

KINGDOM.

LESSON 36

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about preaching God's kingdom to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) [QUIET TIMES] ISAIAH 41, 42, 45 and 46
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Take turns and share (or read from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your personal times with God out of the assigned Bible passages (Isaiah 41, 42, 45 and 46).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

3	MEMORISATION (5 minutes) [KEY VERSES IN ROMANS] REVIEW KEY VERSES IN ROMANS
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Review two by two the last 5 memorised key verses from Romans.

(11) **Romans 8:1.** Therefore, there is now no condemnation (doom) for those who are in Christ Jesus.

(12) **Romans 8:38-39.** For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(13) **Romans 10:9-10.** That if you confess with your mouth: "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

(14) **Romans 10:12.** For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.

(15) **Romans 10:17.** Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

4	BIBLE STUDY (85 minutes) [THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS] ROMANS 10:1-21
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Introduce. In Romans chapters 9 to 11 Paul shows that the rejection of unbelieving Jews and the salvation of believing Gentiles agree with what the Bible teaches. The reasons are:

- It was not against God's covenant promise, because **God has the sovereign right to choose whom he wants and to harden whom he wants** (Romans 9:6-24).
- It was clearly prophesied in the Old Testament revelation (Romans 9:25-29; Romans 10:18-21). Therefore **Israel has no excuse that the prophesied situation became reality**.
- **The message of salvation was as accessible to Israel during the Old Testament period as it is now to Gentiles and Jews during the New Testament period** (Romans 10:5-8).
- Salvation during the Old Testament period and during the New Testament period is only by faith (cf. Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6-9,26-29). **People are rejected for their unbelief and accepted for their faith** (Romans 9:30-33; Romans 10:1-4,11,17).
- Therefore **"there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles"** (Romans 10:12-13)!

STEP 1. READ.	GOD'S WORD
LET US READ Romans 10:1-21 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

STEP 2. DISCOVER.	OBSERVATIONS
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <i>Record.</i> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook.	

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share).
Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered.
(Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)

10:1

Discovery 1. Preaching the gospel of God's righteousness to lost people.

In Romans chapter 9 the apostle Paul teaches that God's sovereign prerogative is to show his mercy to the objects of his mercy and to withhold his mercy from the objects of his wrath (that is, his right to save who he wills and to harden who he wills (Romans 10:18,22-23).

But this fact may not determine how we as Christians ought to relate to the lost people in the world! Although God has a sovereign will with regard to whom he saves, he did not reveal that will to us. Our responsibility is to have a genuine concern for all the lost people in all the nations of the world, to pray for them and to preach the gospel to them. Election is God's prerogative, but proclaiming the gospel is our responsibility and task (Romans 10:1)!

10:2-4

Discovery 2. To be justified by keeping the law (Torah, sharia) is a misconception.

(1) Two kinds of righteousness.

This passage contrasts two kinds of righteousness:

- **Law-righteousness**, which the Jews pursue, is the idea that God will justify a person who keeps the law of Moses or any other law.
- **Faith-righteousness**, which God graciously gives, is the truth that God graciously imputes the righteousness which Christ earned to the life of everyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

(2) The failure of Israel to attain righteousness (Romans 10:2-3).

Although the nation of Israel was very zealous to attain righteousness in God's eyes by their works of the law (as they interpreted the law), their zeal was not based on understanding! Israel failed to obtain the righteousness of God, because they failed to realise that the righteousness of God can only be obtained through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:2).

The nation of Israel failed to attain God's righteousness, because she not only refused to submit to God's righteousness, but also sought to establish her own righteousness (Romans 10:3).

(3) Jesus Christ is the end of the law,

that is, the termination of the law (as a religious means to obtain righteousness).

Or Jesus Christ is the goal (fulfilment) of the law

(as God's revelation in the Old Testament) (Romans 10:4)

The words in Romans 10:4 can be translated in two ways.¹

Christ is "the end (termination)" of "the law". "The law" is understood in the sense of the principle to earn righteousness by keeping the Law of Moses as interpreted by the Jewish teachers of the law and the Pharisees who have made at least 613 additions to the law in the Bible. Jesus Christ ended this misconception of the Jews (Galatians 3:10-13). No one will be justified by keeping religious laws. A person can only be justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

Christ is "the goal (fulfilment)" of "the law". "The law" is understood in the sense of the Old Testament revelation, including its moral, ceremonial and civil laws (Matthew 5:17). Jesus Christ (and not laws) is the goal, the fulfilment or real content of the Old Testament! In this way people living during the Old Testament period were justified only by faith in the coming Messiah and people living during the New Testament period are justified only by faith in Jesus Christ who has come.

Both translations are true, but the intention here is probably: "Christ is the end of the law".

10:5-8

Discovery 3. Righteousness by faith in Christ is also the message in the Old Testament.

Paul makes two quotations from the Old Testament revelation (the Torah or Law) to prove that faith-righteousness is the exact opposite of law-righteousness.

(1) Leviticus 18:5 defines "law-righteousness" (Romans 10:5).

It says, "The man who does these things will live by them."

¹ De KBS (1995), NBV (2004), HSV 2010) vertalen: "Christus is het doel van de wet"
De SV (1618-19), NBG (1951), NIV (1973), NAV (1983) vertalen: "Christus is het einde van de wet"
De GNB (1982/1996) vertaalt: "Christus is het doel en het einde van de wet"

The law is God's absolute standard of judgement, condemnation and doom of sin. An absolute holy and righteous God requires nothing less than absolute perfect justice by punishing all sins. Because no sinner can fulfil this, he needs a Saviour who has been punished in the place and thus *made atonement* for the sinner who believes in him.

The law is God's absolute demand or requirement for justification (salvation). An absolute holy and righteous God requires nothing less than absolute perfect righteousness in order to be accepted (saved) by God. Because no man possesses this perfection, all people need a Saviour who has earned this absolute perfect righteousness in the place of man and *imputes* (ascribes, reckons, NIV: "credits") this righteousness to the person who believes in him.

The law is God's absolute demand or requirement for holiness (sanctification). An absolute holy and righteous God requires nothing less than absolute perfect holiness (holy living from beginning to end) in order to be accepted (saved) by God. Because no man possesses this perfection, all people need a Saviour who has earned this absolute perfect holiness in the place of man and *imparts* this holiness to the person who believes in him.

God's demand or requirement is that all people must obey his commands (100%) perfectly. Paul applies this Old Testament definition to prove that no man can become righteous in God's eyes in this way, because no one has kept or can keep God's law perfectly (100%)! The way of "law-righteousness" is doomed to fail!

(2) Deuteronomy 30:11-13 defines "faith-righteousness" (Romans 10:6-7).

It teaches that the truth what to know, believe and obey is accessible and near to people. People do not need to do anything to acquire righteousness. People do not need to ascend to heaven or travel across the sea to acquire this truth. Paul applies this Old Testament definition of "righteousness by faith" to prove that everyone has access to God's righteousness.

Any person has access to God's righteousness:

- by the first coming of Jesus Christ from heaven to earth (2000 years ago). No one needs to or can ascend to heaven to bring Christ down to earth (Romans 10:6)
- by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the abyss of the grave (2000 years ago). No one needs to or can descend into the grave in order to resurrect Christ from the dead (Romans 10:7)
- by the preaching of the gospel (the past 2000 years and today). The preaching of the gospel makes God's truth concerning righteousness (salvation) available for every human being on earth so that he can know, believe and obey it.
- by having God's word in the heart and in the mouth (now). The gospel is God's Word which a person must believe with his heart and confess with his mouth (Romans 10:8). "The gospel is God's power for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

(3) The task to fulfil the just requirements of God's law was not given to people, but to Jesus Christ (Romans 10:6-7).

Romans 10:4-5 describes the state of righteousness, which only Jesus Christ has acquired (earned). Because Jesus Christ is the Only One in human history who has lived completely perfect on earth (John 8:46; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26-28), who has conquered death (Matthew 28:6-7; 1 Corinthians 15:20) and after his resurrection lives forever (John 11:25; Hebrews 7:23-25), he is the Only One in human history who has fulfilled the requirements of God's law! He is the Only One who "did these things and lived by them" (Romans 10:5)!

Romans 10:6-7 describes the same state of righteousness, which people receive by God's free grace and through faith in Jesus Christ and not by their efforts to keep the law (see also Ephesians 2:8-9).

Paul proclaims the New Testament truth in Old Testament terms (words). He can do this, because he already proved that the way to justification in God's eyes was the same during the Old Testament period as is now during the New Testament period: the righteousness of God has always been "justification by faith" and never "justification by the works of the law" (Romans 1:17; 3:21-22; 4:1-3)!

Moses gave instructions (among other things, the law) to Israel *who were already God's people*, shortly before Israel entered the Promised Land (1407 B.C.). God would send his curses over people that disobeyed him (Deuteronomy 27:9-26) and send his blessings over people that obeyed him (Deuteronomy 28:8-14). Then Moses spoke the words, which Paul quotes (Deuteronomy 30:11-14). With these words, Moses emphasised that the law was given to Israel *in the context of grace (and not in the context of human works/obedience)*. The Promised Land and its blessings were God's gracious gift to Israel. Also the righteousness (salvation) was God's gracious gift to Israel. It was never the result of the energetic efforts of people trying to keep the law (cf. Deuteronomy 8:17-18; 9:4-6), but was and still is a gracious gift to every person who believes (Hebrews 4:1-3a).

What Paul wants to say is that the task to fulfil the righteous requirements of God for justification and sanctification (that is, for salvation from beginning to end) was never assigned to man. This task was assigned to Jesus Christ and he only fulfilled the task!

Jesus Christ was God that took on the human nature (John 1:14). He suffered the agonies of hell in the place of believers in him (Matthew 27:46). He died in their place as a sacrifice of atonement for their sins (Romans 3:25), so that

God may declare them righteous by faith. He was raised from the dead, so that they may be able to live the new and holy life (Romans 6:4). He ascended into heaven and sat at the right hand of God, so that he may rule as King and Lord over believers. As Lord, he works out their salvation from its beginning (at rebirth and justification) to its end (at his second coming and the resurrection of their bodies). He guarantees the complete and perfect salvation of believers (Romans 8:29-30; cf. Philippians 1:6).

Every human effort to ascend to heaven as it were to bring Christ down would be a renunciation of the reality and value of his *incarnation*. And every human effort to descend into the grave to bring Christ out of the dead would be a renunciation of the reality and significance of his *resurrection* from the dead. No human being contributed anything to the birth of Christ or to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. No human being can contribute anything to his own salvation! No man can try to keep the law and think that it could accomplish the same as the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension and enthronement of Jesus Christ! “Jesus Christ was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (Romans 4:25). Jesus Christ accomplished everything necessary for the complete and perfect justification of a believer!

(4) The word that requires faith and evokes faith is very accessible (Romans 10:8).

Paul quotes Deuteronomy 30:14a, “The word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart”. Paul is thinking of the “word” as the gracious promises and admonitions in the book Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 5:6; 6:4-9; 7:7-9; 10:12-13; 11:13-15,22-25; 18:15-18; 26:16-19; 28:1-14), which required faith as a response and which evoked faith. All these words in the book of Deuteronomy were given to Israel *in the context of God’s grace*. God had already saved Israel out of their slavery in Egypt. He was already their God and they were already God’s justified people (Deuteronomy 5:6; cf. Exodus 20:1-2). These words were not given to the Israelites *in the context of human works*. The Israelites were not required to keep the law in order to be justified and become God’s justified people! On the contrary, they were called *to live as God’s saved people!*

Paul elaborates this “word” as “the word of faith that we are proclaiming”. “The word of faith” (Greek: to réma té^s pisteós) is not only God’s Word as it is revealed in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy), but also God’s Word as it is proclaimed in the New Testament. “The Word of faith” does not only mean that God’s Word demands (requires) faith as a response, but also that God’s Word evokes faith in the hearts of people. The word of faith elicits a response of faith in order to exert a saving effect.

If this happens, God’s Word leads to the justification by faith in both the Old Testament as the New Testament. The way of justification (salvation) is thus exactly the same in the Old Testament as in the New Testament.

- God’s Word was near to the people during the Old Testament period: “in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it” (Deuteronomy 30:14). The Israelites had already confessed God’s Word with their mouth and believed it with their heart. Israel was already God’s people! Israel did not have to become God’s people by keeping the law!
- God’s Word is also near the people during the New Testament period: “in your mouth and in your heart” (Romans 10:8) The Christians at Rome had already confessed the gospel with their mouth and had already believed it with their heart. The Church was already God’s people! It did not have to become God’s people by also keeping the law!

“The Word of faith” (verse 8) is “the Word of Christ” (verse 17). (Here a Genitive with objective sense: with Christ as the contents and subjective sense: spoken by Christ. People not only passively hear the preachers speaking the word, but actively hear the voice of Christ himself speaking in their heart!

STEP 3. QUESTION.	EXPLANATIONS
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?	
Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 1:1-17 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.	
<i>Record.</i> Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.	
<i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)	
<i>Discuss.</i> (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.) (The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)	

10:4

Question 1. How should we understand Romans 10:4: Christ is “the end” or “the goal” of the law??

Notes.

See manual 11, supplement 13.

10:5

Question 2. How should we understand the principle “The man who does these things (obeys God’s laws) will live by them”?

Notes.

(1) Before the fall into sin obedience to the law maintained the original state (position) of righteousness and innocence.

(Maintaining) righteousness (salvation) by keeping the law was only possible before the fall into sin. Because Adam possessed eternal life before the fall into sin and had not yet sinned, he was righteous in God's eyes. He could lose this righteousness only by disobedience! God's prohibition to Adam in Genesis 2:15-17 was not intended that Adam by obeying this law could earn (bring about, gain) his justification, but rather that Adam through obedience could maintain (keep on possessing) his state of righteousness (that is, the eternal life).

(2) After the fall into sin obedience to the (moral) law expresses the righteous life of a believer.

After the fall into sin, the works of the law were never the ground for justification (salvation). The principle: "The man who does/obeys (aorist tense, active) them, will live (future tense expressing certainty) by them" (Leviticus 18:5) was only a principle of maintaining justification in the state of innocence before the fall into sin. It was never a principle of gaining justification in the state of sin after the fall into sin.

Leviticus 18:1-5 clearly shows that the words refer to the principle of God's approval in the state of justification. It has the same meaning as in Exodus 20:1-17. After God had saved his people, the Israelites, (from the house of slavery) (Exodus 20:1-2), he commands them *to live as God's saved people* by keeping the Ten Commandments. It does not mean that they will become God's people by keeping the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17). Likewise Leviticus 18:1-5 is directed to God's saved people and commands the Israelites how they ought to live as God's saved people. By keeping God's law (the Ten Commandments), God's people maintain their relationship to God, their possession of eternal life and their approval of God: they will (continue to) live the saved life, they will prosper and prolong their days in the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 5:32-33).

10:9-10

Question 3. What is the relationship between believing in the heart and confessing with the mouth?

Notes.

(1) Summaries of the gospel.

In the New Testament there are several different ways of summarising the gospel:

In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 the gospel according to the Scriptures is that Christ died for our sins and was raised on the third day. We are saved when we hear the preaching of the gospel, receive it, take our stand on it and hold firmly to it.

In Romans 10:9-13 the gospel is that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead and Jesus Christ is the Lord. We are saved when we hear the gospel, believe it in our hearts, call on the name of the Lord and confess him with our mouths.

Thus in Romans 10:9-13 Paul stresses two aspects of the gospel message, namely, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (two thousand years ago) and his kingship (rule) from heaven over everything and all (in the present time). He also emphasises two aspects of receiving the gospel, namely, to believe in one's heart and to confess with one's mouth. However, this summary does not teach that "believing in the heart" or "confessing with the mouth" has the same function or effect with regard to salvation.

(2) The relationship between believing in the heart and confessing with the mouth.

The quotation from Deuteronomy 30:14 with regard to God's word in the heart and in the mouth is thus the same truth in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Paul uses the order "mouth-heart" in verse 9, because that was the order in Deuteronomy 30:14. He uses the order "heart-mouth" in verse 10, because that is the natural order: a person confesses with his mouth what is already present in his heart (cf. Matthew 12:34). The righteousness (salvation) of God is obtained only through faith in the heart and this leads to confession with the mouth.

The heart is the centre around which human life revolves. It is the centre of a person's mind, will and emotions (Proverbs 4:23). It is essential to believe that God raised Christ from the dead, because the resurrection proves that Jesus is truly "the Lord" (Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-11). The word "Lord" (Greek: kurios) means nothing less than that Jesus is the LORD (Hebrew YaHWeH), the name of God in the Old Testament revelation (compare Mark 1:3 with Isaiah 40:3). Paul says, "Christ is God over all"² (Romans 9:5).

"To believe" and "to confess" do not have the same function or effect with regard to justification (salvation). "To confess" without believing is in vain (cf. Matthew 7:21-23). And "to believe" without confessing is renouncing Christ (cf. Matthew 10:32; John 12:42). Believing in the heart is absolutely indispensable for justification (salvation) (cf. John 3:18,36). And confessing with the mouth, just like good works, is the evidence that faith in the heart is genuine and upright (Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Corinthians 4:13; James 2:17-22; 1 John 3:18-20). People who really believe cannot help speaking what they have seen or heard (Acts 4:20; 1 Timothy 6:12; 1 John 4:15). "The justification" and "the salvation" in verse 10 are synonyms, because salvation in verse 9 is the product of both believing and confessing. Salvation has its

² Greek: ho ón epi pantón Theos.

origin in the heart and finds expression through the mouth. Faith leads to justification (cf. Romans 4:5) and thus also to salvation from God's eternal wrath (cf. Romans 1:16; 5:9-10). Faith is the instrument by which people are justified. Faith is the empty hand that receives God's salvation by grace.

10:11-13

Question 4. Why is there since the first coming of Jesus Christ no longer any difference between the Jew and the Gentile (non-Jew)?

Notes. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, because of three reasons:

- All believers in Christ have been made into one people of God. Believers in Jesus Christ from among the Gentile nations and believers in Jesus Christ from among the Jews "have been created one new man in Christ" and "fellow-citizens with God's people" (Ephesians 2:11-22). They are on complete equal footing "heirs together with Israel (God's people)", "members together of one Body (the Church) and "sharers together in the promise in Christ" (Ephesians 3:2-6; cf. 2 Corinthians 1:20-22). "There shall be one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:16)!
- Jesus Christ is the Lord of all people in the universe (cf. Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:11).
- The gospel is available to everyone. The terms for salvation for every person in every nation on earth is exactly the same: he must believe in his heart that Jesus Christ died on the cross in his place for his sins and was resurrected from the dead (thus, that Jesus Christ lives)! He must call on the Name³ of Jesus Christ in order to be saved; and he must confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord (verse 9 and 13).

(1) There is no difference between believers in the Messiah during the Old Testament period and believers in Christ during the New Testament period (Romans 10:11)

Paul repeats Romans 9:33b (Isaiah 28:16) here, but adds the word "all or anyone". "All who trusts in him will never be put to shame" (Romans 10:11). Paul can add the word "all or anyone", because there is absolutely no difference in the way Jews were justified during the Old Testament period and the way Jews and Gentiles are being justified during the New Testament period. This was a very difficult truth for Jews to accept. Does Paul really announce that the Jews, who were the very privileged descendants of Abraham, were nothing better in God's eyes than the non-Jews?

This is also a difficult truth for certain non-Jewish Christians who have always believed that the natural nation of Israel or Jews were God's chosen people and that God still has a special programme in the future for the natural nation of Israel. On the whole they have based their theories on the Old Testament revelation.

However, the overwhelming light of the New Testament revelation clearly teaches that although the Jewish nation had certain privileges during the Old Testament period (Romans 9:4-5; Ephesians 2:11-13), from the first coming of Jesus Christ onwards God no longer makes any differentiation between Jew and non-Jew, between the nation of Israel and the other Gentile nations in the world (Romans 10:12; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 3:2-6; Colossians 3:11; Revelation 21:10-14)!

During the Old Testament period, the Jews were *only saved by faith in the Messiah that would come in the future* (cf. Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6-9). The Jews, who did not believe, were rejected (Isaiah 1:9; 10:20-23; Hosea 1:6,9). During the Old Testament period also the non-Jews, who believed in the LORD, were added to God's Old Testament people (Isaiah 56:1-8). During the New Testament period, not only Jews, but also non-Jews (Gentiles) are *only saved by faith in the Messiah that has come* and they are added to God's one and only people (Romans 1:16-17; 2:11; 3:10-18,22-24,29-30; 4:9-12; 5:18-19; 9:24; 10:12; 11:32; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 3:9,29; 5:6; 6:15; Ephesians 2:14-18; 3:2-6; Colossians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:9-10).

(2) There is no difference between the Lord of the Jews and the Lord of the Gentiles (Romans 10:12)

"The same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." This was already true during the Old Testament period (Joel 2:32) and is still true during the New Testament period (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13). There exists only one living God. "Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. Apart from me (the LORD) there is no saviour" (Isaiah 43:10-11). The only God is the God of the Jews who believe in Jesus Christ and the God of the non-Jews who believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:29).

Jesus Christ revealed himself as Lord, the King over everyone and everything in the universe (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23; Revelation 17:14). The lordship of Jesus Christ over all people on earth is the reason why there is no difference between any of the people groups on earth! God is rich (Haggai 2:9; Psalm 5:10-12) for all his creatures on earth (Acts 14:17) and he blesses all believers with all kinds of blessings in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3; 2:7). "In Christ the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9) and Christians from all the nations on earth receive from his fullness one blessing (grace) after another (John 1:16-17).

³ Name of the Lord" means just as the Lord has revealed himself in the Bible and not as people in the world, members of other religions, theology, philosophy or science may think about him.

(3) There is no difference between a Jew or a non-Jew who call on the Name of the Lord (Romans 10:13).

Paul quotes Joel 2:32, “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” With this Paul confirms from the Old Testament revelation that there is no difference between Jew and non-Jew. “Calling on the name of the LORD” refers first of all to the prayer when someone asks Jesus Christ to come into his heart and life. But it also refers to the continuing worship of the Lord thereafter. Note well that Paul applies Old Testament passages that refer to God (the LORD) (Hebrew: JaHWeH without distinction to the Lord (Greek: kurios) Jesus Christ! This is a further proof that the apostle Paul taught that Jesus Christ is God. It is the distinguishing mark of Christians in the New Testament that they gave Jesus Christ the name “Lord” (Greek: kurios). That is why they also worshipped the Lord Jesus Christ with the worship that is only given to God (Matthew 14:33; 28:9,17; Luke 24:52; John 9:38; Revelation 5:6-14)!

Because there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, the gospel must be proclaimed to all people, whether Jew or non-Jew, so that as many people as possible may be saved.

10:14-15

Question 5. How should Christians proclaim the gospel?

Notes. Romans 10:14-15 say, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

(1) The necessity of proclaiming the gospel.

These verses teach that the gospel should be proclaimed to everyone. Without the preaching of the gospel in any of its many forms, no one can come to faith in Jesus Christ.

(2) The historical order of the process of salvation.

The historical order of the process of salvation as seen from the human point of view is given in reversed order, so that the result is mentioned first and the cause is mentioned last. Authorised messengers *proclaim* the gospel. People *hear* the gospel. They *believe* the gospel (that is, receive Jesus Christ into their heart and life and confess him with their mouth). They are *saved* (or justified). In this Bible passage especially the Jews are in view (Romans 10:1-3,19,21; 11:1). Nevertheless, this process of salvation is also true of the Gentiles. Every person must respond to what he hears.

(3) The authorised messengers of the gospel.

The messengers are authorised messengers, because Jesus Christ sent them. “He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me” (Luke 10:16; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20). The preachers of the gospel must know that Jesus Christ has called them and sent them to proclaim the gospel. The people, who have not been called and have not been sent, are false prophets who only preach the delusions of their own minds, false dreams, reckless lies and distortions of God’s Word (*read* Jeremiah 23:9-40). But the preachers of the gospel bring great joy to their hearers (cf. Isaiah 52:7).

(4) The genuine hearing of the gospel is a personal confrontation and encounter with Jesus Christ.

People should *hear* the gospel, that is, people must not only understand what they hear, but must also be *able to respond to the Person who is speaking to them!* Note, Romans 10:14 literally says, “How can they call on the one whom they have not believed? And how can they believe (in him) *whom* they have not heard? (Not: “*about whom* they have not heard)? See Luke 9:35, “This is my beloved Son, you *must* listen to him! (Greek: autou akouete) (imperative). The Son of God himself (his voice) must be heard (not just a message about him)!

In the proclamation of the gospel, people must not simply hear about Jesus Christ, but hear Jesus Christ himself speak to them! Whenever the gospel is proclaimed, Jesus Christ himself wants to speak to people. Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the specific Word of (not: about) Christ (Greek: dia rématos Christos)! “Hearing about Jesus Christ” is not an encounter with Jesus Christ. But “hearing Jesus Christ himself speaking to you” is a personal encounter with him!

(5) Faith is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Faith in Jesus Christ is brought about by a personal confrontation with the specific words of Jesus Christ in the gospel to a person. Faith is thus a personal encounter with Jesus Christ in which a personal relationship (bond) is established with Jesus Christ! Faith is not simply an acknowledgement of certain truths about Jesus Christ. Faith is rather obedience to his personal call to follow him, the risk to take the first step to follow him and the commitment and determination to keep on following him. Faith is a growing trust in Jesus Christ. Faith means the relinquishment of every other confidence (faith) and the abandonment to Jesus Christ as your only help before you call on his name for salvation.

10:16-21

Question 6. Why is failure to respond to the gospel not excused?

Notes. The nation of Israel certainly heard the gospel, but the great majority of Israel has rejected the gospel (Romans 10:16-18). The nation of Israel certainly knew God's purpose with respect to blessing and saving many Gentiles (Genesis 22:18), but the great masses of Israel continued obstinately to disobey God. Stephen said, "You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised ears and ears! You are just like your fathers: you always resist the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:51)! As the New Testament shows, history unfolded exactly as the prophets had predicted it would happen. The unbelieving Jews only have themselves to blame for rejecting God and his Messiah. God's consequent rejection of the unbelieving Jews was certainly not arbitrary (Romans 10:19-21).

While Romans 10:14-15 teach that certain people will respond in faith to the proclamation of the gospel, verse 16-21 teach that other people will not respond to the gospel. This already happened in the Old Testament period of the prophets and also happened during the New Testament period of Jesus and the apostles. The good news was proclaimed, but not all the Israelites accepted the good news (cf. Hebrews 2:1; 4:1-2). At this point, Paul returns to his subject in Romans chapters 9 to 11, and explains the unbelief and disobedience of the great majority of the natural nation of Israel.

(1) The natural nation of Israel did not accept the gospel (Romans 10:16).

The text literally says, "Not all the Israelites accepted the good news." Although the gospel has been preached to the natural nation of Israel, not all Israelites have responded to the gospel. In fact many Jews rejected the gospel (Romans 9:27; 10:21; cf. Isaiah 53:1; John 1:11; 1 Corinthians 10:5).

(2) Faith comes by hearing the gospel (Romans 10:17).

The Bible contains many admonitions to respond to God's message (Matthew 11:15; 13:9,43; Luke 8:8,18; 14:35; Revelation 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22; 13:9). *The Word* that the Jews encountered in the gospel was nothing less than the Word that Christ himself spoke to them! The proclamation of the gospel to them was a confrontation with the words of Jesus Christ and therefore an encounter with Jesus Christ himself.

(3) The natural nation of Israel heard the gospel (Romans 10:18).

The natural nation of Israel cannot object that they did not hear the gospel.

- They already heard the words of Christ in the first five books of Moses (cf. Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:8; Deuteronomy 30:11-14; Romans 10:6-8).
- They already heard the words of Christ during the Old Testament period. Paul quotes Psalm 19:4 in Romans 10:18. While in Psalm 19:1-6, the Psalmist speaks of *God's general revelation* through his works of creation and providence, in Psalm 19:7-14, he speaks of *God's special revelation* through his Old Testament words. The Bible teaches throughout that God's general and special revelations are complementary (Act 17:24-31). While God's general revelation was proclaimed throughout human history without distinction (cf. Romans 1:19-20; 2:15; Psalm 19), God's special revelation was proclaimed throughout the Old Testament Scriptures to Israel (cf. Romans 3:21-22)
- They already heard the words of Christ during the New Testament period. The gospel was preached, disciples were made and the Bible was spread to Jews and non-Jews without distinction (Matthew 24:14; 28:19; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:16; 2 Peter 3:1-2, 15-16). During the days of the apostles, the gospel spread fast across the known world (Romans 15:8-12,22-24; Philippians 1:12-13; Colossians 1:6; John 12:19; Acts 2:41,47; 4:4; 17:6). Through the proclamation of the gospel to the uttermost parts of the world, the pattern of God's general revelation has now also become the pattern of God's special revelation!

(4) The natural nation of Israel understood the gospel (Romans 10:19).

The Jews cannot claim that they have not understood the gospel. It was not their *ignorance*, but rather their *stubborn unwillingness* that caused their unbelief. The nation of Israel had received sufficient knowledge and understanding about the way of salvation in order to make them fully accountable for their unbelief.

Paul quotes Moses in Deuteronomy 32:21b-22. "Because Israel made God jealous by what is no god (the idols), God would make Israel envious by those who are not a people (that is, the Church consisting mainly of non-Jewish believers)." Through their idolatry Israel kindled a fire in God's wrath that would burn to the realm of death (hell) and devour the land and its people. "How could one man chase a thousand or two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them (unbelieving Israel) and had given them up (Deuteronomy 32:21-22,30; Isaiah 30:15-17)? The ordinary rule for believers is the opposite (Leviticus 26:8; Joshua 23:10)! The idols are "the rock" of the heathen nations, but the LORD is "the Rock" of all true believers (Deuteronomy 32:31-33)!

In stead of the national people of Israel another much larger group of people would arise (namely, the Church) that would be composed of the believers of different (mainly Gentile) nations. God says, "I will make them jealous by what is no people. I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding" (Deuteronomy 32:21). This nation would initially have no knowledge or understanding of the special revelation of God in the Old Testament. Yet, the privileges that were initially given to Israel, would be given to a people "that is no people".

Also Jesus has Deuteronomy 32 in mind when he says, “The Stone (the Rock) the builders rejected has become the Capstone”; the Lord has done this. ... Therefore the kingdom of God will be taken away from Israel and given to a people who will produce its fruit” (Matthew 21:42-44).

Also Paul in Acts 13:44-48 thinks of Deuteronomy 32, “We had to speak the word of God to you (i.e the Jews) first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles (the non-Jews). For this is what the Lord has commanded us (the Church with among others the apostles) “I have made you (singular) (that is, the New Testament Church with its apostles) a light for the Gentiles (cf. Matthew 5:14), that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” “When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honoured the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life, believed” (Acts 13:48).”

But Isaiah 49:6 in Hebrew says, “It is too small a thing for you (singular) (that is, the Messiah, Jesus Christ) to be my Servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept (that is, the remnant). I will also make you (singular) (that is, the Messiah, Jesus Christ) as Light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.” Both the Hebrew and Greek texts are true: God gave Jesus Christ (John 8:12) and his church (Matthew 5:14) to be a light for the Gentiles.

Thus, the Jews not only understood the gospel and the conditions for salvation, but also that God planned to extend his revelation through the gospel to the Gentiles and bring them salvation! History unfolded exactly as the prophets had predicted it would happen.

**(5) The natural nation of Israel is passed by
due to her unbelief, disobedience and obstinacy (Romans 10:20).**

Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 65:1. While Isaiah refers to the nation of Israel, Paul applies the same words to the Gentiles.

In the Old Testament, Israel had complained that the LORD (Hebrew: YaHWeH) had hidden himself in heaven (Isaiah 63:9) and that he was holding himself back in silence (Isaiah 64:12). The LORD answered Israel’s complaint and said that he was very willing to reveal himself to Israel and had actually revealed himself to Israel, in spite of the fact that Israel had not asked for the LORD, had not sought the LORD and had not called on the LORD’s name. In spite of the LORD’s willingness and patience, Israel had responded with unbelief (Romans 9:32a), disobedience (Hebrews 4:1-6) and obstinacy (Romans 10:21). The natural nation of Israel had rejected the grace of the LORD. “You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace” (Galatians 5:4)! The natural nation of Israel “stumbled over the stumbling stone” (Romans 9:32b).

Just as Paul quoted Hosea 2:23 and 1:10, *but applied it* to the Gentiles in Romans 9:25-26, he quotes Isaiah 65:1 *and applies it* to the Gentiles in Romans 10:20. During the Old Testament period, the Jews enjoyed the privilege of finding the LORD even when they did not seek him. Now in the New Testament period, the Gentiles (and the Jews, if they want to) enjoy this privilege! Paul quotes the free and merciful grace of the LORD to Israel during the Old Testament period and applies it to the Gentile nations during the New Testament period!

The fact that God was now revealing himself to the Gentiles and that God was found by the Gentiles was a truth that many Jews simply could not believe and could not accept, even until today. The fact that strangers and aliens would become a part of God’s covenant people (cf. Isaiah 49:6; 56:1-8) *on completely equal terms* (Ephesians 3:2-6) angered the Jews. The by-product of spreading the gospel to all the nations in the world is the provocation and angering of the natural nation of Israel (Romans 11:14). This truth emphasises that neither the Jews nor any other nation or individual can make a natural claim on the God of the Bible! God has the sovereign right (prerogative) to turn to whomever he wants.

**(6) The natural nation of Israel remains responsible
for their rejection of the God of the Bible and his Messiah (Romans 10:21).**

Jesus Christ had quoted Psalm 118:22-23. The “Rock” (Deuteronomy 32:30) which the builders (the religious leaders and teachers in Israel) had rejected the Messiah, has become the “the Capstone” (that is, the Saviour and Lord of every believer). Therefore the kingdom (and its privileges) will be taken away from the unbelievers and disobedient in Israel and given to “a people who will produce its fruit” (the believers and obedient among the Jews and the Gentiles). The unbelievers and disobedient in Israel fall on the Stone, but the Stone will crush them (Matthew 21:41-45)! But to the believers and obedient in every nation the Stone will become the precious Cornerstone. The person “who trusts in him will never be put to shame” (1 Peter 2:6-10).

Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 65:2. God said concerning the natural nation of Israel, “All day long have I held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people” (cf. Matthew 23:37-38). Paul contrasts the grace shown to the Gentiles with the continued disobedience of Israel. God’s patience and loving-kindness was not simply made to a people, but to a constantly disobedient and obstinate people. This magnifies God’s grace, but at the same time reveals the depth of Israel’s rebellion.

Nevertheless, the message of the Bible to Gentiles and Jews today is still, “If you confess with your mouth *Jesus is Lord* and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (cf. Romans 11:23; cf. Hebrews 4:1)!”

STEP 4. APPLY.**APPLICATIONS**

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Romans 10:1-21.

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from Romans 10:1-21.

- 10:1. Let the desire of your heart and prayer to God be for the lost people in the world.
- 10:2. Religious zeal that is not based on knowledge of the truth as revealed in the Bible is absolutely in vain.
- 10:3. Never try to establish your own righteousness before God. Receive his righteousness instead.
- 10:9-10. Believe with your heart in Jesus Christ and confess your faith with your mouth to others.
- 10:14-15. Be convinced that people cannot come to faith unless they hear and understand the gospel.
- 10:16. Make sure that you really submit in obedience to the message of the Bible every time you hear it.
- 10:19-20. Go and preach the gospel to people, who have never heard it before, because God promised that they will find God.

2. Examples of personal applications from Romans 10:1-21.

I want to keep on submitting in obedience to God's word, which I read in my quiet time and hear in the church.

I want to go and preach the gospel to people who have never heard it before.

STEP 5. PRAY.**RESPONSE**

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Romans 10:1-21.

(Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

5**PRAYER** (8 minutes)

**[INTERCESSION]
PRAY FOR OTHERS**

Continue to pray in groups of two's or three's. Pray for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

6**PREPARATION** (2 minutes)

**[ASSIGNMENT]
FOR NEXT LESSON**

(*Group leader.* Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples, build the Church and preach the kingdom.
2. Preach, teach or study Romans 10:1-21 with another person or group of people.
3. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Isaiah 48, 49, 52 and 53** each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. Memorisation. Daily **review** the last 5 memorised Bible verses. (1) God's presence: **Hebrews 13:5-6.** Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. Teaching. Prepare the parable of "**the shrewd manager**" in Luke 16:1-13. Make use of the six guidelines for interpreting parables.
6. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
7. Update your notebook on preaching God's kingdom. Include your notes on quiet time, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.