

## Romans 9:30 – 10:4 (ESV)

### Israel's Unbelief

<sup>30</sup> What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; <sup>31</sup> but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness<sup>[a]</sup> did not succeed in reaching that law. <sup>32</sup> Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, <sup>33</sup> 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.”

**10** Brothers,<sup>[b]</sup> my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. <sup>2</sup> For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup> For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. <sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.<sup>[c]</sup>

## Romans 9:30 – 10:4 (HCSB)

### Israel's Present State

<sup>30</sup> What should we say then? Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained righteousness—namely the righteousness that comes from faith. <sup>31</sup> But Israel, pursuing the law for righteousness, has not achieved the righteousness of the law.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>32</sup> Why is that? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were by works.<sup>[b]</sup> They stumbled over the stumbling stone. <sup>33</sup> As it is written:

Look! I am putting a stone in Zion to stumble over  
and a rock to trip over,  
yet the one who believes on Him  
will not be put to shame.<sup>[c]</sup>

### Righteousness by Faith Alone

**10** Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them<sup>[d]</sup> is for their salvation! <sup>2</sup> I can testify about them that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup> Because they disregarded the righteousness from God and attempted to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to God's righteousness. <sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end<sup>[e]</sup> of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

## English Standard Version Bible - *Study Bible*<sup>1</sup>

### Romans 9:30 – 10:4

**9:30-11:10 Israel's Rejection of God's Saving Promises.** God's sovereignty is compatible with human responsibility. Israel should have believed the gospel and trusted in Christ, but the majority refused to do so. Still, God's saving promises will be fulfilled.

**9:30-31** Paul assesses the situation: **Gentiles**, who were not God's chosen people and did not seek right standing with God, now enjoy that right standing **by faith**. **Israel** pursued right standing with God through the **law** but failed to achieve it.

**9:32** **Why** did Israel fail to achieve right standing with God through the law? They did not pursue obedience to the law in humble trust, but tried to make it a means of establishing their own righteousness. Such a use of the law led them to stumble over the **stone** (which was Christ confronting them), for those attempting to establish their own righteousness see no need to believe in Christ.

**9:33** The **stumbling** over Christ was prophesied in [Isa. 28:16](#). Those who trust in Christ will not experience end-time **shame**.

**10:1** Salvation is the issue throughout [chs. 9-11](#).

**10:2** The Jews' **zeal** and sincerity does not lead them to salvation. The broader principle is that many sincere, "religious" people are wrong in their beliefs.

**10:3** Many Jews did not believe in Christ because they failed to submit to **God's righteousness** and instead attempted to be righteous before God on the basis of their own works. On the contrast of the two ways to **righteousness**, see [Gal. 3:7-14](#).

**10:4** **End** probably includes the idea of both goal and termination. The Mosaic law has reached its goal in Christ (it looked forward to and anticipated him), and the law is no longer binding upon Christians (the old covenant has ended). Since Christ is the goal and end of the law, righteousness belongs to all who trust in Christ.

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1. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 9 & 10".

## Holman Christian Standard Bible - Study Bible<sup>2</sup>

### Romans 9:30 – 10:4

**9:30-10:21** Chapter and verse divisions in the Bible are modern inventions made for the convenience of readers. Chapters 9-11 are one unit of thought, and they must be understood together to get a complete picture of Paul's argument.

**9:30-33** Gentiles, who were not seeking **righteousness**, were granted it by grace through **faith**. They did not work for it or earn it. But **Israel** missed it by seeking righteousness through the **law** and by their **works**. They stumbled over the Messiah and did not believe in Him ([Isa 8:14](#); [28:16](#)). Jesus Himself warned Israel that they missed the "stone" ([Mt 21:42-44](#); see [Ps 118:22-23](#)).

**10:1** Paul saw no contradiction between election and prayer. Only a sovereign God, who has rights to move unilaterally in the affairs of humanity, can answer **prayer**. Among unbelievers we do not know beforehand who is elect and will come to faith upon hearing the gospel, but we can know that "God our Savior... wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" ([1Tim 2:4](#)). Paul therefore prayed for Jewish **salvation**, and we must be diligent to share the good news of Jesus with everyone. It is never proper to give up on someone as "non-elect."

**10:2-3** Both **zeal** and true **knowledge** are necessary if one is truly to know God and serve Him. In his zeal as a non-Christian Pharisee, Paul (then called Saul; see [Ac 7:58](#) and note there) persecuted the church ([Ac 22:3-5](#)). Likewise, zeal among unbelieving Jews led to Jesus' unjust execution. In spiritual blindness they not only missed God's way of **righteousness**, they opposed it.

**10:4** Christ is the **end of the law** in being both its fulfillment and its termination. Any system of salvation based on performance is excluded.

#### telos

Greek Pronunciation [TEHL ahss]

Uses in the NT 40

HCSB Translation end

Focus passage [Romans 10:4](#)

Uses in Romans 5

The Greek noun *telos* is related to the verbs *teleo* and *teleioo*, both meaning *to complete, perfect, finish*, and to the adjective *teleion*, meaning *complete, perfect, whole*. The term *telos* refers to the *consummation, completion, or fulfillment* of something. In the NT, *telos* is commonly used for the *end* of this life ([Mt 10:22](#); [Lk 18:5](#); [1Co 1:8](#); [Php 3:19](#); [Heb 3:14](#); [6:11](#); [7:3](#); [Rev 2:26](#)) or for events related to the *end* times ([Mt 24:6,13,14](#); [Mk 13:7,13](#); [Lk 1:33](#); [21:9](#); [1Co 10:11](#); [15:24](#); [2Co 11:15](#); [1Pe 4:7,17](#)). In Revelation *telos* occurs twice in the formula "the Beginning and the *End*" as a title for deity ([21:6](#); [22:13](#)). In [Romans 10:4](#) *telos* refers to Christ as "the *end* of the law," which is similar to Paul's statement that believers are no longer "under the law" ([Rm 6:14](#)). Christians do not relate to God through the old covenant God made with Israel at Mt. Sinai through Moses, but through the new covenant He made at the cross through Christ's blood (see [Jer 31:31-34](#); [Lk 22:20](#); [Heb 8:8-12](#)).

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2. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., HCSB Study Bible, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 9 & 10".

## NLT Life Application Study Bible<sup>3</sup>

### *Romans 9:30 – 10:4*

**9:31-33** Sometimes we are like these people, trying to get right with God by keeping his laws. We may think that attending church, doing church work, giving offerings, and being nice will be enough. After all, we've played by the rules, haven't we? But Paul's words sting—this approach never succeeds. Paul explains that God's plan is not for those who try to earn his favor by being good; it is for those who realize that they can never be good enough and so must depend on Christ. We can be saved only by putting our faith in what Jesus Christ has done. If we do that, we will never be disappointed.

**9:32** The Jews had a worthy goal—to honor God. But they tried to achieve it the wrong way—by rigid and painstaking obedience to the law. Thus, some of them became more dedicated to the law than to God. They thought that if they kept the law, God would have to accept them as his people. But God cannot be controlled. The Jews did not see that their Scriptures, the Old Testament, taught that salvation depended on faith, not on human effort (see [Genesis 15:6](#)).

**9:32** The "great rock" they stumbled over was Jesus. The Jews did not believe in him because he didn't meet their expectations for the Messiah. Some people still stumble over Christ because salvation by faith doesn't make sense to them. They think they must earn their way to God, or perhaps God will simply overlook their sins. Others stumble over Christ because his values are the opposite of the world's. He asks for humility, and many are unwilling to humble themselves before him. He requires obedience, and many refuse to put their wills at his disposal. Have you stumbled over this rock, or have you chosen to build your life on it?

**10:1** What will happen to the Jewish people who believe in God but not in Christ? Since they believe in the same God, won't they be saved? If that were true, Paul would not have worked so hard and sacrificed so much to teach them about Christ. Because Jesus is the most complete revelation of God, we cannot fully know God apart from Christ; and because God appointed Jesus to bring God and people together, we cannot come to God by another way. The Jews, like everyone else, must find salvation through Jesus Christ ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#)). Like Paul, we should pray that all Jews might be saved and lovingly share the Good News with them.

**10:3-5** Rather than living by faith in God, the Jews established customs and traditions (in addition to God's law) to try to make themselves acceptable in God's sight. But human effort, no matter how sincere, can never substitute for the righteousness God offers us by faith. The only way to earn salvation is to be perfect—and that is impossible. We can only hold out our empty hands and receive salvation as a gift.

**10:4** Christ accomplished the purpose for which the law was given in two ways: He fulfills the purpose and goal of the law ([Matthew 5:17](#)) in that he perfectly exemplified God's desires on earth. But he is also the termination of the law because in comparison to Christ, the law is powerless to save.

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3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1912-1913.

## Life Application Concise New Testament Commentary<sup>4</sup>

*Romans 9:30 – 10:4*

*Israel's Unbelief / [9:30–10:4](#)*

This section provides a summary in the middle of Paul's exposition on God's sovereign plan and an expanded explanation of the present position of the Jews. He realized that his teaching was creating a paradox, especially for his Jewish audience. How could it be that the acknowledged experts in righteousness would find their way to God barred, while those who were ignorant of righteousness were welcomed by God as long-lost children? Paul here contrasts the way of faith with the way of the law. Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not attain it—while the Gentiles, not seeking righteousness by the law, found it by faith in Christ.

**9:30** The gospel was preached to both Jews and Gentiles, but it was being accepted by far more Gentiles than Jews. The **Gentiles** did not have God's law, did not even know God, and were not even **seeking him**, yet they were being **made right with God**. Why? Because they were coming in **faith**.

**9:31-32** In contrast to the Gentiles, the **Jews tried to get right with God by keeping the law**, only to fail. They had incorrectly understood righteousness in terms of works. They could not keep the law perfectly, therefore they could not keep it at all. They tried to achieve right standing with God the wrong way—by **keeping the law and being good**. Thus some of them became more dedicated to the law than to God. They thought that if they kept the law, God would have to accept them as his people. But God cannot be obligated by us. The Jews did not see that their Scriptures, the Old Testament, taught salvation by **faith** and not by human effort—the point Paul made in the first part of this letter. As a result, they **stumbled over the great rock in their path**—the Lord Jesus Christ (see [1 Peter 2:4-8](#)). Jesus was not what they expected, so they missed him. In so doing they missed their only way of salvation. Jesus is a stumbling block to Jews and to all who by pride would rather have recognition for doing it on their own than for trusting Christ and his goodness.

Some people still stumble over Christ because salvation by faith doesn't make sense to them. They would rather try to work their way to God, or else they expect him simply to overlook their sins. Others stumble over Christ because his values are the opposite of the world's. Christ asks for humility, and many are unwilling to humble themselves before him. He requires obedience and many refuse to put their will at his disposal. The "rock" has caused them to stumble. They heard about Christ and misunderstood, so they tripped over the one thing that could have saved them.

**9:33** Paul quotes from [Isaiah 28:16](#). Isaiah declared God's warning of destruction to Israel by Assyria. Then he said, "**I am placing a stone in Jerusalem that causes people to stumble.**" This stone refers to the righteous few and to Christ. Some will stumble over him, but those who put their trust in him need never fear that their trust is misplaced. When we have placed our feet on the Rock of Zion, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, we **will not be disappointed**.

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4. Barton B. Bruce et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 614-615.

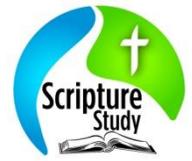
**10:1** Paul's concern for **the Jewish people** is genuine and heartfelt; his **longing** and **prayer** is that they **might be saved** (see also [9:1-3](#)). Paul worked hard and sacrificed much to teach Jews about Jesus Christ. Because Jesus is the most complete revelation of God, no one can fully know God apart from knowing Jesus; and because God appointed Jesus to bring God and human beings together, no one can come to God by another path. The Jews, like everyone else, can find salvation only through Jesus Christ ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#)). Just as Paul did, we should wish that all Jews might be saved. We should pray for them and lovingly share the Good News with them. In fact, we should ask ourselves, Who do I desire to be saved, and am I regularly praying for them?

**10:2** The Jews certainly had **enthusiasm** in their devotion to God and their practice of the law—Paul knew that from his own experience. However, it was **misdirected zeal**. The people Paul loved (the Jews) were so busy trying to keep the law that their zeal was actually keeping them from understanding God's way of salvation. This was exactly Paul's state of mind before Christ confronted him. He was so zealous for God and for his religion that he persecuted Christians (see [Acts 9:1-2](#); [22:3-5](#); [26:4-11](#)). His zeal was based on a misunderstanding of God's word, and so was the zeal of his fellow Jews.

**10:3-4** The Israelites did not understand the extent of God's righteousness, how it would be achieved, and how it would be made available to all people (the point Paul explained in [chapters 3–6](#)). Instead, they were **clinging to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law**. They were not creating some new kind of righteousness; rather, they wanted to achieve God's righteousness by observing the law and their rituals. Once their minds were set, they could not see **God's way**—that righteousness had been provided for them through faith in Jesus Christ, that the **whole purpose of the law** had been **accomplished** in him. Christ fulfills the purpose and goal of the law ([Matthew 5:17](#)) in that he perfectly exemplified all that the law requires.

# Study and Discussion Questions

For Oct 10 - 24 (3 weeks)



## Israel's Unbelief - [Romans 9:30-10:21](#)

Topics: [Desires](#), [Jesus Christ](#), [Law](#), [Righteousness](#), [Salvation](#), [Self-righteousness](#), [Unbelievers](#), [Zeal](#)

### Open It

1. \*When have you known someone who refused to listen to any advice or instruction?
2. How carefully do you follow the instruction sheet in a ready-to-assemble product?

### Explore It

3. By what means have the Gentiles (non-Jews) obtained righteousness? ([9:30](#))
4. \*What kept Israel from obtaining righteousness? ([9:31-32](#))
5. Over what has Israel stumbled? ([9:33](#))
6. What was Paul's greatest desire? ([10:1](#))
7. What positive trait did Paul recognize in the Israelites? ([10:2](#))
8. What had the Israelites done instead of submitting to God's righteousness? ([10:3-4](#))
9. What is the relationship between Christ and the Law in a person's pursuit of righteousness? ([10:4](#))
10. How did Moses describe righteousness that comes by the Law? ([10:5](#))
11. How does righteousness produced by faith come about? ([10:6-9](#))
12. What were the simple instructions Paul gave regarding personal salvation? ([10:9-10](#))
13. What promise is given to anyone who puts his or her faith in Christ? ([10:11](#))
14. \*What distinctions did Paul note in the way that Jews and Gentiles obtain their salvation? ([10:12-13](#))
15. What does it take to get the message of God to someone? ([10:14-15](#))

16. How have the Israelites responded to hearing the message of God? ([10:16-18](#))
17. \*How did Paul answer the argument that the Jews have not had adequate opportunity to hear God's message? ([10:18-21](#))
18. How had the response of the Gentiles to the message of God differed from the response of the Jews? ([10:18-21](#))

### **Get It**

19. What makes it hard for Jews to believe Jesus Christ is the Messiah?
20. What hinders non-Jews from believing Jesus Christ is the Lord and Savior of the world?
21. \*How can a person have great zeal for God or religious activities and yet be misguided?
22. What are the similarities and differences between a sports fanatic and a committed Christian?
23. How legitimate are claims by people who profess ignorance about Jesus' identity as Savior?
24. \*What groups of people in our society resemble the unbelieving Jews of Paul's time?
25. Why is it essential to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead?
26. Why is both believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth important for salvation?

### **Apply It**

27. \*When could you spend extended time in prayer to bring before God those groups or peoples who have shown little interest in the gospel?
28. Who in your circle of friends and family needs to hear about God's plan of salvation? When?