

Romans 10: Rethinking the Roman Road
*Rethinking the Romans Road as a Method of Evangelism:
A Response to Submission (Lordship) Salvation from a Contextual Study of
Romans 10:9-10*

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Introduction

I strongly believe that the Church of the twenty-first century is in a state of major confusion. Could we be living in the Laodicean Period, a time of luke-warmness? We supposedly need nothing (not even God Himself), for we have become quite complacent, satisfied, and self-centered in life's pursuits. I propose that the Church of Jesus Christ has not only departed from its doctrinal mooring, but it is no longer possible to discern what the mooring is or where the mooring can be located.

Post-modernity flies in the face of mooring pursuit, for "no mooring really exists." Many pulpits have become theologically vacated. The person in the pew has no bearing. This stems from the fact that the person behind the pulpit possesses little doctrinal direction.

We live in a time when doctrinal clarity, particularly regarding the doctrine of salvation, must be proclaimed with utmost urgency. Seldom does one hear clear distinctions between Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification. Because theological systems have been imposed on many texts of Scripture, the clarity of the Gospel of Grace has come under siege like never before. The New Testament alone provides more than 150 references that clearly teach a person receives the free gift of eternal life through the human response of simply "believing" in Jesus Christ.

This writing project will address the teaching of "Lordship Salvation" as it relates to those who are in a lost condition. I will propose that "Spiritual Salvation" in God's Word must be interpreted in agreement with the knowledge of the three phases of salvation – justification, sanctification, and glorification.

The "Lordship" issue falls within the category of sanctification. A central passage used in the "Lordship" message is Romans 10:9-10. I believe using Romans 10:9-10 as a justification passage clearly conflicts with the message of John 3:16 and many other verses.

I will provide a background study of Deuteronomy 30 and a contextual study of Romans 10:9-10 in presenting the case that eternal life is received by Grace Alone, through Faith Alone, in Jesus Christ Alone. These studies demonstrate that Romans 10:9-10 falls within the overall context of Sanctification Salvation and the "confession unto salvation" (vv. 9-10) is something expressed by one who has already received the free gift of eternal life.

Chapter One

Simplicity of the Gospel Message

Children and Jesus – Is the message of the gospel really a simple concept, or has it been made into a message with multiple complexities? Who can respond to the message? Can a child respond? Can a child understand his need for a Savior? Is it necessary for one to have a theological education prior to understanding how one receives eternal life? In 1985, Donald Bunge, who along with his wife became the first AWANA missionaries, wrote a short booklet entitled *What Happened to the Word Believe*. He quotes Marjorie Soderholm as she lists statements coming from pre-teen children. These statements indicate the need for those who present the gospel message to be both consistent and accurate. The children said, "I'VE BEEN SAVED seven times." – "I got saved at camp again this year. Every year at camp I get saved." – "I accepted Jesus yesterday, but I want to do it again today." – "I had a fight with my brother. He cried. Now I want to let Jesus in my heart again" (4).

Responses such as these demonstrate multiple (and inaccurate) messages are being proclaimed regarding what a person must do to be saved. Our Lord Jesus is quite clear that children can and should come to Him. In Matthew 18:1-3 we read, "*At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' and He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, 'Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.'*" (Unless otherwise noted all Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Translation)

The Greek word used throughout this context (Matthew 18:1-6) is *paidion*, indicating a little, or young child. In verse six the description of these children is “little ones.” This is the Greek word *mikros*, which means small or little. More importantly the warning to those who would cause one of these little ones to stumble clearly identifies impressionable and therefore, young children. Concerning the simplicity of the Gospel message, one simple enough for a child to believe, the Lord Jesus uses a very telling phrase – a phrase that contradicts anything other than faith alone in Christ alone. Jesus says, “*But whoever causes **one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble . . .***” (Matthew 18:6a). The obvious conclusion is that Christ clearly says He is the object of faith, and the reality is that children can become Christians.

The Purpose of John’s Gospel

The Gospel of John was written that all might know what the Biblical response concerning the message of grace actually is. John clearly tells his readers one of the reasons why he writes his Gospel, that people might know how to have eternal life. Specifically, John provides the narrative of seven signs (in the midst of other information) for the purpose of giving evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing in Him one receives eternal life (John 20:30-31). All who believe in Jesus Christ receive eternal life.

It seems appropriate to quote John 3:16, a verse most would have memorized in early childhood. John writes, “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes** in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*” He uses the word translated believe (*pisteuo*) approximately 100 times, the majority of which speak directly to the issue of how one receives eternal life.

Only one time in God’s Word do we find someone asking precisely, “What must I do to be saved?” The answer given corresponds to John’s answer of how one receives eternal life. Recording the dialogue of Paul and Silas with the jailor in Philippi, Luke writes, “*And after he (the jailor) brought them out, he said, ‘Sirs, **what must I do to be saved?**’ And they said, ‘**Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household**’” (Acts 16:30-31).*

In their pursuits to clarify the truth concerning salvation, pastors, preachers, and theologians have too often brought confusion into truth, thus rendering truth not true. If children can become Christians, and they can, as mentioned above (Matthew 18:6 “. . . *little ones who believe in Me . . .*”), would it not make sense to remain as simple in our presentation as the Apostle John is in his? John says repeatedly if one believes, he has eternal life.

Faith Alone or Faith Plus?

Jesus emphasizes a child’s faith so we might draw a strong and consistent conclusion. Anything required of a person for justification more than “believing in Jesus Christ” is tantamount to works salvation. Those stepping beyond faith alone have literally nowhere to draw the line. How one is saved becomes a matter of degree and relativism (again, works salvation).

Those defining repentance inaccurately as “turning from sins” raise many questions: How much turning from sin? How long do I turn from sin? Must all sin be stopped? What if I stop a certain sin, but it returns later? Similarly, those calling for a life commitment must answer “how much of my life must be given to Christ? All of it? For how long? How committed do I have to be? 100%? 51%? Must I serve Jesus 100% of the time? Will 51% be enough? Am I to make Him Lord of my life? What does it mean to make Him Lord of my life? Do I submit to Him as Lord of my life? Must I confess Christ as Lord? Must I publicly profess (confess) Jesus as my Savior? Must I publicly profess Jesus as my Savior and Lord?

Paul’s words in Romans 10:9 are commonly used by pastors and evangelists when attempting to lead someone (individual/mass) to salvation in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, “*That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.*” The requirement of “coming down front, etc.” for salvation stems from a misunderstanding of Romans 10:9 in its context. The Romans (sometimes written Roman) Road to Salvation approach to witnessing begins well, but ends poorly by adding to faith alone in Christ alone. Commonly speakers quote Romans 10:13 “*WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED*” to urge a person to pray a prayer of salvation (justification). Does a

person pray to receive Christ or does he believe to receive Christ? Is there a difference? What is Romans 10:13 saying in the Romans 10 context?

Does the Romans Road Method lead to Justification?

To the question “What is the Romans Road to salvation?” the consensus is seen in the following Internet source: “The Romans Road to salvation is a way of explaining the good news of salvation using verses from the Book of Romans. It is a simple yet powerful method of explaining why we need salvation, how God provided salvation, [and] how we can receive salvation . . .” (gotquestions.org). The Romans Road approach generally travels down the following path: All have sinned (Romans 3:23); the wages of sin is death (6:23); Jesus paid the death penalty for sins (5:8); Confess Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart (10:9-10); and last, Ask Jesus to save you (10:13).

One writer says, “To place your faith in Jesus and receive His gift of eternal life you must: 1) Recognize that you are a sinner and that you need a saving relationship with Jesus Christ; 2) Confess (agree with God) your sins; 3) Repent of your sins (turn from sin to God); 4) Ask Jesus to save you by His grace; and 5) Turn over the rule in your life to Jesus. Let Him be your Lord” (rrbycresa.com.).

It is true that in order for someone to be saved he must recognize his lost condition and therefore, the need of a Savior (number one above). It is numbers 2-5 that do not find agreement in the Scriptures. Confession (*homolegeo*) of sins (1 John 1:9) is a believer’s agreement with God for the purpose of walking in fellowship with God. Certainly an unbeliever cannot name each of his sins to God. If the writer means admit that one is a sinner, then that point is covered with number one. To repent is to “change one’s mind” concerning what is spoken of in a particular context. Never in Scripture is a lost person told to repent of specific sins or turn from sins to God in order to go to heaven. These are additions to various texts. Never do we read in the Scripture that a lost person is to “ask Jesus” to save him. And finally, there is no statement telling a lost person to turn over the rule in his life to Jesus. Lordship or submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ is clearly a sanctification category.

Paul’s exhortation to Lordship can be seen in Romans 12:1-2 where he writes, “*I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*”

Is there a legitimate method of observation and interpretation that yields discernment regarding this wonderful Doctrine of Salvation? To approach Scripture from a hermeneutic that lends itself to a literal (normal), historical, grammatical, and contextual study is always best. To study the Scripture within its context eliminates proof-texting. Nowhere is contextual study more important than in the study of the Doctrine of Salvation.

Chapter Two

Salvation is Both Physical and Spiritual

Physical Deliverance

The Greek words *soteria* (salvation) and *swzw* (to save) have the basic meaning of rescue/deliverance and to rescue or to deliver. Dr. Earl Radmacher says, “In the New Testament the verb *sozo* (“to save”) and the nouns *soter* (“Savior”) and *soteria* (salvation”) parallel the Hebrew word [*yasa*] and its derivatives. Thus the Old Testament concept of deliverance is carried over to the New Testament” (4). The context always determines the arena of deliverance. In certain cases, such as Matthew 14:30 and Acts 27:31 we see physical rescue or deliverance from death. In Matthew we hear Peter saying, “. . . *Lord, save me!*” (*kurie, swson me*). In Acts we see Paul the Apostle warning those on the ship that unless they stay on-board they cannot be saved (*swqhnai ou dunasqe*). In Acts 27:34 Paul tells those on the ship to eat for their health. The word translated health is the Greek word *sothrias* (salvation).

Justification

Regarding spiritual salvation, deliverance must be understood in three phases. Phase One is theologically termed Justification. Justification means to be declared righteous. It is the legal, forensic determination by God, Who is both Righteous and Just, that those who believe in Jesus Christ are at that moment declared righteous in their position, although they will never attain practical righteousness in this life. Paul writes, *“Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 3:24). He further states, *“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law”* (Romans 3:28). When the apostle concludes his confrontation with Peter in the Book of Galatians he says, *“Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified”* (Galatians 2:16). As a way of remembrance, some have said those who are justified have been delivered from the penalty of sin. They have been saved in the past tense.

Sanctification

Phase Two is theologically termed Sanctification. This is the practical walk of every Christian in which salvation is to be understood as something happening in the present. Every believer is to live out his positional righteousness in a practical sense. Phase Two is a process, in contrast to the instantaneous nature of Phase One and Phase Three, Glorification. To sanctify means to be set apart.

In Justification, the believer has been set apart in his position. As he walks in sanctification, he is being experientially set apart. Practical righteousness varies among believers, from carnality to growing toward maturity. The end result of the believer’s participation will be made manifest at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Paul says in Philippians that believers are to *“. . . work out your salvation . . .”* (Philippians 2:12). Salvation is the inward possession of each believer that is to be expressed outwardly.

In Romans we read, *“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him”* (Romans 5:9). (I will demonstrate in chapter four that the wrath of God in Romans is present, temporal wrath.) This verse says that justification is past tense, and the future tense of salvation from God’s wrath speaks of present tense deliverance day after day as we live life.

Rene Lopez (Ph.D. candidate, Dallas Theological Seminary) provides insight into the grammar of the future tense. He states, *“The future tense we shall be saved may be understood as a predictive future that can have either of two nuances: A strict-future fulfillment (from the presence of sin) or an immediate-future fulfillment (from the power of sin), understood as a ‘logical’ future that states what is natural and expected”* (Commentary, 109).

The next verse lends support to this present tense deliverance. It reads, *“For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life”* (Romans 5:10). Again the reconciliation is past tense, but the salvation is future tense (present tense deliverance as we go day to day). How shall we be saved? The stated answer is by His life. The life spoken of is not the life Jesus lived on earth, for his human life was preparatory for His High Priestly sacrifice. There existed no efficacy in a penal sense in His life lived while on earth. *“His life”* is to be understood as His seated capacity at the right hand of the Father, where He ever makes intercession on behalf of believers. It is His position as mediator that provides our deliverance day by day extending into our life’s future. Concerning the sanctification phase of salvation, the believer is being delivered from the power of sin. He is being saved in the present tense.

Glorification

Glorification (Phase Three of salvation) speaks of a time yet future when believers will receive the promised final redemption of our bodies. Paul says, *“. . . waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body”*(Romans 8:23). To the Church at Philippi the apostle writes, *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to*

Himself" (Philippians 3:20-21). In the future the believer will receive final or ultimate salvation. He will no longer do battle with the fleshly nature (Galatians 5:16-17). In Romans 7:15-23 Paul speaks of a present tense battle within the life of the believer. In verse 21 he succinctly says, "I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good." The time is coming for future salvation, a deliverance from even the presence of sin. In Romans 13:11-14 Paul speaks of each of the three phases of salvation in one context. He writes, *And this [loving your neighbor] do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now **salvation** (Glorification) is nearer to us than when we **believed** (Justification). (The remainder of the passage speaks of Sanctification.) The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.*

Chapter Three

Salvation Received by Faith Alone

Sola Fide – Faith Alone for Justification

The term "Solafidianism" emerged during the Reformation as a consequence of Martin Luther's translation of Romans 3:28 in which he added the word "alone" to the phrase "man is justified by faith [alone] apart from works of the Law (Harm, 1032). F. R. Harm continues "The translation is justifiable in view of the only alternative, namely justification by works, which Paul expressly repudiated" (1032). When stressing the concept of "faith alone" as the only means of receiving eternal life, this subjective belief in the heart of an individual necessarily must be without addition. If anything is added to "faith alone" it changes grace into works.

Concerning righteousness received through faith by Abraham and his descendants, Paul writes, "For this reason it is by faith that it might be in accordance with grace . . ." (Romans 4:16). To mingle anything with faith removes the clear contrast Paul stated earlier to the Romans. "But to the one who does not work, **but** believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness" (Romans 4:5). Any appendage to faith alone changes faith. Most would agree that faith plus baptism or church membership would be something additional to faith; however, I would argue that there is a more subtle approach that likewise adds works to faith: to re-define faith or change the nature of faith.

Faith, in any language, is a simple concept. In reality one either believes something or he does not. The emphasis in the Scriptures (both Old Testament and New Testament) is not faith itself, but the object of that faith.

A common phrase used concerning faith for justification is "saving faith," as if there were a certain quality of subjective faith that brings salvation. Other forms of this would be "really believe," "truly believe," and "sincerely believe." Another common phrase that changes the nature of faith is "a person is saved by faith alone, but faith that saves is never alone." A statement such as this is a way to re-define or change the nature of faith.

From Reformed Theology to Lordship Theology (many times one and the same) the salvation teaching toys with a person's faith, always stressing the subjective nature of faith rather than the objective truth that must be believed. Theologians have moved the emphasis of the Bible from the Savior to the hopefully saved. Because of this we must be concerned about those who are hearing that faith is something other than faith. Is their faith in their faith and its particulars (I sincerely believe, I truly believe, I promise, I commit), or is it Jesus Christ, the one in whom they place their trust?

On any given day we believe numerous bits of information. Sometimes we believe things that are not true or are not reliable. Would the amount of faith that something is true cause it to become true when in reality it is not true? Truly faith is only as good as its object. To believe that a lake frozen over in January/February is as reliable to cross on foot in March/April (although it appears to be safe) is placing one's faith in an unreliable object.

Concerning the quality or quantity of faith, a small amount of faith in a reliable object (the ice in January) would allow one to cross over. On the contrary, a huge amount of faith in an unreliable object (the ice in March) would result in possible major catastrophe. Child-like faith (void of theological understanding in the details) in the person of Jesus Christ will always result in eternal life. John 6:47 reads, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.” (NKJV)

Submission (Lordship) Salvation Adds to Faith Alone

I believe the “Lordship” teaching for justification developed from the reality of carnality within the Body of Christ, for not all believers live to glorify Jesus Christ. In fact, there are many (the Corinthians of old and any Corinthians in the present age) who simply live unto the flesh. Is this really possible for a believer? Chapters 6-8 of Romans (plus any statement of warning or exhortation in any epistle) would be needless if living ungodly were not a possibility for the Christian.

I find it quite interesting that in Romans 13:13 (quoted above) we read “strife and jealousy” grouped in the same category as carousing, drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, and sensuality. How easily the “Lordship” teachers can discern that a person caught up in these hideous sins most certainly is lost, but a person who expresses strife and jealousy is temporarily out of fellowship. The passion for purity inside the Church is to be honored, for believers are to live holy – set apart unto God. I question that the “Lordship” method brings about holiness. Someone “front-loading” the Gospel by demanding that the lost person make Phase Two (Christian Life) decisions before receiving the free gift of eternal life is nothing short of works salvation. The Apostle Paul never changed his presentation of the Gospel by giving a list of commitments (behavior) to unbelievers before they received salvation. Instead he taught believers (those justified by God) how they were to “behave” having entered the family of God.

A number of tremendous Bible teachers (pastors, authors, scholars, theologians) have much to offer the Body of Christ. However, in some instances their doctrinal teaching in the area of Soteriology must be questioned. Many in the pulpit have acquiesced to traditional definitions of faith. In doing this they have changed the very nature of faith. A well known pastor (and excellent Bible teacher) writes, Forsaking oneself for Christ’s sake is not an optional step of discipleship subsequent to conversion: it is the *sine qua non* of saving faith. (MacArthur, 135)
He is glad to give up all for the kingdom. That is the nature of saving faith. (139)
His demeanor was one of unconditional surrender, a complete resignation of self and absolute submission to his father. That is the essence of saving faith. (153)
A concept of faith that excludes obedience corrupts the message of salvation. (174)
So-called ‘faith’ in God that does not produce this yearning to submit to His will is not faith at all. The state of mind that refuses obedience is pure and simple unbelief. (176)

It seems somewhat (tongue planted firmly in cheek) contradictory for something that Paul says is a “free gift” (Romans 5:15-17) not to be a free gift according to the above statements. Does a person receive the gift of eternal life by forsaking himself for Christ’s sake, by giving up all for the kingdom, by an unconditional surrender, by a complete resignation of self, by an absolute submission to his father [God]? Has anyone save Jesus Himself lived this way? The specific words unconditional, complete, and absolute can never be understood as partial (even a life graded to be 99% surrendered, resigned, or submitted). These words demand perfection. All thinking people would conclude that if these are the requirements necessary to enter heaven, then heaven will have no occupants other than the Trinity and the angels who did not follow Satan.

Snapshot of the Greek word *pisteuō*

Greek grammarian and scholar Zane Hodges writes, “Clearly, we all operate at the level of common sense when we talk about faith as it relates to everyday life. It is only when we discuss this subject in religion that we tend to check our common sense at the door” (28). He continues, Let it be clearly stated here that English words like to “believe,” or “faith” function as fully adequate equivalents to their Greek counterparts. There is not some hidden residue of meaning in the Greek words that is not conveyed by their normal English renderings. Although some have

affirmed that there is, this claim betrays an inadequate or misguided view of biblical linguistics (28-29).

The verb form “to believe” (the sole Biblical response to the offer of eternal life) comes from the Greek word *pisteuō*. Since the New Testament was written in Greek, the interpreter’s role is to determine the meaning of the word *pisteuō*, not the meaning of the English word *believe*. The standard Greek Lexicon records that *pisteuō* is a favorite in John’s Gospel, where it is found 96 times (BAG, 665-666). This is of special importance considering the stated purpose of John is that all who believe receive eternal life (John 20:30-31). We must remind ourselves that the Apostle John, who many understand to be the closest companion to Jesus, never once mentioned the need for turning from sin or committing one’s life to the Lordship of Christ.

Concerning the lexical meaning of *pisteuō*, the primary meanings are 1) to believe (in) something, be convinced of something; and 2) to believe (in), trust (BAG, 666). To add meanings such as persuasion, assurance, and reliance would also be appropriate. Paul defines faith as to its true nature when speaking of the faith of the Patriarch Abraham. The apostle writes, “*And being fully assured* (persuaded or convinced) *that what He [God] had promised, He was able also to perform. Therefore also IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS*” (Romans 4:21-22). These conclusions concerning the nature of faith have been noted by others.

Charles Bing, in his doctoral dissertation, states:
The lexical evidence and Bible passages do not support the Lordship definition of faith as obedience, willingness to obey, or submission. . . Furthermore, there is no strong argument that the Bible contains examples of spurious faith. Faith is always real faith. The lexical evidence shows that faith is trust, reliance upon, or confidence in something. . . When one believes, he takes God at His word and personally appropriates the provision of Christ’s free gift of salvation for himself. This is saving faith. (Bing, 58-69)
Faith is simply taking God, Who cannot lie (Titus 1:2), at His word.

Chapter Four ***Salvation in the Epistle to the Romans*** **Scholarly Perspective**

The term *salvation* must always be understood within the context of its occurrence. To reiterate, the conclusion that *salvation* always means “going to heaven” is a gross error when interpreting Scripture. Dr. John F. Hart, Professor of Bible at Moody Bible Institute, writes with exceptional clarity concerning the presentation of the Gospel of Grace. He provides readers with a scholar’s perspective, but more importantly, he demonstrates contextual consistency in his presentation. Hart says,

Solutions for understanding Romans 10:9-10 may be found by reassessing various assumptions brought to the text. These assumptions are compounded by the over familiarity of the verses. The first assumption that needs to be set aside is the identification of “salvation” with justification in Romans. A study of the terms “salvation” and “save” in Romans corroborates the impression that Paul does not necessarily equate the two. (5)

Concerning the “wrath of God” phrase in verse 18 Lopez writes, “. . . wrath should be understood as God’s displeasure and display manifested against sin in time and not in eternity, whether one is unjustified or a justified-sinning-believer” (25).

Dr. Robert Wilkin, director of Grace Evangelical Society, in an article addressing confession for salvation in Romans 10 writes, “The salvation spoken of in verse 13 (and thus also in verse 10) relates to believers. It is dealing with **salvation from the wrath of God here and now**, not salvation from God’s eternal wrath” (emphasis his, 1).

In contemplating Dr. Wilkin’s statement, the word translated “wrath” is the Greek word *orgh*. Other renderings are anger, retribution, punishment, and revenge. Paul uses the word *orgh* ten times in the Epistle of Romans (Romans 1:18; 2:5 [twice], 8; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19; and 13:4, 5). Only in Romans 2:5 (considering the context of each occurrence) do we have the possibility of

wrath being understood as something other than temporal wrath; however, a closer look at this verse even allows for it to be understood as temporal wrath.

Romans 2:5 reads, *“But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”* The phrase “in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” is normally understood to be speaking of the same event – the period of The Tribulation. The word “revelation” simply means “unveiling” and therefore can be understood as the display of God’s wrath without regard to time. Because the definite article “the” does not appear in the Greek text it remains indefinite and should be translated “a day of wrath.” If this is the case, “a day” could be any day (any time in the future – any day or even every day).

The wrath of Romans 1:18 and the wrath of Romans 2:5 serve as bookends for the literary device “inclusio.” The conjunction *διο* (therefore) in Romans 2:1 serves to connect chapter two with the preceding “therefore” of Romans 1:24 which takes the line of thought contextually back to Romans 1:18. Paul argues that God’s temporal wrath falls upon all who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. This includes both those who deny the existence of God and those who, though believing in God (this second group is identified in verse 17 to be Jews), remain stubborn and unrepentant. It is also true that God’s wrath falls upon any believer who suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. A form of God’s wrath would be the discipline from a loving Heavenly Father because of His child’s errant behavior.

Salvation used as a Signal to Interpretation

The term “salvation” appears to be strategically placed throughout the Book of Romans to give the reader not only “salvation’s” proper meaning (deliverance from the power of sin and the wrath of God in the present tense), but also to provide signposts in understanding the argument of this epistle of the Grace of God.

Signpost One

The word is first used by Paul in giving what many feel to be the theme of the epistle: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘BUT THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”* (Romans 1:16-17) The gospel of which Paul is not ashamed is truly good news, for it provides deliverance from sin in all three phases of salvation. What is important to the believer during this life is phase two, temporal deliverance from both the power of sin and the wrath of God. In the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed presently in a progressive manner. It is an on-going revelation bringing on-going deliverance. Since the revealing is from faith to faith, the righteousness of God cannot refer simply to one’s initial faith for justification.

The Church at Rome was made-up of both Jew and Gentile converts; therefore, both groups are addressed in the one letter. To a Jewish mind (author and audience which included Gentiles who needed a sense of Jewish perspective) the thought of “salvation” conjured up fullness and completeness with regard to deliverance and belief in establishing an earthly kingdom, not a “pie in the sky” salvation.

Detailed observation of Romans 1:15-18 clearly reveals these verses are tightly woven together by Paul’s use of the explanatory *gar* (for). He says in verse 15 he is eager to preach the gospel (good news regarding deliverance) to those who are in Rome. He follows this statement with three reasons explaining his eagerness: *“For I am not ashamed . . .”* (Romans 1:16), *“For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is [being] revealed . . .”* (Romans 1:17), and *“For the wrath of God is [being] revealed . . .”* (Romans 1:18).

The immediate context juxtaposes the wrath of God (v. 18) by using the precise word as in verse 17 (apokaluptetai – present, passive, indicative – is being revealed). Two things are being revealed in the present tense: the righteousness of God and the wrath of God. The wrath of God is seen in the repeated phrase “God gave them over.” Hart writes, “He no longer restrained them from deeper and deeper enslavement to sin” (6). The context argues for a salvation (deliverance) from the present wrath of God, not a salvation from eternal punishment.

Signpost Two

Paul does not use the word salvation again until Romans 5. He states, “*Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we **shall be saved** from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we **shall be saved** by His life*” (Romans 5:9-10). Romans 5:1 emphatically states the declaration of righteousness is a past tense reality. It reads, “*Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Verses nine and ten repeat this reality – having now been justified and having been reconciled. The salvation addressed here is yet future (but worked out in the present tense as believers live day to day – chapter two). Obviously in Paul’s mind justification and salvation are two distinct deliverances. Lopez agrees when he says, “Failure to make such distinctions will distort the theme of the book: The gospel produces power to be justified and to be delivered from God’s wrath brought by sin. This enables the believer to experience life, as well as expect God’s promises to Israel to be fulfilled in the future” (25).

The absence of the word “salvation” (Romans 1:16 to Romans 5:9) strongly supports the definition being deliverance, and particularly deliverance from temporal wrath. After introducing salvation Paul categorizes all people as being without excuse. He follows this characterization with the only possible answer to man’s dilemma. In Romans 3:21 we read, “*But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*”

At this juncture Paul explains justification (the declaration of righteousness) by faith alone. He devotes the entire fourth chapter to the doctrine of imputation, whereby the believer’s account is credited with the righteousness of God. Paul uses the Patriarch Abraham to illustrate his teaching, arguing that Abraham’s faith was reckoned as righteousness prior to his being circumcised. He says this same imputation is applied to all believers, regardless of ethnic background.

Having demonstrated irrefutably that justification (eternal life) is by faith apart from works, Paul begins chapter five by saying, “*Therefore having been justified* (aorist tense) . . .” The remainder of Romans five is used to transition into the sanctification section, i.e., chapters six through eight. Omitting the word “salvation” between Romans 1:16 and Romans 5:9 is completely logical because salvation (deliverance) for the lost is justification, that is, the declaration of righteousness based on imputation. In Romans 5:9-10 Paul again uses the term “salvation” (deliverance) as he begins the topic of sanctification, that is, the deportment of righteousness.

In Romans six Paul asks two very direct questions to those that have been justified by faith. He answers these two questions with the strongest of negatives. The first question is “. . . *Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?*” (Romans 6:1). The second is “. . . *Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?*” (Romans 6:15) Paul’s answer to both questions is “May it never be.” Some other translations give the answer as “God forbid” (KJV), “By no means” (NIV), “Certainly not” (NKJV), and “Absolutely not” (TNB). The Greek phrase is *mh genoito*. The Greek negative *mhis* followed by a form of the word *ginomai*, which means to become, to come into existence, to begin to be, or to receive being. The negation has the effect of saying that which could come into existence is never to come into existence. The believer should never consider the possibility or even the thought of the possibility. It is a tremendously strong statement written to one who is justified. In essence, Paul challenges the believer to perish the thought.

Through identification with Christ’s Death, Burial, and Resurrection each saved individual is to reckon the statements of Romans six as true in a personal sense. We are to add up (calculate) the accomplishments of Christ on our behalf and consider them done. We are no longer to let sin reign in any capacity. All that the believer was in Adam has been rendered without power; and therefore, serving the Savior or serving sin and self becomes a matter of choice.

Obviously chapter seven teaches the Christian life involves a present battle that will not be completely won until the time of glorification. In various ways Paul expresses his desire is to do

good, but he recognizes the principle that evil is present in him (Romans 7:21). The freedom sought after in verse twenty-four is deliverance in sanctification.

Romans 8:1 reads, *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* The earliest manuscripts (Aleph and B) eliminate the second phrase – “. . . *who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*” Two texts in the century after Aleph and B include the phrase, as do the majority of manuscripts (Lopez, 161). It seems best to include the phrase since the previous context speaks of a still present tense slavery from which believers are delivered (saved). Romans 8:1-17 exhorts the believer to deliverance and victory by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We learn in Romans 8:4 the righteous requirements of the Law can be fulfilled only by walking according to the Spirit. Furthermore, in Romans 8:12-13 Paul says, *“So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh (the implication being we are under obligation to live according to the Spirit) – for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”*

Signpost Three

It is not until Romans 8:24 that Paul again uses the word “salvation.” The apostle writes, *“For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it”* (Romans 8:24-25). He makes this statement after saying that all of creation, even our physical bodies are crying out for ultimate redemption. We have been saved unto something in the future, designated by Paul as a “hope.” This can be nothing other than Phase Three Salvation (Glorification), but until hope becomes sight, we persevere with eager anticipation. Paul completes Romans eight by giving both doctrinal (God’s foreknowledge) and practical (God’s favor) reasons why nothing whatsoever can separate the believer from the love of God.

Signpost Four

The only remaining mention of the word “salvation” between Romans 8:24 and Romans 10:1 is found in Romans 9:27. The apostle quotes Isaiah when he writes, “. . . *‘THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED.’*” The word here indicates a “return” and therefore deliverance. The fact God has always preserved a remnant of Jewish believers even until today (presently members of the Body of Christ) indicates He will do so in the future.

Romans 11:25-26 clearly says because of God’s covenant to Israel, final and ultimate salvation will come to this chosen nation. Paul states, *“And thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB. AND THIS IS MY CONVNTANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.’”* Having traced the term “saved/salvation” from Romans 1:16 to Romans 11:26, it is important to consider the contextual placement of Romans 9-11.

Many expositors understand Romans 9-11 as a parenthetical interlude, which gives “true to life” examples of the doctrinal material presented in the first eight chapters. Immediately after the parenthetical section, Paul uses chapters twelve through sixteen to teach the practical outworking of chapters one through eight. I concur with the practical approach to Romans 12-16 (and I would add there is much to make practical in the first eight chapters), but disagree that chapters nine through eleven make up a parenthetical interlude. This writer sees these chapters flowing straight from the preceding context of chapter eight. The dissertation found in Romans 9-11 certainly pertains to the nation Israel (past, present, and future), but these chapters precisely answer the question: If there is no way that a believer can be separated from the love of God, i.e. God Himself, then what about the nation of Israel? The specific questions might be: Has Israel been rejected? If so, why, and is this rejection forever? Does the nation still exist? Does Israel have a future as a nation? Is Israel really God’s chosen people?

Sovereignty in Selection

Romans nine teaches that God is sovereign in the selection of both nations and individuals to fulfill His desired purpose. I do not believe Romans nine teaches that certain individuals are chosen for salvation (i.e. justification), while others are passed over. The main teaching is Israel has been chosen to bring about His plan of redemption. Israel was chosen for three major purposes: The first was to proclaim the truth concerning the one true God. Secondly, Israel was chosen to give the world the written Word of God. And thirdly, Israel was chosen to bring the “seed of woman,” the Lord Jesus Christ, to a lost and dying world. The nation Israel, plus the individuals named in Romans 9 (from Abraham to Pharaoh) were chosen to serve. They were selected to serve the purposes of God. As a nation, Israel stumbled over the stumbling stone – the Lord Jesus. (Romans ten will be considered in the final chapter.)

The result of this unbelief is that Israel’s final dispensation of service is yet future. Until that time the proclamation of God’s Word is being administered by the Body of Christ. Chapter eleven of Romans begins with these words: *“I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin”* (Romans 11:1). Once more the apostle uses the phrase *mh genoito* – perish the thought. In Romans 11:11 Paul writes, *“I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.”* Again, *mh genoito!* Paul believes there is a future for Israel.

And finally, he writes in Romans 11:25, *“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a **partial hardening** has happened to Israel **until** the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”* The word **partial** opens the way for many Jewish people to believe in Jesus as Messiah/Savior during this dispensation. The remnant continues through the Church, the Body of Christ. This partial hardening is associated with the preposition “until,” indicating a time factor. How long is the time factor? There is no answer other than “until” the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. I understand this to be (because of the context, Romans 11:17-20) the time of the grafting in of the final non-Jewish believer. It is for certain each individual (Jew or Gentile) who comes to faith in this church age receives forgiveness of sins and is saved (justified); however, the thrust of Romans 9-11 is that the people groups (including certain individuals) through whom God’s plan for proclaiming salvation (all phases) would come is based upon the divine determination of God.

Chapter Five

Sanctification of a Saved Generation

Paul’s Use of Deuteronomy 30

The Apostle Paul was precise not only in what Christians were to believe, but also how they were to behave. He is the New Testament author of argumentation with the necessary application always following. In Romans 10:6-8 he writes, *But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, “DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN:” (that is, to bring Christ down), or “WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 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.*

Paul partially quotes while alluding to Deuteronomy 30:12-14. Deuteronomy 30:11-14 reads, *For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?” Nor is it beyond the sea that you should say, “Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?” But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.*

Paul selects this particular passage to use in Romans because it refers to a saved (declared righteous) and secure people who have already received their “marching orders” (Mosaic Law). They have no need for more information – nothing else has to happen. No one is to ascend into heaven to receive more laws, statutes, or ordinances. Moses had already ascended the mountain and had already received everything necessary for them to walk in a manner pleasing to God. Crossing the sea is an allusion to Moses’ leadership at the Red Sea. That was not to happen again.

The deliverance of Israel and the judgment of Egypt was already past tense. The Israelites were to cross over Jordan and live in obedience to God's revelation. The Romans application follows in Chapter six.

Second Generation Believers

The Book of Deuteronomy, taking its name from the Septuagint, literally means "this repetition of the law" (Deere, 259). This repetition does not speak of a new Law in addition to the Law given to Moses, but to the "second giving" of the Mosaic Law. Dr. Deere adds, "This Hebrew title ["these are the words"] is a more apt description of the book for it is not a 'second Law,' but the record of Moses' sermons on the Law" (259). Deuteronomy presents Moses' final orations to the children of Israel, that is, a second generation of Israelites, for the Exodus generation had passed away. Because of the Exodus generation's unbelief, although redeemed out of Egyptian bondage, they were unable to enter into the abundance of the Promised Land.

That rebellious generation chose to die in the wilderness rather than participate in the inheritance God would have given them in the Land of Canaan. Numbers 14:29 emphatically states, "*Your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.*" The Bible is clear that not even Moses entered the land. The only exceptions were Joshua and Caleb. To say Canaan speaks of heaven and not the abundant life of the believer is to say Moses will be in the Lake of Fire.

The messages found in Deuteronomy were given to a generation not responsible (because of the age factor) to the Law when first given as recorded in Exodus. The new generation was about to enter the land. If they were to receive blessings of God upon their lives as a nation, they necessarily had to walk in strict obedience to the Law of Moses.

The establishment of the Feast of Passover (with the slain lamb and blood applied) is clearly teaching redemption in a spiritual sense. Israel had been purchased with a price, foreshadowing the price that would one day be paid by the spotless Lamb of God. Typologically, Israel speaks of a saved (justified) people, a people who by the time of hearing Moses' speeches in Deuteronomy are in the position to enter into the land as they walk in obedience to God's Word (The Mosaic Law). Dr. Joseph Dillow writes, "In Dt. 30:15-20 life and prosperity are associated and contrasted with 'destruction.' If they love the Lord their God and walk in His ways and keep His commands, they will 'live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess'" (138).

Deuteronomy 30 obviously teaches a contrast between obedience resulting in blessing and disobedience resulting in cursing (discipline). The contrast is between physical life and physical death, not heaven and hell. This makes perfect sense being in the broader context of the Palestinian (land) Covenant promised first to Abraham. Deuteronomy 30:15-20 provides an extended paragraph showing the above mentioned contrast. In summary verses 19-20 read, *I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you **life and death**, the blessing and the curse. So choose **life** in order that you may **live**, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your **life** and the **length of your days**, that you may **live in the land** which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.*

In concluding this brief review of Deuteronomy 30, it is important to again quote verse fourteen, for Paul applies it (Romans 10:8) to drive home his point to the believers in the Church at Rome. It reads, "*But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.*" Moses is telling the second generation they have no need of further information regarding how to walk in a way that pleases God. They (Israel) have received the Law (all 613 commandments) and now they are to enter the land, remembering obedience to the Law in detail will ensure their stability and prosperity. Should the Israelites choose to not walk in obedience, they can anticipate the curses reserved for the Canaanites. We shall see in the presentation of Romans 10:9-10 Paul does not use the final phrase of Deuteronomy 30:14, which says, ". . . *that you may observe it.*"

The Hebrew word *אָשָׂה* (*asah*) that is translated observe is an infinitive in the Qal stem. It means to act, to do, to make, to produce, and to work. Dr. Thomas McComiskey provides help with this word:

Aside from the numerous occurrences of the meaning “do” or “make” in a general sense, *asa* is often used with the sense of ethical obligation. The covenant people were frequently commanded to “do” all that God had commanded (Ex 23:22; Lev 19:37; Deut 6:18, etc.). The numerous contexts in which this concept occurs attest to the importance of an ethical response to God which goes beyond mere mental abstraction and which is translatable into obedience which is evidenced in demonstrable act. (701)

It is a word of strict obedience. As Moses spoke this to his audience, he stated plainly the absolute need to obey. The Hebrew mindset of “hearing” left no room for disobedience, for disobedience was equal to “not having heard.” The doing of the Law was incumbent for Israel. When Paul uses this verse, he replaces “. . . *that you may observe it*” with “. . . *that is, the word of faith which we are preaching*” (Romans 10:8). To the Church at Rome Paul preaches the same message, but from a different perspective.

Chapter Six

Sanctification view of Romans 10:9-10

Salvation Understood as Deliverance

Paul’s use of the term “salvation” must be determined not only by the context in which it occurs, but also by the Jewish understanding of salvation. As alluded to earlier, the nation of Israel was anticipating not only a liberation from the problem of sin, but a liberation from the problem of physical bondage.

Israel’s history was one of servitude to other nations, whether Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, or Roman. God had promised peace and prosperity in the context of a ruling kingdom. Israel desired freedom from any and every foreign nation’s control. In the Jewish mind, salvation was not seen in three theological categories, but a package of deliverance providing freedom from everything and everyone, both spiritual and physical. Without knowing all the details, Israel looked forward to a time when the nation was truly the head and not the tail. The people anticipated the “contingency kingdom” (a generation of Israel that by faith received the Messiah) being the actualized kingdom. Dr. Alva J. McClain saw this “contingency kingdom” as the “mediatorial kingdom.” This understanding is quite logical when one views Israel as Israel and not the Church. He writes, “The Mediatorial Kingdom may be defined tentatively as: (a) the rule of God through a divinely chosen representative who not only speaks and acts for God but also represents the people before God; (b) a rule which has especial reference to the earth; and (c) having as its mediatorial ruler one who is always a member of the human race” (McClain, 41). The Church’s teaching of “going to heaven” was not part of Israel’s promised deliverance. Based on the Word of God given to Abraham, they were to receive a Land, a Seed, and a Blessing. These covenant promises (Palestinian Covenant, Davidic Covenant, and New Covenant) will be realized when the Lord Jesus returns to establish His kingdom on earth.

Sanctification Context of Romans 10

The Apostle Paul begins chapter ten of Romans by saying, “*Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation*” (Romans 10:1) Salvation here is to be understood as their deliverance encompassing both physical and spiritual (all phases, yet in one complete package) salvation. As Paul pens chapter ten, the salvation focus will converge on sanctification, as will be seen in Romans 10:9-10.

Although Romans 8:30 mentions the word “glorified” in the aorist tense, and Romans 8:39 says nothing can separate the believer from the love of God, the overall context which began in Romans 6:1 is still in the apostle’s mind. The Romans eight passages provide tremendous impetus for

living the Christian life. A believer who sees himself from God's perspective (glorified and eternally secure) can walk with confidence, serving the Lord Jesus out of love's sake rather than according to Law. This knowledge is indeed necessary during "phase two" of salvation (progressive sanctification).

In a sanctification context, Romans 10:2-5 indicates Israel's pursuit of righteousness was on their own terms, not subjecting themselves to the "righteousness of God." Clearly from this epistle the Law's purpose was never to make anyone righteous. The Law brought condemnation while at the same time "stirred up" the sin capacity (Romans 3:19-20; 5:20). Cornelius Stam comments, "Efforts to keep the Law will never establish one's righteousness; rather they will establish his *unrighteousness*." In Galatians 2:21 Paul writes, "*I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.*" He goes on to state "*Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith*" (Galatians 3:24). One could never consistently argue Israel's righteousness (theologically justification or sanctification) came about through the Law.

The apostle speaks forthrightly when he says, "*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness*" (Romans 10:4-5). Because of the weakness of the flesh (Romans 8:3) righteousness could never actually be earned through keeping the Law. The Law served as a steward to guide people to Christ. Once Christ appeared to fulfill the righteousness of the Law, His obedience was not simply one of "fleshing out" the demands of the Law, but as His constant and continual submission to the will of His Father (by means of the Spirit of God). Christ's submission resulted in a perfect, moment-by-moment righteousness. Moses' statement (Romans 10:5) was a legitimate proposition. Spiritual life and lifestyle could be earned through the keeping of the Law; however, keeping the Law is impossible (James 2:10).

Justification Righteousness Example is Abraham

The New Testament model for both justification and sanctification is Abraham, the progenitor of the Jewish nation. Concerning Abraham's justification unto life eternal Moses writes, "*Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness*" (Genesis 15:6). Paul defends and develops Abraham's justification in the entirety of chapter four of Romans. He quotes Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4:3. It reads, "*For what does the Scripture say? 'AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.'*" This quotation by Paul comes immediately after many didactic details concerning "justification (declaration of righteousness) by faith alone" (Romans 3:21-31). The placement of Romans 4:3 conclusively teaches Abraham is saved (justified) by faith alone, apart from the Law. The common sense statement is that his declaration of righteousness occurred before the Law was given. Paul addresses justification theologically.

Sanctification Righteousness Example is Abraham

James, the Lord's half-brother, uses Abraham as the example of "Christian Life" justification (progressive sanctification) when he writes, "*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,' and he was called the friend of God*" (James 2:21-23).

The work to which this declaration is applied is the sacrifice of Isaac, an act of obedience coming from a very mature faith. Many have conjectured that Isaac was anywhere from teenage years to the age of Jesus when He Himself allowed men to nail Him to a cross. The point is the declaration of Genesis 15 occurred before Isaac was born. By the time Abraham offered his son, his only son (Genesis 22:2), many years had transpired. James speaks not of justification theologically, but sanctification.

Righteousness Based on Faith

In Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30 (chapter five) we see two people groups in comparison and contrast. One similarity is that both audiences already have a relationship with God. Another similarity is that both groups have received all the information they need to live in a way pleasing to God. The major contrast is the audience in Deuteronomy is commanded to practice righteousness based on Law, whereas the audience in Romans is exhorted to practice righteousness based on faith.

In the same way God had provided the Law (God's method for Israel to experience abundance in the land flowing with milk and honey) through Moses, He had provided Christ as the fulfillment of the Law. The second member of the Godhead had taken on flesh, lived without sin, and offered Himself as mankind's substitute. He died on a cross, giving Himself as the necessary propitiation rendered unto a righteous and just Father. He arose from the dead on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:4). The Lord Jesus ascended into heaven. Ten days later the Lord Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to empower believers to walk in His likeness. To the Romans Paul is saying – nothing else is to be done; you are to be characterized by faith and confession.

Salvation in Romans 10:9 Demands Two Conditions

Those who preach (and even some who do not) "Lordship Salvation (Justification)" use Romans 10:9 as the central passage in attempting to lead someone to Christ. It reads, *"That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."* The first observation is this verse must be taken at face value. Anyone who desires to interpret Scripture accurately must allow each and every verse to say what it says. To change what a text says, or to read theological positions into a text only serves to heighten the interpreter's view of himself, while at the same time reduce the opportunity to handle accurately the Word of truth. Romans 10:9 says salvation is based on two conditions: One condition is to confess with your mouth. The other condition is to believe in your heart. This is the only place in the New Testament where a condition in addition to faith is added for salvation (Dillow, 123). If this salvation refers to justification, then it would be impossible for a person to come to Christ by reading John 3:16, for this famous verse does not mention the need to confess with the mouth. The Bible is replete with references clearly teaching that justification comes by faith alone in Christ alone.

Secondly if justification is solely on the basis of faith alone plus nothing, and Romans 10:9 asks for confession, does this not seem contradictory? I say it does not seem contradictory – it is contradictory! Salvation in this context must be speaking about a different deliverance from justification salvation. This is not deliverance from the penalty of sin (justification), but clearly the power of sin (sanctification). For one who is justified to experience the joy of his salvation (intimacy with Christ and abundant life instead of God's present tense wrath through discipline and loss of blessing), he must remove the faulty thinking that holiness is optional. The Christian life is a life of faith and confession. In the first chapter the Greek word confession (homologeō) meant to agree with God within the area of fellowship with God. The word confession in Romans 10:9 has a lifestyle connotation that includes both the platform (a believer's walk) and the proclamation (a believer's words). This platform and proclamation are expressions that Jesus is Lord. This Lordship relates to both His Deity and His Mastery over the believer's life. Again let me say Lordship in terms of submission of life is in the category of sanctification salvation. Thirdly Romans 10:9 is a peculiar place to glean justification doctrine when the apostle more than adequately dealt with justification in the extended passage beginning in Romans 3:21 and continuing to the end of chapter four. If someone has a question about how one receives righteousness as taught in the Book of Romans, the place to look is not Romans 10, but Romans 3 and 4.

Fourthly if the "confess with your mouth" is to be understood literally, then the person without the ability to speak cannot be received into heaven. Furthermore, if this verbal confession means a public profession at the end of a church isle (mh genoito), then many people think they are saved when in reality they are lost. Anyone who has "public profession" or "Christ and public profession" as the object of faith instead of solely the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ remains unsaved.

Romans 10:9 Explained in Romans 10:10

A contextual observation concerning Romans 10:9 is that verse 10 begins with another explanatory *gar* (for). Romans 10:10 provides the explanation for verse 9. It reads, “*For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*” Notice what the first half of Romans 10:10 says. With the heart man **believes**, resulting in **righteousness**. Is that not what is needed for someone to be justified? That is certainly the conclusion one reaches from a study of Romans 3 and 4. When a person believes the gospel message concerning Jesus he receives a righteousness imputed by God. At the moment of faith he is justified. The second half of Romans 10:10 states **confession** results in **salvation**.

Belief results in righteousness and confession results in salvation. The distinct conditions followed by distinct results indicate that not one, but two propositions are being stated. If Paul’s argument in Romans 10:9-10 is one proposition to demonstrate how one is justified, his words should read something to this effect: “For with the heart man believes, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in righteousness.” Another question to ask the text is “If righteousness and salvation have the same meaning, why confuse the reader by using different words?” This is especially true if the wording could mean the difference between heaven and hell.

Expressing concern over the lack of Romans 10:9-10 understanding, Radmacher states, “Romans 10:9-10 shows the contrast between initial salvation (justification) and continuing salvation (sanctification). The tendency in our day is to reduce salvation to justification, but that is not the case in Scripture. Belief alone brings righteousness (justification salvation), but belief and confession (and much more) bring sanctification. This is in keeping with the past, present, and future tenses of salvation” (259).

Supposed Confusion Clarified

In the next three verses (Romans 10:11-13) Paul extends his explanation through the continued use of the conjunction *gar* (for). He quotes the latter part of Isaiah 28:16, which he first quoted in Romans 9:33. Isaiah 28:16 reads, “*Therefore thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed’*” (emphasis mine). In Romans 10:11 Paul immediately makes reference to justification. He does this by saying (by implication) anyone who does not stumble over this Stone (Jesus), but believes in Him will not be disappointed (disturbed in Isaiah). Although believers could be both disappointed and disturbed in the present time, no believer will ever be disappointed or disturbed in terms of eternity. In quoting this ending phrase of Isaiah 28:16 he gives the reason as to why the believer can rest in his declared righteousness which results from “believing in your heart.” Paul writes, “*For the Scripture says . . .*” (Romans 10:11).

To the Church (Jews and Gentiles) at Rome who desperately needed to apply the apostle’s teaching, Paul says there is no partiality with God as He relates to His children. Romans 10:12 reads, “*For [explanatory *gar*] there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him.*” The phrase “abounding in riches” speaks of the abundant life available for the one who has believed in Christ as Savior. “Abounding in riches” is not a phrase used to describe the receiving of eternal life, though eternal life is certainly rich in itself. This phrase speaks of blessing in the temporal life as we experience the wonderful hand of His grace. It further speaks of the believer’s future inheritance (Ephesians 1:18-19).

Another line of reasoning substantiating this view is that the abounding riches are for those who “call upon Him.” We will consider the word translated “call upon” in the next section, and hopefully answer the question “Can anyone and everyone ‘call upon’ the Lord, or is it a privilege possessed by only His children?”

Romans 10:13 is a quotation from Joel 2:32. It reads, “*For [explanatory *gar*] ‘WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.’*” The extended context of the quotation begins in Joel 2:28.

“And it will come about after this that I will pour out my Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions and even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls” (Joel 2:28-32).

The full passage in Joel seems to speak conclusively of Israel’s deliverance during the great and awesome day of the LORD, a day of physical deliverance for those Jews who will enter the physical kingdom under the reign of the Lord Jesus. Dr. Charles Feinberg says, “The prophet is speaking of the latter days for Israel, a period which covers both the Tribulation period and the reign of the Messiah which follows it” (80). Paul’s application for the believers in Rome is that those who call upon the name of the Lord will find deliverance. This is understood as both physical deliverance and spiritual deliverance in the sanctification process.

Snapshot of the Greek word epikalew

The Greek word epikalew is most often translated either call on or call upon. Cleon Rogers simply says to call upon (371). The word itself comes from the preposition epi meaning upon, and the verb kalew meaning to call. I will demonstrate that this Greek word is used (in the spiritual sense) in the New Testament only of people who are already in relationship with God.

The following is a listing of verses in which the Greek word epikalew appears in a context where someone is calling upon another. In a non-salvific manner we see Paul calling upon Caesar (Acts 25:11, 12, 21, 25; 26:32; 28:19). The Greek word is translated by the word “appeal.” In contexts other than Romans 10 where spiritual deliverance is in view we find the word epikalew: Acts 2:21; 7:59; 9:14, 21; 22:16; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:23; 2 Timothy 2:22; and 1 Peter 1:17. In these passages the word is translated address, call, call on, or call upon.

Significantly in each reference, whether non-salvific or salvific, the “caller” has an established relationship allowing him the privilege and right to “call upon.” All of the verses referenced in Acts 25-28 record what Paul said, or what was said about Paul. Acts 25:11 reads, *“If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die, but if none of those things is true of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them, I appeal (epikalew) to Caesar.”* Luke later writes in Acts 28:19, *“But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal (epikalew) to Caesar; not that I had any accusation against my nation.”* The average man on the street had no right to appeal to Caesar. Paul’s Roman citizenship established his relationship and privilege. Having appealed to Caesar, to Caesar he would go.

In order to demonstrate clearly the sanctification view of Romans 10:9-10, one must quote each passage that uses epikalew in the spiritual sense. They are as follows:

“AND IT SHALL BE, THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON (epikalew) THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED” (Acts 2:21).

“And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon (epikalew) the Lord and said, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’” (Acts 7:59)!

“And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon (epikalew) Thy name” (Acts 9:14).

“And all those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, ‘Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on (epikalew) this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests’” (Acts 9:21)?

“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon (epikalew) the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours” (1 Corinthians 1:2).

“But I call (epikalew) God as my witness to my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth” (2 Corinthians 1:23).

“Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on (epikalew) the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22).

“And if you address (epikalew) as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth” (1 Peter 1:17).

These verses speak of believers (Believing Jews during the Tribulation [see previous section], Stephen, Believers in Damascus, Believers in Corinth with Believers in every place, Paul, Timothy and others, Believers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia) calling upon God. Hodges states, “Many readers of Romans 10 have thought that the text talks about how a person could be saved from hell. But this completely ignores the fact that in the New Testament “calling on the name of the Lord” is a *Christian* activity” (195).

The Apostle Paul uses the word epikalew in three consecutive verses (Romans 10:12-14, translated “call upon” in each verse) as he addresses believers who must realize sanctification deliverance is available. This deliverance is multi-faceted. They have deliverance from sin, self, the world, and the devil. In other words, they are not to suppress truth by walking in unrighteousness. By taking advantage of this deliverance, they assure themselves that God’s blessing, as opposed to His wrath, would be theirs day in and day out.

Paul says “abounding riches” exist for those who call upon God (Romans 10:12). He says spiritual (and sometimes physical) deliverance is available for all who call upon God (Romans 10:13). Appropriately Paul’s third use of epikalew found in Romans 10:14 finalizes the apostle’s argument. He asks, *“How then shall they call upon (epikalew) Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”* (emphases mine)

The logic is quite simple as the questions flow backwards. Each question demands a negative answer. Beginning in Romans 10:15 the question is asked, *“And how shall they preach unless they are sent? . . .”* The answer – they cannot, for it is impossible. *“. . . And how shall they hear without a preacher?”* The answer – they cannot, for it is impossible. *“. . . And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? . . .”* The answer – they cannot, for it is impossible. *“How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? . . .”* The answer – they cannot, for it is impossible.

The practical element of this understanding is the loving nature of the Heavenly Father. Each and every child of God has equal access to the Father. There are no restrictions, nor limitations. Whatever the situation the Father’s child can “call upon” Him. It is true that an unbeliever can call out to God offering prayers and be heard. Cornelius is a great example. Any lost person can pray, but not in the same manner as one who belongs to God. It is a unique relationship established by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Even with our physical families, only a son can truly “call upon” (epikalew) his father. Likewise, only a Christian can truly (epikalew) “call upon” his Heavenly Father.

Summary

The Gospel which gives eternal life is truly a simple proposition. The proposition is such that even a small child can understand. The final mention of this wonderful “good news” is found in Revelation 22:17. John writes, *“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost (freely).”* This water of life can be offered without cost because the cost has been paid in full.

The Scripture is unquestionably clear that “justification” comes by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone. The Greek word pisteuw means to believe or to have faith, not commit, promise, or submit. The Biblical emphasis of faith is not a person’s subjective faith, but the object of that faith, that is, in Christ alone. Although salvation (justification) is without cost, discipleship is quite costly. Beginning with Stephen to the present day many have died as martyrs. What could possibly prompt loyalty to the point of death? The answer lies in the assurance that eternal life has been given to all who believe in Jesus.

In this writing project I have attempted to demonstrate that Romans 10:9-10 should be understood within the theological category of sanctification. Salvation in Romans, though

including justification, focuses primarily on sanctification. Paul strategically uses the word salvation throughout the Book to set forth his Jewish view of deliverance. In Romans 10 believers have need of deliverance from the power of sin and the wrath of God which falls on everyone who suppresses truth.

Paul exhorts his readers to a life of faith and confession by applying Deuteronomy 30 to their situation. Each group of believers (Old Testament and New Testament) had received all the necessary revelation for them to walk in a manner pleasing to God. For those in Rome, having been justified by faith, it was imperative they walk in open confession of the Lord Jesus in Whom they had believed. To do so would bring deliverance in the present tense.

The apostle uses the Greek word *epikaleo* to instill in the Church's thinking that believers have a unique relationship with the Heavenly Father. They could call upon Him at any time, regardless of the situation, be it good or bad. This privilege to "call upon" God relates to Father-son intimacy and goes beyond the cry of the unbeliever.

It is my conclusion that Romans 10:9-10 is not a passage given to introduce someone to Jesus Christ, for it speaks of principles in the Christian life. My concern is that many have supposedly committed their lives to Jesus Christ, or supposedly submitted their lives to Jesus Christ, but have never Believed in Jesus Christ Alone as the Life Giver. The Apostle John writes, *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).

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