

## 92. The Book of Romans 10:4

*Paul's Epistle to the Romans*

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

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(6-25-25)

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Tonight, we find ourselves in the 4<sup>th</sup> major section of the Book of Romans—which breaks down this way:

- I. **Condemnation**—*All people apart from Christ are lost and on their way to hell and need God's righteousness for salvation*—Romans 1:18-3:20
- II. **Justification**—*How a person acquires God's righteousness*—Romans 3:21-5:21
- III. **Sanctification**—*How a person lives a righteous life for God once saved*—Romans 6:1—8:39
- IV. **Restoration**—*Using Israel as an example of God's calling being permanent (irrevocable)*—Romans 9:1–11:36
- V. **Application**—*The practical demonstration or outworking of God's righteousness in the believer's life*—Romans 12:1–15:13

Tonight we pick up on our 4<sup>th</sup> major section:

### IV. **Restoration (of Israel)**—Chapters 9-11

#### A. **Israel's Past: Their Election by God**- Chapters 9:1-29

#### B. **Israel's Present: Their Rejection of God**—Chapters 9:30-10:21

Paul, once again, feels compelled to bare his heart regarding his fellow Jews—as many of them considered Paul a traitor and a hater of his Jewish countrymen.

#### **Romans 10:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

Paul is grieved that so many Jews stumbled over their own Messiah and rejected Him.

Why did the Jewish people do that? —For several reasons:

1. *Because He claimed to be a spiritual Messiah and not a political one.*
2. *Because He claimed to be God in human flesh.*
3. *Because He preached the gospel of grace as the only way to get to heaven and not the Law.*

This final reason why so many Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah was the one Paul zeroed in on—

**Romans 10:1–2 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel 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.**

As we said last time, there are many today who have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge—in other words, they have no knowledge of what true righteousness is all about (sinless perfection through Christ), nor the proper way to approach God. They are convinced that the way to approach God is through *religious* zeal (the Jews, Roman Catholics, Muslims etc.).

❖ A zeal for one's religion doesn't necessarily equal a zeal for God Himself—and the religious Jews were a prime example of that.

If you watch their lives, you will see that their so-called '**zeal for God**' has not produced a changed or holy life.

The problem with religion is that it gives a person a false sense of righteousness—or as someone has said, "*Religion gives a person just enough self-righteousness that it inoculates them to the real thing.*" And that is why having a zeal for God can be a dangerous thing—if it's rooted in *ignorance*:

**Romans 10:3 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> **For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.**

In other words, Paul is saying that the Jews were *willingly* ignorant of God's way of righteousness (the gospel of grace, which many Jews didn't even want to hear about). So, they rejected God's way, choosing instead their own way of being righteous and approaching God through the Law (i.e., 'religion').

It reminds me of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4—

**Genesis 4:2-5 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> ...Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. <sup>3</sup> And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

Here we have two brothers who are each trying to approach God—one (Abel) God accepted and the other (Cain) He rejected.

There are many that feel sorry for Cain as if God capriciously rejected him even though he was sincere in his attempt to come into God's presence to worship Him. What's obvious (even though it isn't stated clearly in the text) is that God had specified to each of them the proper way to approach Him.

This comes through in God's rebuke of Cain for his disobedience in Genesis 4:6-7:

**Genesis 4:6–7 (NLT)**

<sup>6</sup> "Why are you so angry?" the Lord asked Cain. "Why do you look so dejected?" <sup>7</sup> You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."

- So, the issue wasn't that God was being unfair to Cain or that He hadn't made Himself clear about the proper way of coming into His presence.
- The real issue was that Cain had simply rejected God's way of approaching Him (the way of righteousness) in favor of his own way—let's call it, *"Do it yourself religion."*

Many believe (including myself) that God rejected Cain's offering because he brought the *'works of his hands'* as a basis for his atonement and fellowship with God—whereas Able brought a blood sacrifice and offered it to God by faith (Hebrews 11:4).

God would go on to codify this in different places in the Law, not the least of which being Leviticus 17:11 where He said:

*"I have given you the blood upon the altar to make atonement for the soul, it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."*

Then in the New Testament this principle was restated when God said in Hebrews 9:22—*"Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."*

So, starting in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3) and continuing through the entire Bible—God makes a distinction between *"do it yourself religion"* and God directed righteousness.

As we studied a while back in our series, *"The Top 10 Lies of the Devil"*—without a doubt the biggest lie the devil has ever fed the human race—is the lie that you get to heaven by being good and doing good. Or in other words, that heaven is a *reward* for deserving people—folks, that is the lie of religion!

Every religion and religious system in the world apart from Christianity falls under the category of human achievement—in other words, what we do for God to earn His favor and a place in heaven someday (or paradise, nirvana etc.).

Whereas only Christianity (which is not a religion but a relationship) falls under the category of divine accomplishment—in other words, what God has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ to offer us a place in heaven as a gift.

Religion is spelled *"DO"* (as in 'do', 'do', 'do' and maybe someday you'll do enough to earn heaven)—whereas Christianity is spelled *"DONE"* (as in Jesus' declaration from the cross, *"It is finished"*—John 19:30).

This applies to everyone who thinks they can approach God and be accepted by Him because they're a good person and are faithful in keeping the rules, sacraments, commandments, ordinances of whatever religious system they adhere to.

They have a zeal for God but not according to the knowledge that God has given in His Word as to the proper way to approach Him and have fellowship with Him—

#### **Galatians 2:21 (NIV)**

...for if righteousness could be gained through the law [or any other religious system], Christ died for nothing!"

#### **Romans 10:2–3 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup> For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

I think it fairly obvious that the reason the orthodox Jews rejected Jesus and the gospel of grace was because—it removed from them the ability to brag and feel good about themselves.

The religious Jews (like the scribes and Pharisees) loved to *showcase* their *piety* and so-called ‘*righteousness*’ that came from all *their* hard work in keeping the Law.

**Matthew 6:5 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

That is one of the biggest reasons people are drawn to religion—for the ‘*bragging rights*’ along with the praise and recognition they receive from others as wonderful and ‘righteous’ people.

One author put it well—

*“Israel was ignorant of God’s righteousness, not because they had never been told, but because they refused to learn. There is an ignorance that comes from lack of opportunity, but Israel had had many opportunities to be saved. In their case, it was an ignorance that stemmed from willful, stubborn resistance to the truth. They would not submit to God. They were proud of their own good works and religious self-righteousness, and would not admit their sins and trust the Savior. Paul had made the same mistake before he met the Lord.”*

**Philippians 3:7–9 (NIV)**

<sup>7</sup> But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

Unfortunately for them, they failed to understand and believe the words of their own prophet Isaiah who made it very clear that human effort and zeal for God would never earn them God’s favor or a place in His Kingdom:

**Isaiah 64:6 (NLT)**

<sup>6</sup> We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags.

If you were to ask an orthodox Jew today—“*You are very zealous for God but what are you doing about your sin? You have no Temple, no priesthood and no sacrifices—how then are your sins atoned for?*”

They will tell you that they believe God will weigh their good deeds and their bad deeds on a ‘scale’—and if the good outweighs the bad God will accept them into heaven. (Comment)

**Leviticus 17:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.’

However, their ignorance is not just a lack of information—it goes much deeper than that. Their ignorance is often willful and deliberate—a product of their pride, rooted in rebellion and defiance against God Himself (like Cain).

People cannot come to Christ without the right information (the gospel)—but information alone is not enough to save a person (Satan and his demons have the right information and believe every word of it—but they are not saved or going to heaven because of it!).

**To be saved, a person must first renounce the false and then embrace the truth.**

In other words, they must put away their own system of righteousness (abandon it completely), receive the gospel into their heart and bow the knee to Jesus as their Savior. Only then will His blood be applied to their account, pay for their sins, and save their soul.

When a person *'plants their faith'* in a religious system (like the Jews did with Judaism)—it produces the poisonous fruit of self-righteousness—and self-righteousness produces pride. Pride is one of the 7-deadly sins listed in Proverbs 6:16-19—all of which God said were an abomination to Him.

So, the poisonous fruit of self-righteousness produces *pride*—but also judgmentalism (people looking down on others because they are not as good or as righteous as they are).

Religious zeal rooted in the Law is what made the Pharisees so self-righteous—and along with it so *proud* and *judgmental*. (Luke 18:9-14)

The gospel of grace through Jesus' finished work removes all boasting and puts the focus of salvation where it belongs—on God Himself.

**Romans 3:27–28 (NKJV)**

<sup>27</sup> Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup> Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

**Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.

**Romans 10:4 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Just like Cain wasn't ignorant of the way of true righteousness (as ordained by God), he simply rejected it in favor of his own way of being righteous—so did many of the Jews.

God didn't leave them in the dark—everything about the Law: the sacrifices, priesthood, temple services—it all communicated to them that they were sinners in need of a way to atone for their sins and make them worthy to approach God and have fellowship with Him.

But the Law was never intended by God to make them righteous—it was only a temporary solution so their sins could be covered and they could have fellowship with God—but only until the Messiah/Savior came into the world (*"in the fullness of time"*—Galatians 4:4).

**Galatians 3:19 (NKJV)**

<sup>19</sup> What purpose then *does* the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed [Messiah Jesus] should come to whom the promise was made...

I want you to notice 2 key words Paul uses with regard to the Law—**'added'**; and **'till'**

First, the Law was **added** meaning—it was an *addition* to the Abrahamic Covenant not the *replacement* of the Abrahamic Covenant—it was added because of *transgressions*.

The giving of the Law had the specific purpose of showing us our sin and not for cleansing us of our sin—

**Romans 3:20 (NKJV)**

<sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

- ❖ The Law, you might say, was a *signpost* along the highway of humanity, pointing the way to the destination.

But understand—it was not in itself that destination (a sign on the highway can point you to a destination but it is not that destination). The destination that the Law pointed to was Christ—**“the end of the Law [the final destination] for righteousness to all who believe.” (verse 4)**

Jesus is **“the end of the Law”** in the sense that through His death and resurrection, He has begun the New Covenant replacing the Old Covenant—

**Galatians 3:24–25 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

The Law was never intended by God to be permanent—and as such, since Jesus has come and the New Covenant (in His blood) has been ratified—the Law has ended as far as Christians are concerned (it still applies to unbelievers).

And yet, for most Jews, instead of letting the Law bring them to Christ for salvation (Galatians 3:24)—they worshiped the Law and rejected their Savior.

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