

VI. DISPENSATION (9:1-11:36).

A. Paul's burden for Israel (9:1-5).

B. Paul's vindication of God (9:6-33).

C. Paul's defense of the Gospel (10:1-21).

1. Paul's burden for Israelites ignorant of the true Gospel (10:1-4).

Romans 10 gives us Paul's defense of the Gospel, and in the first four verses we see his burden for the Jews who were ignorant of the true Gospel.

Verse 1

It was not just that which would have brought great delight, perhaps the greatest of pleasure, to Paul for Israel to be saved, *but he prayed for it*. It is so easy for us to hope that something will happen, like the salvation of a friend, but we don't always pray for it. And we can be sure that Paul would not have prayed for it if he had not believed that Jews still could be saved. He did not consider the case of the Jews hopeless.

Verse 2

Sincerity is always commendable, but it is not a substitute for the truth. A person can be very sincere and wrong at the same time. Many Jews were very devout. In fact, Paul's statement here would indicate that most of them were zealous. This meant that they were fervent in trying to please God. They were "on fire"! But all of the work they were doing was worthless because it could not produce the result that they were after: acceptance with God. They were working for their salvation, but salvation can never be earned by works. If it could, the death of Christ was the greatest mistake that was ever made. But it was not a mistake. It was 100% necessary. But the Jews did not understand the grace of God.

It is surprising, but the word "grace" is not found in this chapter. It is used four times in one verse in chapter 11, verse 6. But the chapter that has the word "grace" the most in Romans is chapter 5. Cf. vv. 2, 15 (2x), 17, 20, and 21. Grace means undeserved, unmerited. Grace and works are in total contrast with each other. The ignorance of the Jews (and of a lot of Gentiles) was demonstrated by the fact that they sought salvation by what they were doing for God instead of in what God would do for them.

Verse 3

And it was because they were seeking to establish their own righteousness that they had no idea that a righteous standing before God could not be obtained that way. The result of their works was just the same as if they had not been working at all.

Verse 4

Here Paul stated the reason why they could not be saved by observing the Law. In fact, Paul had taught the Romans earlier that the Law was not given as a way of salvation, but to show the Jews their sin. See Rom. 3:19-20.

But what did Paul mean that "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." What does the word "end" mean?

“The end” is the translation of the Greek word, τέλος. It means that the coming of Christ and His work on the Cross brought an end to the Law. Paul expressed this truth in Galatians 3, beginning with verse 19 and reading down to the end of the chapter, but especially through verse 26. The Law was never given to save, but as a means of restraining the people of Israel until the Lord Jesus Christ should come. The Gentiles were never put under the Law. If they had, they would have had a priesthood, a temple, and all of the ceremonies and laws that went with it, not just the ten commandments. But with the coming of Christ, He offered a perfect sacrifice for the sins of Jews and Gentiles, and when we trust in Christ we are placed in Christ, and He becomes our life.

Beginning with verse 5 and going down through verse 13 Paul states *what the Gospel is* (although he does not use the word “Gospel” in this chapter until he gets down to verses 15 and 16. But he had mentioned it before, starting with the first verse of the Gospel (1:1), and following that up in verse 9, 15, 16, and then in 2:16. See also 11:28. See also 15:16, 19, 20, and 29. Paul mentioned the Gospel for the last time in Romans 16:29.

But in addition to these verses where the word “gospel” is used, the message of the Gospel is found throughout this epistle, in passages like Rom. 3:21-31 and Rom. 5:1-11. When Paul mentions “the righteousness of God,” he is talking about the Gospel, as Rom. 1:16 clearly indicates. And throughout this epistle he makes it clear that the Gospel is for both Jews and Gentiles, and that there is no other way for anyone to enjoy the favor of the Lord.

2. The true Gospel – for Jews and Gentiles (10:5-13).

Verse 5

At this point Paul quoted Moses in Lev. 18:5:

Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.

After saying in verse 4 that righteousness is *by believing*, or *faith*, Paul went on in this verse to say that there is a righteousness which is “of the Law,” but it comes by *doing*. And a person not only has to do all of it, but he has to keep doing it. Most people have already violated the Law before they even hear about it (e.g., even children of Jewish parents). Paul said in writing to the Philippian church that before he knew the Lord, “touching the righteousness which is in the law,” he was “blameless.” But this was not true righteousness. It was self-righteousness. It was an external righteousness, but not the righteousness which is of the heart. Nor is it possible that anyone except our Lord ever kept all of the commandments

I think you all will remember the story in Matthew 19:16-22 in which a rich man came to him asking how he could “have eternal life.” Let me read that story for you.

16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life ?

17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou

shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

He undoubtedly was stretching the truth in saying that he had kept all of the commandments from his youth on up to the present, especially if the commandments were enforced like the Lord said they were. If the Lord had asked him for money, this rich man would probably have paid for it. But when the Lord told him to sell all that he had, and to follow the Lord, he went away very unhappy. To follow the Lord would have meant to trust the Lord completely, not his money, but that was too much for him. There is a righteousness that is the result of our doing, but that is man's righteousness, not God's. God's righteousness comes only through Christ. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:21.

The righteousness of the law is a righteousness that is the result of man's doing. But Paul contrasts this with the righteousness of God which is what God imputes to us, puts to our account, not the result of what we do, but by faith in what God does. It is not a reward, but a gift. We don't work for it, but we receive it by faith.

In verse 6 Paul refers to Deuteronomy 30, verse 11 and following.

Verses 6 and 7

So Paul was saying here that Moses in Deuteronomy 30 was talking about the Gospel. If God's righteousness is different from Law-righteousness, then it must be with God and somebody needs to go after it to tell us what it is. Otherwise it is hidden and we will never find out what it is. Paul adds words of explanation to the passage in Deuteronomy to help us understand how we find out what the Gospel message is. If Christ is the end of the Law, then someone needs to bring Christ down to us. Or if it is in deep, then we must bring up from the dead. But Paul said here that they were not to ask the question, "Who shall ascend into heaven?," or, "Who shall descend into the deep?" Why not? Because Christ has come down. And He has been raised from the dead. And God has given the truth in His Word, and He brings that to us to show us that God's righteousness is to be found in the coming of Christ, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection from the dead.

Verse 8

What does it say? Even the language of Deuteronomy 30:11-14, to which Paul was referring here in verses 8 through 10, portrays for us the work of Christ in which the righteousness of God is to be found. This is what Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 30:

11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it (Deut. 30:11-14).

In the case of the Romans, the Gospel was to be found, discovered, revealed, in the preaching of the Apostle Paul. And he was doing it here in this epistle which he was sending to them.

What was the message? It is the Gospel, which Paul called here, "the word of faith, which we preach." And it is contained in the next two, very familiar verses.

Verses 9 and 10

The ministry of the Apostle Paul was very unique. There is no evidence that any of the apostles sought him out before he was saved to give him the Gospel. There is no evidence that prayer was being offered by the people of God for the salvation of Saul of Tarsus. But unknown to any of those early Christians was the fact which the Lord Himself announced to Ananias before he sent him to find Saul, that Saul was, as the Lord said, “a chosen vessel unto me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15).

And now look to see where Saul of Tarsus got his training. See Gal. 1:11-19.

Now let us look at the Gospel in verses 9 and 10, based upon Moses words in Deut. 30:14. Salvation involves both the mouth and the heart. Confessing with the mouth the Lord Jesus means saying about Him what God has declared about Him, and acknowledging Jesus as Lord. If He is to be our Savior, He is also our Lord. And that is enough to solve the controversy about Lordship salvation. If we believe that God has raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, it assumes faith also in His death and the reason for it. Man believes in his heart for salvation, and his mouth forever afterwards gives confession of Christ.

The Gospel was very apparent even before the days of Moses. Even Abraham believed in the Lord, and it was accounted to Him for righteousness. From Abel’s sacrifice on through all of the sacrifices that were offered under the Law, the picture was of an innocent sacrifice being offered for the forgiveness of sins. Every one of those typified the coming death of Christ, and the Passover most of all. So the way of salvation was not something that even the Jews had to go after, but by faith they were to *believe* for salvation. The reference to Deuteronomy 30 continues in verses 9 and 10 of our chapter in Romans.

Robert Haldane, in his commentary on Romans, which is considered by many to be the best ever written, had this to say about these important verses:

Moses gave the Israelites a law which was to abide with them for their constant instruction. They were not obliged to send a messenger to heaven to learn how they were to serve God, nor to search out wisdom by their own understanding. Nor had they to send over the sea to distant countries, like the heathens, for instruction. God by Moses taught them everything with respect to His worship and service in the fullest, clearest and most practical manner. *This was a shadow of the clearness of the revelation of the righteousness received by faith, which we are not left to search for by means through which it never can be obtained. Salvation is brought nigh to us, being proclaimed in the Gospel by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The word is in our mouth. We receive the righteousness He has brought, not by any efforts of our own in seeking salvation, and laboring to keep the law of God, by the belief of the word which was published at Jerusalem, announcing salvation to the guiltiest of mankind* (p. 505, italics mine).

No people, either Jew or Gentile, ever asked for either the Law or the Gospel. Both were brought down from God by God. Both were gifts from God. “The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Moses was the messenger of the former; the Lord Jesus the embodiment of the latter.

The mouth and the heart are both involved in salvation. Either one of the two statements in verse 9, and repeated in verse 10, is salvation if genuine because it will always be accompanied by the other. A person who confesses Christ by his mouth, does so because he believes in his heart.

To confess the Lord Jesus is to confess Jesus as Lord. And it is to say the same thing that the Bible says about Jesus Christ. Paul said in 1 Cor. 12:3,

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed:

and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12:3).

There, of course, have always been those who confess Christ as their Savior who are not telling the truth, even though they may think that they are. Perhaps they have gone forward in a meeting, and think that that makes them a Christian. But no one can truly confess Jesus as Lord except by the Holy Spirit. And the confession is not just once, but never to be repeated. It is a lifelong confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Confession is not the cause of salvation, but the evidence.

Notice the order given to the mouth and the heart is reversed, probably to show how inseparable they are.

Verse 11

This verse is a quotation from the latter part of Isa. 28:16. It is translated there that the one who believes will not “make haste,” or as Vine translates it, “shall not have to move,” that is, to go on to anyone else because our Lord, and He alone, is the answer to our need for righteousness. The NASB translates that part of the verse, “will not be disappointed,” and in the margin has, “will not be put to shame.” So this the true and only way to be saved. And that this applies to both Jews and Gentiles, is brought out by verse 12.

Verse 12

The one Gospel is all that either a Jew or a Gentile needs to find perfect righteousness with God. Salvation is ours with only a call. This, of course, means to call in faith. But it certainly implies that the one who is saved will continue to call on the Lord, recognizing that He is a living God, and looking to Him for the supply of every need spiritually, physically, and materially. One writer has expressed it this way:

By calling on the name of the Lord, all the parts of religious worship which we render to God are intended. It denotes a full and entire communion with God. He who calls on the name of the Lord, profoundly humbles himself before God, recognizes His power, adores His majesty, believes His promises, confides in His goodness, hopes in His mercy, honors Him as his God, and loves Him as his Savior. It supposes that this invocation [or calling] is inseparable from all other parts of religion. To call on the name of the Lord, is to place ourselves under His protection, and to recourse to Him for His aid. . . In thus calling upon the Lord, a believer, like Enoch, walks with God (Haldane, p. 511

Verse 13

This is cited from Joel 2:32. Sandy and Headlam estimate that the Apostle Paul quotes from the OT in all of his epistles almost ninety times. And for Paul, it was always in support of his teaching. Haldane makes a good point when he said that “the interpretation of the Apostle is as infallible as the prophecy itself” (p. 511). And in this way Paul again indicates that salvation in OT times was the same as in the NT. They may not have had as much light as we do now because we can look back upon the finished work of Christ with all of the explanation we have, particularly in the epistles of the NT. But nevertheless, salvation has always been the same – although salvation in the OT was to believe in a Redeemer that was to come; today we look back to that same Redeemer who has come.

At this point the Apostle Paul goes on to emphasize how important therefore is the preaching of the Word.

Now we come to the third section in this chapter:

3. The priority upon preaching the Gospel (10:14-17).

Verse 14

At this point Paul raises a very practical problem. If both Jews and Gentiles can only be saved by calling upon the name of the Lord, which means to call upon the Lord, Paul asks, “How then shall they call on in whom they have not believed?” Note that Paul put believing before calling. Here Paul was indicating that to call upon the name of the Lord not only means being saved in the first place, but a continual calling upon the Lord after we are saved. It is not simply an act of faith, but the act of faith followed by a life of faith, a life, as we have already indicated, of continually calling upon the Name of the Lord. So this questions really is, *how can you live as a Christian, calling upon the Lord, if you are not a Christian*; that is, if you have not previously trusted in Christ. The answer is: no one can!

But the problem is still deeper. And so Paul asks a second question: “Or how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard?” Again the answer is: they can’t! A person has to hear of Christ before he can believe in Christ.

This leads to still a third question: “And how shall they hear without a preacher?” Here we come face to face with the ways of God.

There are several different ways that God could have made the Gospel known. He could have spoken from heaven to every person on the face of the earth, like He did to Abraham when Abraham was about to kill Isaac. But that was an exception to the usual way that God speaks. Or the Lord could have spoken through angels. He has done that often through Scripture. He did it with the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos when he revealed to him the truths found in the book of the Revelation. When Cornelius, the Roman centurion, wanted to know how to be saved, an angel of God appeared to him in a vision, and told him to send for Simon Peter. Why didn’t the angel tell Cornelius? He knew the Gospel. It was because that was not the ordinary way in which the Gospel is spread. That is why Paul asked that next question, the fourth one, which we find in verse 15.

Verse 15

The fourth question is: “And how shall they preach, except they be sent?” Godet states it very simply:

No calling without faith; no faith without hearing; no hearing without preaching; no preaching without sending (p. 385).

We might think that God has placed the fortunes of the Gospel entirely in the hands of men if it were not for that last word in the fourth question, the word, “sent.” Who does the sending? The basic answer is: GOD DOES!

Let me read to you from the Gospel of Matthew a passage that applies directly to the answer to this fourth question. Listen to these words:

35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest (Matt. 9:35-38).

One thing to watch for when you are reading your Bible, is to take special note of the things that we are told to pray for. This is one of them. Who is “the Lord of the harvest”? It has to be God. What is the harvest? It is the work of spreading the Gospel message. Who does God send? OT prophets? Yes. The NT apostles? “Missionaries? Yes. Pastors? Yes. Is that all? No. Elders? Yes. Deacons? Yes. Is that all? No! Who else

is sent? We all are. See Acts 1:8. Now I am not saying that everybody ought to go to Bible School or to Seminary, but we all are to go – whether to the other side of the earth, or to the neighbor next door. It is God Who sends us. It may be to a relative, or to a familiar friend, or to someone we have never met before, what we could call “a chance acquaintance,” and yet we know that with God nothing happens by chance. To some God calls to go to another country, to learn another language. To others God calls to the ministry of the Word. Sometimes the Lord impresses us to write to a particular person, or to go to see someone. God is “the Lord of the harvest,” and the work would have died long ago if He had not continued to burden His people to give the Gospel to others. It used to be that it was hard to find a person in the USA who had not heard at least some part of the Gospel. But you have no trouble today finding people who do not have a Bible, have never owned one, and many who have never seen one or heard the Gospel.

But when we are instruments in God’s hand for the spread of the Gospel, that’s when people are grateful for our feet which brought us to them. Read the last part of Rom. 10:15 which is a quotation from Isaiah 52:7. The best reading seems to be, “How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!” The word “beautiful” in the Greek means, *how delightful, how welcome*. The word that Isaiah used in Isaiah 52:7 means *to be at home*. On one occasion Jesus’ feet brought Him to the home of Mary and Martha of Bethany. And you will remember that Mary sat at Jesus’ feet to hear His Word. And twice in John’s Gospel we are told that Mary anointed the feet of our Lord with a costly ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair (John 11:2; 12:3).

Somebody was instrumental in our hearing of the Gospel. It might not be someone we knew. But someone, and many times it is more than one someone, who was instrumental in our coming to Christ. And we could never thank the Lord enough for them. But how are our feet being used to take the Gospel to others? To see others come to Christ, and then to nurture them in the Lord, is one of the greatest blessings that the Lord can give us.

Preaching does not just mean speaking from a pulpit to a congregation of people. That is one thing it means. But preaching means proclaiming the Gospel, telling the good news of salvation, and Spurgeon used to say that the best preaching is done when we are talking to just one person who needs the Savior. It is our responsibility to tell others about the saving grace of Christ; it is God Who determines how His Word will affect those who hear.

Let us remember the words of Paul to the believers at Corinth when he spoke about preaching:

- 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.
- 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:
- 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
- 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:21-24).

So throughout time God has been sending his messengers to preach the Gospel. Enoch “prophesied” (Jude 14), but how many were saved under his preaching. As far as Scripture is concerned, it is silent on whatever success Enoch saw from his preaching. We are not sure that anybody believed his message. But the point is that they had heard!

Noah is another one we need to consult. He is called in Scripture, “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5). And he preached for one hundred and twenty years. How many were saved under his ministry? The most we could say would be seven – his wife, his three sons and their wives. But we are not sure about any of them. How many heard? Hundreds, probably thousands. God has not fallen down on His job as “the Lord of the

harvest.” People are continually hearing The Gospel. Many people can repeat John 3:16 or some other Gospel verse. But the number of those who have heard and believed, is very, very small.

Verse 16

And so Paul said, “But they have not all obeyed the Gospel.” And even Isaiah who ministered to the nation of Judah, said, “Lord, who hath believed our report?”

And now we come to the fourth and last section of Romans 10 which I have called,

4. Scriptural support for Paul’s teaching (10:18-21).

Verse 18

Paul does a very interesting thing here. He quotes from Psalm 19 which has to do with creation, and says that just as God has used creation to carry the message to all men everywhere, of the existence of God, so in like manner the message of the Word of God has gone everywhere with its message of the Gospel. Many people say that they do not believe there is a God, but the message is going out continually, day and night, by the sun in the daytime and by the moon and stars at night, that there is a God, a mighty God, an infinitely wise God, a good God, and there is not a nation but what that message is heard day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, and generation after generation. Plus, as we learned from Romans 1, God has placed in every man’s heart the consciousness that there is a God.

Now Paul was using that all of that is an illustration of the spread of the Gospel in his day and through his ministry. Cf. Rom. 15:14-25. (Read and explain.) Paul had actually run out of places to preach, that is, where Christ had not been preached throughout the Empire. He had preached to many who had been saved through his preaching, but he had also preached to many who had not been saved. *But at least they had heard.* Now Paul was using this to show, just from his ministry, that there were multitudes of people, more than he could count, who had heard the Gospel.

Another illustration of this use of Scripture is to be seen in 1 Timothy 5:17 and 18, especially the first verse quoted in verse 18. Who would think that Deut. 25:4, which Paul quoted in verse 18, would have anything to do with the way a church should provide for its pastor? But it does! The second quotation is from the teaching of our Lord, that “the laborer is worthy of his reward.” Cf. Luke 10:7.

See also Luke 20, verses 37 and 38 where we have a quotation from Exodus 3:6. Who would think in reading Exodus 3:6 that the Lord in saying this to Moses was teaching the resurrection of the dead? But that is what He was doing! The Word of God has a width and depth to it which only the Spirit of God can show us. This passage is also evidence that the NT is a commentary on the OT. In understanding the Word of God we do begin with the OT, but we move from the OT into the NT where the OT is made clearer.

But as great and far reaching the ministry of Paul had been, he was only a small part of what God was doing everywhere. We often get discouraged and are inclined to think because of the prominence of evil and ungodliness in the world, that the work of the Gospel has come to a standstill. But it hasn’t! It never has, and it never will. And just as certainly as creation continues to carry its message of a living God, the Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them, so the same is true of the Gospel. If you and I could see what is actually taking place in the world through the work of the Gospel, we would be dumbfounded! Paul would have us know that while there are many who have not believed the Gospel, there are not many who have not heard the Gospel, or who have not had any contact with the Gospel whatsoever.

I know of a man who was raised in church, who memorized many verses of Scripture, who was able to pray, or at least say prayers in public meetings. But as he grew older, he fell into deep sin and actually got involved in prostitution. I am sure that when his path crossed with true Christians, many of them would be inclined to say, "This man needs to hear the Gospel." The truth is that he had heard the Gospel. He could tell you what the Gospel was. He had heard it hundreds of times as a child and as a young man. *But he had not believed.* He thought that he had, but his life demonstrated that he had not. So his problem was not ignorance; his problem was that although he knew the Gospel, and had memorized many verses, he had never believed what he had heard. And so we need to remember that it is not enough to know the facts of the Gospel. Saving faith comes not just from the head, but from the heart.

Commenting on this verse and the unusual way in which Paul has used it, Haldane said,

It is not, then, as setting aside the literal application of such passages that the Apostles quote them in their spiritual import, nor in the way of accommodation, as is so often asserted, to the great disparagement both of the Apostles and the Scriptures, but as their ultimate and most extensive signification (p. 516).

This first of the four last verses in this chapter is from King David. The next is from Moses.

Verse 19

He introduced this second quotation with a question: "Did not Israel know?" What is he referring to? Did not Israel know *what*? Did not Israel know that Gentiles would be saved? Of course they did, and Paul cited Deut. 32:21 as proof. (Read the quotation.) Speaking to the Israelites concerning those who were "no people," or "not a people," he had to be speaking of Gentiles! God would use Israel's rejection of Himself as a time He would be provoking the people of Israel to turn back to the Lord. He would not be provoking Israel to turn farther away from Him, but to cause them to turn back to Him.

So, as far back as Moses' day, it was a part of the plan of God that the Gospel would go to the Gentiles, and many of them would be saved. So what was happening in Paul's day, was not an afterthought with God, but it was a part of the eternal plan of salvation which we know now was established before the foundation of the world.

Next Paul went on to Isaiah.

Verse 20

This verse, and verse 21, are quotations from Isaiah 65:1 and 2.

Paul said that Isaiah was very bold, and he was. It is never easy to preach an unpopular doctrine, especially when you are pointed out to the people you are addressing that what they are doing is wicked and will ultimately lead to their being cast off by the Lord. Neither the prophets of the OT, nor the apostles of the NT, were guided in their preaching by that which would be acceptable to the people. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4 that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine," but he was to go on preaching the Word anyway. Prophets and apostles and preachers are not to take their guidance from the people, but from the Lord.

But Paul did not mean that the Gentiles would not seek him, but that they would not seek him of their own accord. Neither did they on their own inquire concerning the Lord. This is true both of Jews and Gentiles. Paul mentioned in chapter 3, again quoting from the OT, that "there is none that seeketh after God." So for Gentiles to find the Lord after the Lord had been manifested to them, meant, and the Jews would understand

this, that God would turn from Israel to the Gentiles, and that the Gentiles would respond in a way that the Jews had not responded to God. This would have made Isaiah's ministry even more difficult because it would have made him appear to the Jews as a traitor. How thankful all of us can be for those who are faithful in preaching the Gospel and the truth of God's Word even when it can lead either to imprisonment, or to death.

Verse 21

What about Isaiah's ministry to the Jews? This is what Isaiah expressed in Isaiah 65:2. Please turn with me to Isaiah 65 and follow as I read the first two verses:

1 I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts (Isa. 65:1-2).

And so, although God had repeatedly warned the children of Israel all throughout their history concerning their sin, yet Israel sought to maintain what Godet called a "monopoly" on God. But God never intended that only Jews would be saved. And so, in the light of their rebelliousness and idolatry, it would seem that the Jews would be the ones who would be excluded, and the Gentiles saved.

Godet concluded his notes on this chapter with the following paragraph:

Yet there is a mercy which, where the sin of man abounds, yet more abounds. It (*i.e.*, mercy) has a last word to speak in this history. Its work toward the rebellious seems closed; but is far from being so. And chapter xi proceeds to show us how God, in the overflowing of His grace, reserves to Himself the right to make this severe and painful dispensation issue in the most glorious result.