

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 10:1-3

Study Notes:

- **A Birdseye View of Romans 9-11:**

Chapter 9 details God's sovereignty in dealing with Israel and the Gentiles.

Chapter ten outlines the "human factors": Verses 5-13 -- The need for an understanding of the gospel. Verses 14-15 -- The need for gospel preaching. Verses 16-21 -- The need for a faith response to the gospel.

Chapter eleven is Paul's argument that God has not given up on Israel, even though the Gentiles have come into God's Kingdom.

- **Paul's Heart For Israel: vv. 1-2**

"Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. 2 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge."

This chapter begins much the same way the last one did. Paul expresses his utmost concern for the people of Israel. The opening statements of both chapters expresses Paul's sorrow over the unbelief of Israel and his heartfelt desire that they may be saved.

- **An "Ignorant" Zeal: v. 2**

"For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge."

"Zealousness" – a (form of that) word appears in both the Old and

New Testament, describing an ardent faith or determination. See: 1Kings 19:10; Acts 21:20; Acts 22:3; Galatians 1:14

Paul's use of "zealous" to describe Israel fits very naturally with his description of himself before his salvation.

Paul's problem with his fellow Israelites is not over their dedication to the Law of Moses, or their pursuit of holiness. The problem is, "... Their zeal is not based on knowledge."

1. Israel did not know the righteousness that comes from God and they did not submit to God's righteousness.

2. They sought to establish their own righteousness.

Let's look at the first statement, found in verse 3: "Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness."

- **A Resistance To "God's Righteousness":**

When Paul says Israel did not know the righteousness that comes from God did he mean they were not knowledgeable of how to be right with God apart from the Law? No, Paul has pointed out several times a "righteousness apart from the law" had been known since Abraham's day.

Genesis 15:6: "Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness." (See: Romans 4:3)

Wayne Barber: "It was not due to lacking information. It was willful ignorance stemming from their pride in keeping the Law."

"Pride in keeping the Law": Scrupulous adherence to the Mosaic Law as a means of producing righteousness. If they weren't doing the things prohibited by the Law, weren't they accomplishing right standing with God?

Jesus' warning in Matthew 5:21: "I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Two examples from Jesus' statements in Matthew 5:

- "You have heard ... 'Do not murder ... But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.
- "You have heard ... 'Do not commit adultery' ... But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

The Pharisees were proud of their righteousness that stemmed from not breaking laws like, "Do not murder" and "Do not commit adultery". Jesus taught the underlying truths about anger and lust were more important. He told the crowds, "If you don't get beyond the Pharisees' righteousness, you won't see the kingdom of heaven".

The outcome of the Pharisees' ideology: "Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness."

- **A Christian Parallel:** "Legalism": Imagining we are adding a layer of righteousness to what God did at Calvary.

Erik Raymond:

- Legalism Promotes unbiblical standards, that is, self-authority
- Legalism Promotes performance, that is, self-righteousness
- Legalism Promotes Division
- Legalism Demotes Jesus and his sufficient righteousness

The Pharisees sought to establish their own righteousness – and "did not submit to God's righteousness." Why? To submit to God's

righteousness would mean they would have to abandon their own efforts.

The problem with our own righteousness is that is far below what we imagine it is: “We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind.” – Isaiah 64:6, NLT

Jesus’ Words in Matthew 23:27-28:

“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

The Israelites truly recognized that they needed righteousness to stand before a perfectly holy God. The problem was, instead of accepting what Christ offered, they sought to establish their own, and they did not submit to God’s plan for them.