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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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Introduction

Romans chapter 10 is what we're going to be talking about tonight. Railroad tracks -- as you think about railroad tracks, railroad tracks have two steel rails that run side by side. And obviously, they never run into one another. If at some point those rails ever came to merge, to meet up with one another, you would have a major disaster. In theology, the same is true of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. We have God's sovereignty, and man's responsibility. Just as those railroad tracks run side by side, it's also true of God's sovereignty --and God's sovereign election of those who will be saved-- and man's responsibility to believe or reject the gospel. They run alongside one another.

We saw in chapter 9 how Paul dealt with God's sovereignty. God sovereignly chose Isaac to be Abraham's promised son. We've been reading that as you've been going through our scripture reading. God chose Isaac to be Abraham's son, not Ishmael. And he chose Jacob over Esau. Before either one of them was born or had done anything good or bad, God chose Jacob.

Then we saw how we have no right to question God and His sovereignty. We are the clay, He is the potter. And the clay has no right to ask the potter, why did you make me this way? And we saw God sovereignly works all things out for His glory. It's all for His glory.

Some have asked why God allowed sin in this world. Why did God -- the sovereign God of the universe -- allow sin in this world? Answer you ready for this? For His glory. Some have asked why God allows bad things to happen to believers? Do you want to know why God allows bad things to happen to believers? For His glory. Some have asked why God chooses some and doesn't choose others. Do you want to you want to know why God does that? For His glory, it's all for His glory. God always does everything that He does for His glory.

However, this does not excuse man from being responsible for rejecting God. Man is still responsible when man rejects God. God is sovereign over everything. Man is also responsible for the choice that he makes. And that is what Paul is going to address here in chapter 10 of Romans, specifically, as it concerns Israel and their rejection of Christ and the gospel. Israel has rejected Christ and the gospel.

So we're going to break this chapter down into four responsibilities of Israel, four responsibilities. First, we're going to see that Israel is responsible for knowledge in verses one through four. Second, Israel's responsible for disbelief in verses five through 13. Third, Israel is responsible for disobedience, verses 14 through 17. And then fourth, we're going to see Israel is responsible for rejection, in verses 18 through 21.

1. Israel is Responsible for Knowledge.

So, let's look at our first point here tonight. Israel is responsible for knowledge. Paul has just come right out of the end of chapter 9. And he told us that Christ is a stumbling stone to the Jews, and that's why they rejected Him. In fact, look at what it says in chapter 9 beginning of verse 32.

*"Why? Because **they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written,***
"BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE,
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." (Rom 9:32-33)

They were pursuing righteousness by works instead of by faith, like the gentiles have done. The gentiles now pursue it by faith, but they were pursuing (that is Israel) they were pursuing righteousness by works. And this breaks Paul's heart to see his fellow Jews doing this. It breaks his heart to think of the Jews in this way. And so, what does he do? What is Paul's then response to this? He prays for them. He prays for them.

Look at verse 1 and what it says there. *"Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for **their salvation** (Rom 11:1)*

Now, does Paul know about God's sovereign election? Of course, he does. He knows that God is the one who sovereignly elects whomever He chooses to be saved. He just told us all about this election in chapter 9. But what is his response? How does Paul respond to this? Is it to just say, Oh, well, God has either chosen them or not. Since it looks like most of them have rejected Christ. They're doomed and it's all up to God. --- Is that his response? It's not how he responds. He doesn't respond that way. What does he do? He prays for them. He prays for them and for their salvation.

Now, did Paul believe that only a remnant would be saved? Yes. Look at chapter 9 in verse 27. Look at what it says there, *"Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, **"THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;*** (Rom 9:27)

Paul knew this. Paul knew that it was the remnant of Israel that would be saved. But did Paul still believe that he needed to pray for the lost of Israel? Yes, he did. Now, was his prayer somehow changing God's mind? Was he going to change God's mind with his prayer? Never. Because prayer doesn't change God's mind. God's plans are already set. It's adjusting his heart, as we talked about on Sunday morning, adjusting his heart with the will of God. That's what he's doing there...aligning himself with the will of God. He's not praying, as if somehow he's going to change the mind of God, that somehow God is going to change all of Israel now. No, God has chosen to save the remnant of Israel.

And he knows that. But he understands and knows that his responsibility is to pray, pray for them, pray for the lost of Israel. And so he does that. And by praying, it revealed that his heart was the lost to be saved, and is specifically the lost of Israel.

Now he gives us a little bit more insight as to why Israel was lost. Look what it says in verse 2, he says, "[For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.](#)" (Rom 10:2) Not in accordance with knowledge. Israel had a great zeal for God.

Now think about Paul. What was Paul before God saved him? A Pharisee. A Pharisee of the Pharisees. Did he have zeal for God? But you bet he did. As a Pharisee his zeal as a Pharisee led him to persecute the church. He was a persecutor of God, a persecutor of God's church. No one knew his zeal for God more than Paul did as a Pharisee. So, what was this zeal then that he had and that Israel had? Well, this was an external zeal. That is, they knew about God, and they knew the outward demands of God's law, but they had no spiritual knowledge, no spiritual knowledge, they had no knowledge of Christ and the gospel.

You see, when a person gets saved, they get a true knowledge and understanding of Christ. That's how you can know if somebody is saved. What do they know of Christ in His Word, they'll have a true spiritual knowledge? That's why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12, that "[and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit.](#)" (1 Cor 12:3) When they get born again. Now they declare that Jesus Christ is Lord. And there are many people today who think that their zeal for God is enough to save them. But just like Israel, they don't have the knowledge of the true gospel and of Christ that brings about true salvation. They might have some kind of zeal, but they aren't saved because they don't have the true knowledge of the gospel.

What was it that Israel is trying to do with the zeal that they had? Look at what it says in verse 3 there. "[For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.](#)" (Rom 10:3) Simply put, they tried to get into heaven their own way. They thought that they could gain righteousness by keeping the law. And if they were just good enough, that'll get them in.

There's a lot of people that think that way today. Well so and so's a good person... I think they're going to heaven. That's not how someone gets into heaven. It's not by being a good person. They thought that they could gain their righteousness by keeping the law. But the gospel doesn't tell us -- try to keep this in you will be saved. The gospel does tell us this -- you can't keep the law. That's what the gospel tells us. Try and keep this go! You'll fail on your way out the door. You can not keep it, it is impossible.

So repent and believe in Christ if you want to be saved. Because you can't be saved by upholding the law of God.

When someone puts their faith in Christ, then that whole understanding of trying to gain righteousness through the law is put to death. And we then realize that righteousness can only come through faith in Christ, which is what Paul says in verse 4. Look what he says there. "[For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.](#)" (Rom 10:4)

When you realize that salvation is by faith alone, and not by keeping the law, all of a sudden, everything that you've been trying to attain by upholding the law, it stops, it's dead, and you go, I can't do this. And God goes, That's right. Now repent and believe. You can't do it. That's what I've been trying to tell you the whole time. That's the whole purpose of the law. You can't do it.

The whole purpose of the law is to show us that we are sinners who need to run to Christ for salvation, right? Romans 3:20, "[because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.](#)" (Rom 3:20)

That's the whole purpose of the law. And once we realize that we're totally depraved sinners, who are headed to hell. Then we ask, well, how then can I be saved? Answer? The gospel. Through faith in Christ alone. And it's then at that moment that we're no longer under the law, because the law has done its job, right? The law drove us to now understand that I cannot save myself -- that I am not good enough to get to heaven. It did its job.

And so now the law stops. Because we understand the gospel. And Israel should have known this. They should have known this because God never established the law to be something that anyone could keep or attain salvation through. But that's what Israel had made it. Christ told them, especially the religious leaders of Israel, that they were responsible for what they had done with the law. You guys are held accountable. Listen to Luke 11:52.

["Woe to you lawyers!"](#) (Experts in the Mosaic law) ["For you have taken away the key of"](#) (listen to this) ["knowledge;" You've taken away the key of knowledge, you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering."](#) (Luke 11:52)

You even stopped people who are pursuing God and wanted salvation. They wanted to know -- you hindered them from entering into the kingdom. Because you took away the key of knowledge, and you put upon them the demands of the law, to try and save themselves. They didn't have the knowledge of true righteousness of God because they tried to establish their own.

And they, Israel, willingly rejected God's offer for them to come to Him by faith. And instead, they tried to establish their own righteousness through the works of the law. And they're responsible. They're responsible for that lack of knowledge through willfully denying God's offer to come to Him by faith. So Israel was responsible for their lack of knowledge.

2. Israel is Responsible for Disbelief

Point number two Israel's responsible for disbelief, for disbelief. Paul now moves on to show how Israel is responsible for their lack of faith - for their disbelief - and he begins by laying out the law of Moses, which they're familiar with. Look at verse 5. "For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. (Rom 10:5)

Basically, if you think that you can be saved by upholding the law, well, you're responsible to keep every part of the law completely perfectly. You've got to do it perfectly. Anyone done that? Nope, we've all failed. "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Rom 3:23) Every single person in all of humanity has failed in this. Except for Christ.

You cannot keep it. That's why James 2:10 says, For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." (James 2:10) It's as if you've broken the entire law, you are guilty of it all. Just by breaking one little point in the law, you are just as lost as the person who has broken the entire law. Just by one little sin that you've committed, you are just as guilty as one who says I don't care all break them all.

But if you want true righteousness by faith by faith, well listen up, because that righteousness is speaking to you. That's what Paul is saying here. Paul does this in verse 6. What he does is he personifies righteousness based on faith. And he says in verse 6, "but the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows." (Rom 10:6)

Here's what he's saying, righteousness based on faith, righteousness is speaking to you. He personifies righteousness and speaking to you and what does it say in verse 6 there? "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), 7 or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." (Rom 10:6-7)

Now notice where it all starts. Where does it all start? Verse 6, there in the heart. It all starts in the heart. And righteousness based on faith is crying out to you and saying, don't think this way in your heart. What is this way of thinking? Well, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 30. And he says, "'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), 7 or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." (Rom 10:6-7)

Now, to ascend into heaven, or to descend into the abyss, meant to do something that was impossible, and impossible task, as if you could go up to heaven, and you could get Christ and you could bring Him down, or you could go into the abyss, something that was impossible, you are somehow going to do this. It's some kind of impossible, journey, impossible task, that you would have to search the heavens to find Christ or go down into the depths of the Earth to find Him. It's some kind of journey that you would have to go on -- impossible thing. It is not some kind of impossible journey throughout the universe that you would have to go through to try and find Christ, though. That's what Paul is saying here.

If you want to be saved, all you have to do is believe. You don't have to go on some mystical journey up into the heavens and try and find Christ or go down into the abyss and try and find Him there. All you have to do is believe! Christ has been known to the nations. He's been presented, believe in Christ. But if you think that you have to go to heaven to try and find Christ, not only is that some kind of work that you're doing (works righteousness), but you're also trying to save yourself. You're trying to do it all on your own, as if I'm going to go on some kind of spiritual journey, and I'm going to save myself. Paul says he can't do it. It's impossible.

And if you were to do this, here's what you're doing. Listen to this. If somebody was to do this, what they are doing is they're denying the incarnation of Christ. Because they're trying to go up into heaven and find Christ there. Find the Messiah, Find the Savior, up in the heavens. Christ came to earth, He put on flesh. And so if you're going into the heavens to try and find Christ, what he's saying here is you've denied the incarnation of Christ, because He's already come. And it would also be denying the resurrection of Christ because He rose from the grave.

But listen, that's what every single works-righteousness system does. It denies the incarnation of Christ and it denies the resurrection of Christ -- because it denies the gospel. And says I can do it all on my own. That's what Paul is talking about here. What the what Israel has done. They're trying to earn their way to heaven. They're in total denial of Christ because they're trying to get to heaven apart from Christ.

But Paul's point here is that it is by faith, which is what he continues on saying, as he continues to personify righteousness based on faith, in verse 8, look what it says in verse 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, \(Rom 10:8\)](#)

Now, think about this, think about the access that people have to the gospel today. The Bible is the number one selling book in the world. There are churches who are preaching the true gospel out there, it's flooded, the internet is flooded with true gospel messages. It's out there, podcasts, sermons, all over the internet. And think about how accessible the true gospel is so that people can come to saving faith in Christ. It's more accessible than it's ever been in our time, with the media that we have. But sadly, there are many people who are still trying to earn their salvation by works righteousness, and false religious systems. And yet the true gospel is calling out to them, and they have access to the true gospel, just to listen to it, repent of their sin, and believe it.

They have access to the true gospel, and yet they still choose to do things their own way. I don't need that gospel. I'll get there on my own.

What is that true gospel? What does a person have to do to be saved? Look at verse 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 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. \(Rom 10:9-10\)](#)

When you really think about it, it's not that difficult. Here's the gospel: confession and faith. What is confession? Jesus is Lord. Many people today say they believe in Jesus. They acknowledge that Jesus exists. They'll even say that He's fully God and fully man. Did you know that even the demons believe that? The demons believe that and they shutter.

But these people, they won't call Him "Lord." And they won't live as if He is Lord. They won't submit to Him as if He is Lord. Because they don't trust in Him as Lord. And therefore they don't have saving faith. They believe that there is a Jesus, he was a great man who came, but they don't have saving faith. True confession of Jesus as Lord means that you trust in Him alone for salvation, and then you live your life in full submission to Him as your sovereign King and ruler of your life.

Paul says you must believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. You must believe that in order to be saved. The resurrection is foundational to salvation and Christian faith. Why is it so important? Why is the resurrection so important? Because the resurrection confirms that Jesus is who He said He is, and that He alone accomplished our salvation on that cross.

And there would be no hope if we didn't believe in the resurrection. And if the resurrection didn't happen, there would be no hope. We would be lost. So we must believe. That's the gospel: confess, and believe. It's pretty simple.

Look at verse 11 [For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."](#) 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;](#) 13 [for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."](#) (Rom 10:11-13)

The gospel call to confess Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead goes out to everyone. It's not a gentile message only, it's also for the Jews. In fact, in fact, faith has always been the way to be saved, always. It's been the message to Israel throughout their entire history, put your faith in God. God has always extended this message of faith in Him to be saved. And if they would just call on the name of the Lord, they would be saved.

But Israel has not believed this amazing message. They rejected it. They did reject it then, and they still reject it today. And they are responsible for their disbelief in order to be saved. So Israel is responsible for knowledge, they're responsible for disbelief.

3. Israel is Responsible for Disobedience

Point number three, Israel's responsible for disobedience. Notice quickly in verse 16, ["However, they did not all heed the good news;](#) (Rom 10:16)

Notice that word "heed" there. That word "heed" means to follow instructions, obey, follow or be subject to. They did not obey the gospel, they did not call on the name of the Lord to be saved. Now remember,

creation declares that God exists, right? We look around at the trees, we look around at creation, and it's crying out and telling us there is a God. There is a creator. But that declaration is not enough revelation to save someone. It's not enough.

And no one can be saved by the works of the law. So how does a person then get saved? Well, Paul outlines for the believers in Rome, how God saves people. And Paul works through it backwards from the point of salvation to the original call. He begins in verse 13. Notice what it says there.

“for “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”

14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!” (Rom 10:13-15)

Now, if we were to take what Paul says here, and we were to go backwards, through these three verses, we will see this, first of all, it starts with the good news of the gospel. That's where it all starts. It starts with Christ. It starts with the gospel.

And then that good news must be preached by a preacher. And that's you. You're a preacher, did you know that you don't just have to be in a pulpit to be a preacher, you're a preacher, called to preach the good news.

And then the unbeliever hears the gospel, and they believe, and then they call on the name of the Lord. As it says in verse 13, **"Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."** (Rom 10:13) They call on Him, and then they get saved.

But the only way that a person can be saved, is if they hear the gospel message. They must hear the gospel message. Now, can this happen through reading the Bible also? Yes, of course. There's the gospel message, right? So it can happen by reading God's Word, but it must come through hearing the gospel, either from a preacher or from the pages of Scripture. But that's it. That's it.

How do we know that? Look at the end of verse 16, look at this, **“for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?”** (Rom 10:16)

Look at that word "report" there. Notice that word "report" that word report in the Greek, that Greek word means that which is heard, and is relating to hearing with the ear. You must hear the gospel. It must be heard, therefore, it must be preached. So that they can hear the gospel. Which leads right into Paul's summarization, a summarization of verses 1-16 where Paul says in verse 17, **“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”** (Rom 10:17)

So one commentator says Isaiah's testimony supports the principle that one has to hear the good news of God's deliverance before one believes it. Faith comes only from hearing the Word of Christ, and what is that? What is the Word of Christ? The gospel. It's the gospel. That's why we proclaim the gospel to the lost, right?

God has chosen the means by which unbelievers are saved. And listen, it's not through dreams. I know that's big out there right now, it is not through dreams. God does not save people through dreams, or visions, or signs or hearing some small voice in their head. It's through the preaching of the gospel. That's how faith comes.

But as we saw in verse 16, they Israel did not heed the good news. They didn't listen to the good news. For Isaiah says, Lord, who is believed our report, Israel didn't obey the message of the good news. Instead, what did they do? They rejected it. And they said, Don't worry, we've got a zeal for God, and we'll get in our own way. They rejected it.

4. Israel is Responsible for Rejection

Which leads to our fourth and final point here tonight, Israel's responsible for rejection, the responsible for rejection in verse 18, Paul begins to ask rhetorical questions, almost as if he's trying to get Israel out of the responsibility of rejecting the gospel. It's like he continues to ask these to try and get them off the hook. But his whole point is to show that Israel cannot claim that they did not hear the message. They're responsible for their rejection. Look at verse 18. **But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD."** (Rom 10:18)

What Paul does here is he calls on David to be a witness against Israel. And he quotes Psalm 19 here, and his point is to show that just as the creation declares the glory of God to the whole world, the Gospel has gone out to the whole world. And the gospel is spread to the Jews, but they refuse to listen to it. Their mind is made up and they don't want to listen to it because they're trusting in their own system to save them. Their own works righteousness.

Oh, but but maybe Israel didn't know? Maybe they didn't know. Nope, that's not gonna work either. Look what he says in verse 19. But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says,

**"I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION,
BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU."
20 And Isaiah is very bold and says,
"I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME,
I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME."** (Rom 10:19-20)

Paul, next calls on Moses and Isaiah to the witness stand to answer the question, Did Israel not know? Well maybe they didn't know? What did Moses and Isaiah say? Nope, Israel knew. They knew. If the gentiles are able to come to the knowledge of the truth, then Israel can come as well.

That nation there "without understanding" is the gentiles. And "those who did not seek me" -- those are the gentiles. And Paul's argument here is if this people who had no spiritual knowledge or background

and who neither seek after God, or ask for God can come to an understanding of the good news of the gospel message, than Israel can too.

But what have they done? What Israel do? They rejected it. They rejected the gospel, even when God was patient with them, and continually reaching out to them, which is what it says in verse 21. Look at what it says there. "But as for Israel He says, **"ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE."** (Rom 10:21)

God continually called Israel to repentance and faith in Him. How did He do it? Listen to what Jesus says in Matthew 23:37. Jesus says this, listen, **"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling."** (Matt 23:37)

You didn't want it. You didn't want me. You rejected me. What did Israel do? They killed the prophets. The preachers whom God sent to them... they killed them, because they wanted to earn their way to God through their own works-righteous system.

Warren Wiersbe says, "There are only two religions in the world: works righteousness, and faith righteousness. Nobody can fulfill the first. But everybody can respond to the second."

But Israel failed, they failed to respond to it. And for that they are held responsible. And so is everyone who does not respond in faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for the gospel. And thank You that we have heard it, and that by hearing it, we have been saved. We thank You for those who have preached the gospel to us and their faithfulness, and sharing this amazing news with us. I pray that You would help us to be gospel preachers, that we would go out with boldness to preach this message to the world, to the lost, so that they would come to know the Savior. Although I pray for anyone who's here tonight that doesn't know You. Father I pray through this message of the gospel that they would come to know You. That You would change their hearts, and that You would be the Lord of their life, and that they would declare You as Lord and live in the light of Your lordship. We pray all of this in Christ's name, Amen.