Verses 1-11 – see session 28

VERSE 12 - BLUE

It is difficult to determine whether Paul is making a transition to speaking of Israel's need for faith in the Messiah in the age of grace, where "**there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek**," or if he is mindful of the fact that "**Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed**" (v. 11) was always a truth, even though more than belief was previously required (such as obedience to the Law).

In our "Rightly Divided Color Coding" system, I have colored this passage blue to indicate a direct application to the age of grace. Therefore, I am taking the passage as a parenthetical praise of what God is doing today. The Scripture does hold a universal truth for all dispensations, as passages like Matthew 8:11 suggest. However, we should not assume that this passage implies no dispensational change, as such an interpretation would not fit within this chapter or in the book of Romans as a whole.

VERSE 13 - BLACK

In this verse, Paul quotes Joel 2:32, which was also quoted by Peter in Acts 2:21. The prophecy in the Joel passage concerns the coming of the Messiah to reestablish the throne of David. Peter used these verses in Acts to suggest that Joel 2:29-32 was beginning to be fulfilled. However, neither in Joel nor in Acts did the words imply that such a condition was currently the case; both passages looked to a future fulfillment.

Similarly, in this passage, Paul also looks to a future fulfillment when Israel shall finally "**call upon the name of the Lord**" and "**be saved**," which is precisely what he longs for (Rom. 10:1).

👉 A "rightly divided" perspective of Scripture is that God promised a restoration of all things in the Kingdom through His Messiah. When Israel rejected her King, God sent the Holy Ghost, in fulfillment of the promises of Joel, to display the truth of the Kingdom offer. When Israel rejected the offer, even with convincing proofs, God began setting Israel aside to do a new thing, the age of grace, which is not tied to Israel's covenants. Later, God will discontinue the age of grace and return to His covenant promises to the Jew, and at that time the full promises of Joel 2:29-31 will be delivered upon.

VERSES 14-15 - BLACK

Having stated the future reality, that those who call will be saved, Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions, starting with the end-game of belief. To believe they must hear, to hear they must have a preacher, to have a preacher he must be sent. Then Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7, which is a Messianic prophecy about the one who comes announcing the established Kingdom.

👉 The Greek word for "preach" is κηρυσσω [karusso]. It means to proclaim any news, like an old-fashioned herald on a busy street corner. The word can be used for any news, religious or otherwise.

Paul wants to bring forth the fact that Israel has indeed had a preacher and has indeed heard the Gospel of the coming Kingdom. He uses this series of rhetorical questions to bring up the topic, which he will complete in the following verses.

These verses are often used in Evangelicalism to call forth preachers and missionaries. Standing alone, they simply give the logical demands for belief, and so such a use would not be unfounded. However, in their context, they are not talking about sending forth witnesses of the Gospel of grace, and so care should be taken not to use the passage out of context.

VERSE 16 - BLACK

Paul confirms our interpretation that the questions in verses 14-15 are rhetorical and imply the previous fulfillment of the conditions by bringing up Israel's failure to believe.

In fact, Paul says, “**they have not all obeyed the gospel.**” The pronoun “**they**” is referring to Israel. But the words “**obeyed the gospel**” are problematic for those who do not rightly divide (separating Israel’s Kingdom Gospel from that of the age of grace). The only other time such an “obey the Gospel” phrase comes up is in 1 Thessalonians 1:8, in which Paul speaks of the Judgment of Christ at the Second Coming and thus Israel’s Kingdom Gospel rather than the Gospel of Grace.

It is difficult to reconcile the word "obey" with a gospel that is "not of yourselves" (Eph. 2:8). The New International Version (NIV) reconciles this by translating the Greek word ὑπακούω [hupakouo] as "accepted," despite translating it as "obey" in 19 of the remaining 20 instances of its use. Many commentaries either ignore the issue altogether or appeal to the etymology of the word, which means "to come under hearing," and use that to suggest that it means "to accept that which was heard." However, this argument is valid only if any instances of the word in actual use mean "to accept that which was heard," rather than "to obey," and no such validity can be found in Scripture.

Paul then quotes Isaiah 53:1, much like was done in John 12:38, to show the fulfillment of a prophesied rejection of the Messiah.

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#### VERSE 17 - BLACK

This verse is sometimes seen as a conclusion, but I think it is a bridge to Paul’s continuation of the argument, and should even be seen more as introductory to verses 18-21. Verse 17 echoes verses 14-15 and the need for the proclamation of “**the word of God.**”

👉 The critical texts read "word of Christ" instead of "word of God." This change in the modern versions was likely made by a scholar who felt that the Gospel needed to include Christ, and so made the change from the majority of texts. In reality, the Old Testament nature of the passage is much more consistent with "word of God." That is to say that the change was likely due to a failure to rightly divide.

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#### VERSE 18 - BLACK

Verses 18-21 each bring a Biblical argument that **Israel has heard** the Gospel of her Kingdom.

In verse 18 Paul presents one of the most intriguing arguments. Quoting from Psalm 19:4, Paul argues that Israel’s Gospel “**went into all the earth.**” What is so intriguing is that Psalm 19 is about the heavens making a declaration of God’s glory. When studied in its full measure, the only logical conclusion that can be made is that ***the stars themselves contain a message which the world has heard.*** In Psalm 19 the message itself is not given, forcing the reader to do research to discover, “**what is the message of the stars?**” Since Paul uses Psalm 19:4 as evidence that Israel has heard her Gospel, then the message of the stars must contain at least the word about the Messiah, the Kingdom, and the restoration of all things through the Kingdom. Those who desire to learn more should consult E.W. Bullinger’s “The Witness of the Stars,” available at Dispensational Publishing House and other book retailers.

Many Christian traditions resist the notion that the sun, moon, and stars herald the details of the Messianic age (i.e., the Kingdom Gospel). Instead, they propose a general interpretation of Psalm 19, essentially rendering the Psalm non-specific and thus, diluting its significance. However, this broad interpretation runs into a significant issue in Romans 10:18, where Paul invokes this verse to make a precise point, arguing that Israel cannot claim ignorance of the Gospel. In other words, this Psalm cannot simultaneously be a general declaration of God's glory and also serve as a specific indication that Israel cannot feign unawareness of the message Paul advocates they should heed. Christianity, in this respect, faces a paradox: it cannot conveniently interpret Psalm 19 as both non-specific and highly specific, depending on the context.

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#### VERSE 19 - BLACK

I propose a different understanding of verse 19. As currently printed, with insertions from translators, it ***may*** refer to the body of Christ. However, this goes against the principles of right division since this message came from Moses long before the body of Christ was revealed (see Eph. 3:1-12). The King James Version adds the words “***them that are.***” Most other translations do the same, some without even italicizing the inserted words.

If these words are removed, then Moses' warning becomes, “I will provoke you to jealousy upon no people.” This literal translation takes the common understanding of the Greek ἐπί [epi] as “upon” rather than “by.” Doing so enables the interpretation that “I will provoke you to jealousy by making you no people at all.” This interpretation fits with Moses' prophetic understanding at the time and also aligns with the literal interpretation of Hosea’s “Lo Ammi” (not a people) prophecy. With this same reasoning, the “**foolish nation**” (literally "nation without understanding") refers to Israel itself.

If the more standard replacement theology perspective is accepted, it also puts the church in the awkward position of being called a "foolish nation." This is untenable because the body of Christ is "complete in him" (Col. 2:10) and is not a nation at all.

Furthermore, only by embracing this proposed interpretation does the consistency of Paul's argument in this passage - that Israel has indeed heard - remain intact. The traditional understanding, with its inserted words, disrupts the flow of Paul's reasoning. In contrast, by considering that God intended to provoke Israel by reducing them to a status of 'no people', we maintain the coherence of Paul's line of thought. Paul's argument from verses 18 to 21 is that Israel has been adequately informed about their Kingdom Gospel, and this interpretation aligns perfectly with that narrative. Therefore, this alternate reading is not only more faithful to the original text and to the historical context, but it also brings greater clarity and continuity to the overall argument Paul is presenting in this passage.

#### VERSES 20-21 - BLACK

Paul fortifies the argument that the previous verse pertains to Israel, who is on the verge of becoming a "**no people**" and a "**foolish nation**," by citing Isaiah 65:1-2. Isaiah's prophecy reveals what transpires after Israel assumes the status of "**no people**." Specifically, he says, "**I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me**" (v. 20). In this verse, God expresses joy over being discovered by Israel, who previously did not seek Him. Yet, He simultaneously mourns that "**All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.**" (v. 21, from Is. 65:2).

Paul's citation of these verses from Isaiah completes his argument, demonstrating that Israel has been thoroughly informed about the message of the Kingdom Gospel, understands the demands it places upon them, and is aware of the consequences of rejecting it. Ultimately, Paul makes a case that Israel is teetering on the brink of becoming a "**no people**."