

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Romans 9-16 The Implications of Salvation

Number: 596

Verses: Romans 10:14-17

Topic: Faith Is By Hearing

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Romans 10:14-17 MKJV *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preaching? (15) And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!" (16) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" (17) Then faith is of hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*

The starting premise is that "all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 9:13). However in order to call on the name of the Lord they must first believe that calling on His name will be effective. And before they can believe in the effectiveness of His name, they must have heard of Him. And in order to hear of Jesus they must have it announced to them through some form of preaching. And in order to hear the preacher, then the preacher must first be sent out from those who possess the gospel.

Thus everything follows from sending the preacher. If no preacher is sent, then no one is saved. So the feet of the gospel herald are "blessed feet" because they bring the message that gives eternal life to the world! Indeed there is always a greater need for gospel heralds than there is a supply!

Matthew 9:37-38 MKJV *Then He said to His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. (38) Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest that He will send out laborers into His harvest.*

But sometimes missionaries, prophets and scribes are sent to no effect. Jesus' final withering blast at the Pharisees in the gospel of Matthew includes the following:

Matthew 23:34-35 MKJV *Therefore, behold, I send prophets and wise men and scribes to you. And you will kill and crucify some of them. And some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city; (35) so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Berachiah, whom you killed between the temple and the altar.*

Isaiah, who ministering to Israel during a time of rapid spiritual decline cried out: "Lord, who has believed our report?" (Romans 10:16 above)

In general the Bible attributes unbelief to the hearer, rather than to the messenger being inept. This is clearly evident when even such a brilliant communicator, poet and prophet as Isaiah could not break through the spiritual lethargy of his day. Unbelief is seen as the outcome of being hardened in sin and having a conscience that is defiled. Satan clearly has a hand in this process.

Titus 1:15 MKJV *To the pure all things are pure. But to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*

2 Corinthians 4:2-4 MKJV *(2) But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor adulterating the Word of God, but by the revelation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (3) But also if our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those being lost, (4) in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving ones, so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ (who is the image of God) should not dawn on them.*

But unbelief is not necessarily final and total, because unbelievers, even of the most difficult kind, can become believers:

1 Timothy 1:12-15 MKJV *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who strengthened me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry-- (13) the one who before was a blasphemer and a persecutor and insolent. But I obtained mercy, because being ignorant, I did it in unbelief. (14) And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. (15) Faithful is the Word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*

I find it interesting the Bible never blames the preacher for the non-responsiveness of the audience! In fact I cannot find a single example anywhere that says anything like "because Jeremiah was so boring no one believed". The Scriptures do not place any obligation on the evangelist to be interesting, eloquent, or entertaining. They are simply required to proclaim the cross of Christ and His Kingdom! The obligation is always on the hearer:

Luke 8:18 MKJV *Therefore be careful how you hear. For whoever has, to him shall be given; and whoever has not, from him shall be taken even that which he seems to have.*

Matthew 7:24-29 MKJV *Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on a rock. (25) And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house. And it did not fall, for it was founded on a rock. (26) And everyone who hears these sayings of Mine and does not do them shall be compared to a foolish man who built his house on the sand. (27) And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the wind blew and beat on that house. And it fell, and great was its fall. (28) And it happened, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His doctrine. (29) For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

Paul then concludes with "so faith comes through hearing". Now you might have expected him to say "faith comes through preaching". However Paul does not say that! For to Paul the Word must be received, it must be implanted in the heart, it must be heard deeply in the soul. It must not just vibrate the tympani in the eardrum. It must go deep down into the soul if it is to result in spiritual life. This meaning to "to hear" is like the Old English expression "to harken" or the military term "listen up". The Shema is a famous Jewish recitation of the words of Moses in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy:

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 JPS *HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE. (5) And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with*

all thy might. (6) And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; (7) and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

So faith comes by hearing, by listening with the inner man, by harkening with the conscience (which is where we know truth), and by attending with one's entire soul to who God is and to what God says – and especially to the gospel.

Paul concludes with “and hearing by the Word of God”. The Greek for “word” here is rhema or utterance and means primarily the preached or spoken word of the prophets or the gospel messenger, the preached word. It is the immediate verbal uttered word of God encountering the person. Our souls are opened up to hear when the preacher's word comes to us - we are awakened, we listen deeply and we grow in faith. It is the proclaimed word of God that opens the ear, and not the word sitting idle in a book on a shelf.

Blessings,

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