

The Impossible Salvation (10:5)

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

Misunderstanding Leviticus 18:5

- The New Testament corrects a predominate misunderstanding of the purpose of the Old Testament, specifically a passage in Leviticus: “*Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, “I am the LORD your God. You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes. You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the LORD your God. So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD”’*” (Leviticus 18:1-5).
- While this verse describes an obedient life to God’s Law as a response to His gracious salvation and covenant-entering with His people, the Pharisees interpreted it as a works-based religion or salvation. Paul is trying to correct that faulty interpretation.
- So what? Why does the misunderstanding of A.D. 1st century Jews in the reading of their religious book matter to us today at all? Because the spiritual heart-foundation of this misunderstanding is the spiritual heart-foundation of all of lost humanity, no matter their ethnicity or religion or language or age. **It is a universal misunderstanding of the truth in the spiritual heart of humanity – we believe we are saved by things we do.** This is a humanity-problem, addressed by Paul through the misunderstanding of a single people (the Jews) at a particular time (A.D. 1st century).

The Inferiority of Law-Righteousness

- Paul claimed that, “*as to the righteousness which is in the Law*” he was “*found blameless*” (Philippians 3:6). He means that no one could accuse him of breaking God’s Law – his outward life was exemplary.
- However, we know that God’s perfect standard is far greater than the opinions of other human beings.¹
- Immediately after making a claim to blamelessness in his outward Law-keeping, Paul says: “*But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith*” (3:7-9; see also Galatians 3:10-12).

Remember the Function of the Law

- **READ Psalm 78:5-8.** Why did God give the Law to O.T. Israel? Do you see from these verses faith and unbelief?

Only One Man Has Lived This Life

- There is only one man who has lived a life of perfect obedience to the Law of God – Jesus Christ.
 - He was made to be fully human, like us in every way except that He did not sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5).
 - Sin is a breaking of God’s Law (1 John 3:4); Jesus never sinned. Jesus perfectly obeyed

¹ In the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5:21-48), Jesus teaches that God’s standard of obedience to His Law goes to our hearts – making mere outward Law-keeping insufficient to salvation.

God’s Law, alone among humanity in earning eternal life by good works.

- Who earns eternal life? *“...God...will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek”* (Romans 2:5-10). Only one Man comes through this judgment earning “eternal life” and “glory and honor and peace.” That Man is Jesus Christ. We can only be saved by faith with Him, by which His righteousness is credited to our account before a holy Judge, the perfect God Who rightly expects perfect obedience to Him.

The Closeness of Salvation (10:6-8)

10:6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows [in Deuteronomy 30:12-14]: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down), 10:7 or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” 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...

Deuteronomy 30

- Since Paul is quoting from Deuteronomy 30, we would do well to familiarize ourselves with it (I personally believe this is exactly what Paul would have us do).
- Deuteronomy, which means “second Law,” is a renewing of God’s covenant with Israel. The generation saved out of 430 years of slavery in Egypt through the Exodus did not have faith in God, and therefore were not saved from eternal separation from God because of their sin (Hebrews 3:19; 4:2). God condemned that

generation to wander in the desert for forty years, between Egypt and the Promised Land, until they died. Their children were raised in the desert (Numbers 14:33). Now, on the edge of the Promised Land, Moses leads this second generation to commit themselves to the Lord.

- In Deuteronomy 27-28, the people rehearsed the blessings for covenant obedience and the curses for covenant disobedience. The curses include a long-term description of invasion by foreign army and exile in a foreign land – exactly what happens to the northern ten tribes of Israel in 722 B.C. and the southern two tribes in 586 B.C.
- The covenant is ratified in Deuteronomy 29. God foretells that both the blessings and cursings will fall on the people. In Deuteronomy 30, God tells them what He will do after they are exiled in a foreign land:
 - 30:1-5 promises the Restoration after the Exile (which happened in 539 B.C.).²
 - 30:6-14 gives us the promise of the new covenant in Jesus Christ:
 - *“...the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live”* (30:6). Paul has already used this language in Romans 2:28,29 (see also Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:11,12).
 - God’s covenant people are promised blessings and the cursings are

² Jesus uses this gathering language to describe His growing His Church (John 10:16; 11:52; see also Acts 15:14; Ephesians 2:15-18). You and I, when we were saved by faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, became part of this gathering together of God’s covenant people from all the parts of the world.

reserved for their enemies (30:7-10).
In the new covenant, *“every blessing in the heavenly places”* are given to us by the Father through Christ (Ephesians 1:3), and Christ is now reigning at the Father’s right hand, and *“He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet”* (1 Corinthians 15:25).

- In Deuteronomy 30:12-14, we come to the passage Paul quotes in Romans 10:6-8. **God has not hidden His plan for the salvation of His people. He has not made it difficult for them to find, and has not made their salvation too hard. He has accomplished it all in Christ, as we are to believe in that accomplishment.**
- The *“commandment”* of the Law in Deuteronomy 30 is embodied in the life of *“Christ”* according to Paul’s meditation on Deuteronomy here. When God asks, *“have you perfectly loved and obeyed Me?”*, we plead *“Christ,”* and *“Christ”* alone!
- From incarnation (*“bring Christ down”*) to ascension after the resurrection (*“bring Christ up from the dead”*), Christ’s obedient life is the *only answer* to the demand that we live in perfect obedience to God’s Law.

The Word of Faith Which We Are Preaching

- God has, through His messengers, made the saving *“word of faith”* near to us all.
- Please, oh please notice that we must preach the *“word of faith”*! If don’t preach it, nobody will, and it will not be heard. The *“word of faith”* is the only *“word”* that has the power to save! READ Romans 1:16,17.
- Is the *“word of faith”* written on your hearts? Is it behind every thought you think? Is it in your words to your

family, your neighbors, your co-workers, your schoolmates? Is it the foundation behind all of your convictions about how lives and nations are to be healed of their sin-sickness? If there is anything that is equal to or greater in your thoughts and words and heart than the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you are not preaching the *“word of faith.”*

What Must We Do to Be Saved (10:9-13)?

Confess and Believe (10:9,10)

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

- Confessing *“Jesus as Lord”* is not just an affirmation of belief in Jesus, but in *“Jesus as Lord.”* He is *“Lord,”* not just the greatest authority, but He is God. You cannot fool God – to confess *“Jesus as Lord”* is to recognize Him as the greatest authority in your life not just as one authority among many, but as God Himself, Creator of heaven and earth.
- If you *“confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord,”* don’t think yourself better than the unbeliever next door or on television. If you *“confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord,”* humbly give thanks to God for this grace and plead with God that He do this miracle in the lives of the lost around you: *“...no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit”* (1 Corinthians 12:3b).
- Your faith must be a resurrection faith – a belief not just that Jesus died on the cross for your sins, but a belief that He rose from the grave in victory over the universal sin-penalty of death: **READ 1 Corinthians 15:1-4,21-26,56,57.**

Old Testament Proof #1 (10:11)

10:11 *For the Scripture says [in Isaiah 28:16], “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.”*

- Paul’s already given us this quote in 9:33.

Old Testament Proof #2 (10:12,13)

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; 10:13 for [as it is written in Joel 2:32] “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

The God of All Types of People

- The apostle again appeals to the oneness of God in His saving of all types of people; he made this same argument earlier: “...we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God Who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one” (3:28-30).
- There is no people group from which God cannot save. His goal from Genesis 12:3 (which Paul calls “Gospel” in Galatians 3:8) is to save from out of “every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9).

The Wealth of God

- He is “abounding in riches for all who call on Him.” What is the wealth of God for His people? Salvation.
 - “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4).
 - God is astoundingly patient toward those deserving His wrath, so that He can “make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which

He prepared beforehand for glory”
(9:23).³

Jesus, God of the Old Testament

- When we look back at Joel 2:32, we see the Old Testament covenant name of God used: “...it will come about that whoever calls on the name of **the LORD** [יהוה] will be delivered.” This is the name God Himself gave Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:13-15).
- This quote from Joel which uses the Old Testament name for God, is quoted by the apostle Paul and applied to Jesus Christ.⁴ Paul is clearly reminding us that Jesus Christ is fully God!
- The phrase “call on the name of the Lord” is used in the Old Testament to describe prayer.⁵
- In addition, Paul’s quote from Joel 2 is near another quote that was exceedingly important for the early Church, where God promises, “I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind” (Joel 2:28, quoted in Acts 2:17). Just as He saves all those who call on His name (Jesus), He pours out His Spirit without regard to ethnicity.

³ For more on the riches of God in our salvation through Christ, READ Ephesians 1:7,18; 2:7; 3:8,16; Philippians 4:19; Colossians 1:27; 2:2. Especially look at the choice of Moses in Hebrews 11:26, contrasting that with the choice of those who reject the faith for the riches of the world (Matthew 13:22//Mark 4:19// Luke 8:14). Paul ends this section of Romans 9-11 by praising God for the “riches” of His wisdom in the plan of salvation.

⁴ Paul also does this in Philippians 2:11, where he quotes Isaiah 45:23; and in 1 Corinthians 2:16, where he quotes Isaiah 40:13.

⁵ For example, see Genesis 4:26; 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25; 33:20; 1 Samuel 12:17,18; 2 Samuel 22:4,7; 1 Kings 8:43,52; 17:21; 18:24; Psalm 4:2; 13:4; 17:4; 30:18; 52:5 (this list is not exhaustive).