

# Israel's Failure—part 2

## Ignorance of the Provisions of Christ

## Ignorance of the Place of Faith

# 42

**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. 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, 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; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (10:4–10)**

As Paul stresses in the first three verses of chapter 10, the Jews of his day were ignorant of the person of God, in particular His perfect holiness and righteousness. Consequently, they also were ignorant of the divine standard of holiness that He demands of men. If anything, God's standard for Israel was higher than for Gentiles, because Israel had the great privilege and advantage of being “entrusted with the oracles of God” (Rom. 3:2) and because, under the Old Covenant, it was Israel “to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises” (9:4).

But proud arrogance led most Jews to disregard “God's righteousness” and seek to “establish their own” (10:3). As Paul had already declared, they sought “a law of righteousness, [but] did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works” (9:31–32).

1

---

1MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

## ISRAEL WAS IGNORANT OF THE PROVISION OF CHRIST

### **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness (10:4a)**

Because of that arrogant self-satisfaction and self-righteousness, Jews were blind to the marvelous truth of the New Covenant, that **Christ is the end of the law for righteousness**. “They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense’” (Rom. 9:32–33; cf. Isa. 8:14–15; 28:16). Just as Jesus **Christ**, “the stumbling stone,” had declared early in His earthly ministry, the manmade self-righteousness characterized by the scribes and Pharisees was repugnant to God and would qualify no one to “enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20). To the Pharisees who criticized Him for eating with “taxgatherers and sinners,” Jesus said sarcastically, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick” (Matt. 9:11–12). In other words, those who think they are already righteous and acceptable to God will be ignorant of God’s true provision for righteousness.

Paul explained to the church at Philippi that before his conversion he was “a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; . . . as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless” (Phil. 3:5–6). But he went on to say that he now counted “all those things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” and that he no longer relied on “a righteousness of [his] own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (vv. 8–9).

Until a person acknowledges his own unrighteousness in light of divine and perfect righteousness, he will see no need for a Savior to liberate him from sin and provide him with God’s own righteousness. No preacher, teacher, or evangelist can faithfully or effectively present the gospel if he does not first convince his hearers of their damning unrighteousness apart from Christ.

Jews in New Testament times sought to fulfill **the law** by their own efforts and thereby attain a righteousness acceptable to God. But Paul declares that **Christ** is the only **end**, the only fulfillment, of perfect, divinely acceptable **righteousness**.

Some interpreters believe Paul is here referring to the fulfillment of the law of which Jesus spoke when He said, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished” (Matt. 5:17–18). Others maintain that the apostle is speaking of Christ’s fulfillment of the Old Covenant through the New Covenant of the gospel.

Paul cannot be speaking of Christ’s historical fulfillment of the law, as important as that truth is. Christ did indeed historically fulfill **the law** and the entire Old Covenant by His perfect, sinless life—whether anyone believed in Him or not. But that accomplishment does not provide anyone else with saving righteousness. Rather, as indicated at the end of verse 4, Paul is saying that belief in Christ as Savior and Lord brings to an end the sinner’s futile quest for **righteousness** through his own imperfect attempts to fulfill **the law**. When a sinner receives Christ, he also receives the gift of Christ’s own **righteousness**.

---

cf *confer* (Lat.), compare

Paul here uses the term **law** in its most general sense, as representing the totality of God's commands and requirements under the Old Covenant, including such things as observance of the temple sacrifices and the feasts.

Those who try to please God and thereby attain salvation through legalism or religious ritual—even behavior and forms commanded by Him—pursue an absolutely vain quest, because the best righteousness fallen man can hope to achieve on his own is worth no more than “a filthy garment” in God's eyes (Isa. 64:6). Anticipating the provision by Christ, Isaiah declared that “only in the Lord are righteousness and strength” (45:24). The glorious truth of the gospel is that God “made Him [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free,” Paul reminded the Galatian believers; “therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1). In different words, he explained the same basic truth to the church at Colossae: “When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, [God] made you alive together with [Christ], having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (Col. 2:13–14). In his letter to Rome, Paul has already proclaimed that “by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. 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” (Rom. 3:20–22).

Being willfully ignorant of Christ and His righteousness, the Jews cut themselves off from redemption.

2

## ISRAEL WAS IGNORANT OF THE PLACE OF FAITH

**to everyone who believes. For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. 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, 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; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (10:4b–10)**

Because Israel was ignorant of God's holiness and of His provision for salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ, she was also ignorant of the place of faith in God's plan of

---

2MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

salvation. Because they relied on their own works—righteousness, Jews saw no need for faith. As Paul already had pointed out, “Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,” Jesus Christ (Rom. 9:31–32). Consequently, they cut themselves off from Christ and thereby also cut themselves off from the righteousness that He imparts **to everyone who believes** in Him. To reject Christ is to forfeit the perfect righteousness that only He can provide.

Believers receive as a gracious gift from God what they never could have achieved by their own efforts. **Everyone who believes** in Him, signs, as it were, the new and eternal covenant that Christ sealed with His own blood (see Heb. 12:24; 13:20), thereby making His righteousness our own.

To verify the place of faith in God’s eternal plan for man’s redemption, Paul reminds his readers that **Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness**. The Lord also declared through Moses: “You shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them” (Lev. 18:5). In other words, whoever relies on his own obedience to the **law** is held accountable for everything that the **law** requires. Quoting again from Deuteronomy, Paul testifies that “as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them’” (Gal. 3:10; cf. Deut. 27:26).

**The righteousness which is based on law** demands absolute perfection in every detail of the **law**. For that reason, James says, “Whoever keeps the whole law, and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all” (James 2:10). In other words, if such were possible, a person who failed in only one point of the law would remain just as lost as a person who failed in *every point* of the law.

Anyone who is not utterly selfdeceived realizes the impossibility of never stumbling even in the smallest way. And the foolish person who does presumptuously rely on his own obedience to the **law** will attain only the imperfect and unacceptable **righteousness** that his imperfect obedience merits. In God’s sight, such righteousness is wholly *unrighteous* and can never remove sin or earn divine favor. “That no one is justified by the Law before God is evident” (Gal. 3:11).

Because of the countless rabbinical traditions that had been developed over the previous several hundred years, the Jews of Paul’s time had so lowered and replaced with tradition God’s divine standard of righteousness that many Jews actually believed they lived in satisfactory obedience to the law. After Jesus cited several Old Testament commandments, the rich young ruler told Him with doubtless sincerity, “All these things I have kept” (Matt. 19:20).

The truths that Paul emphasizes here may be summarized as follows: First, the man who pursues salvation by trying to keep the law will be judged on the basis of that effort. Second, it is impossible to keep all the law. Third, the inevitable failure of worksrighteousness results in eternal damnation.

The idea that even the most ardent Pharisee was unable to keep God’s law and was therefore cursed was unthinkable to Jews. Many Jews believed they were acceptable to God *simply because they were Jews*, members of His chosen race through physical

---

cf *confer* (Lat.), compare

descent from Abraham. In their thinking, the most reprobate Jew was more pleasing to God than the most upright Gentile.

But as Paul makes clear earlier in this epistle, “The Law brings about wrath” (Rom. 4:15). The law both demonstrates and incites man’s natural lawlessness and releases God’s wrath against him. The law justifies no one, redeems no one, provides mercy for no one. By the law, man is left to his own resources, all of which are imperfect, sinful, and powerless to save, which necessitates salvation by faith.

Personifying **the righteousness based on faith**, Paul says that it **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)”** (cf. Deut. 30:12–14).

Calling His people to faithful obedience, God said to Israel, “The Lord your God will prosper you abundantly . . . if you obey the Lord your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, *if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul*” (Deut. 30:9–10, emphasis added).

In His law, God set the standards for holy living and has always required heart obedience, so that the promises to Israel just mentioned were contingent on her faith, evidenced by seeking the Lord “with all [her] heart and soul.” As Paul pointed out earlier, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” (Rom. 4:3; cf. Gen. 15:6). The physical father of Israel became the spiritual “father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them” (Rom. 4:11), because “the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Rom. 4:13).

Even the commandments in the Old Testament books of the law (the Pentateuch) are not primarily a call to external obedience. They are, above all, a call to heartfelt, adoring faith in the God of mercy and lovingkindness, who desires obedience and who graciously forgives sin. External observance of the law without internal faith in the God who gave the law results in condemnation for sin without mercy, not salvation from it.

On the plains of Moab, Moses proclaimed: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:4–5). A short while later he reminded the people:

The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments. (7:7–9; see also 9:4–5; 10:15; 14:2; 15:15–16)

---

cf *confer* (Lat.), compare  
cf *confer* (Lat.), compare

The framework of Deuteronomy—and of all the rest of Scripture—is God’s sovereign grace. Salvation and divine blessing *have always* begun with God’s grace, which is made effective for the sinner when he comes to God in faith.

Paul’s point in Romans 10:6–7 is that, even if such things were possible, men could not come to salvation by searching for **Christ in heaven, . . . to bring [Him] down**, or by descending **into theabyss**, the depths of the earth or of the oceans, to raise Him **up from the dead**. The righteousness of faith does not require some mystical, esoteric, and impossible journey through the universe to find Christ. No matter what form it takes, “righteousness which is based on law” (v. 5) denies Christ’s incarnation and denies His resurrection. Consequently, worksrighteousness is also a denial of the gracious salvation Christ has provided by His own blood. As Geoffrey Wilson observes, “The sheer perversity of unbelief is shown by the many who prefer to undertake an impossible odyssey rather than put their trust in an accessible Christ” (*Romans: A Digest of Reformed Comment* [London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1969], p. 177).

Continuing his personification of “the righteousness based on faith” (v. 6), Paul asks, **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**. In other words, men do not have to ascend or descend to find it, because God’s way of salvation had already been clearly and abundantly revealed. His chosen people had been engulfed in and surrounded by **the word of faith** that Paul was now **preaching**. Even under the Old Covenant men could claim God’s grace simply by receiving it in **faith**.

Much of western society today is like the Israel of Paul’s day. Although most unbelievers have a limited and often distorted concept of Christianity, they have a general idea of its claims and have access to Bibles, churches, and Christians—through which they could easily discover the gospel if they honestly desired to. Tragically, however, men still choose worksrighteousness and “suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:18–20).

The way to be saved and to secure the righteousness God requires is the supreme essential. There is great confusion in much of the church today about God’s way of salvation, but it is the same as it was when Paul wrote to Roman believers: **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; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation**. Salvation and its attendant righteousness are appropriated by confession and by faith.

Following the order of verse 8, which quotes Deuteronomy 30:14, Paul speaks first of confession, which is **with the mouth**, and then of faith, which is in the **heart**. In verse 10, however, he mentions them in reverse order, which is the chronological order of redemption. First, **with the heart man believes** and is granted **righteousness**; second, **with the mouth he confesses** and is granted **salvation**.

Paul has been speaking about true and false righteousness. False righteousness is based on the law (Rom. 10:5), which is impossible for man to fulfill. True righteousness, on the other hand, is based on faith in Christ (vv. 6–8), who bestows His own perfect

righteousness on those who believe in Him. It is therefore of great significance that in verse 10 Paul equates **righteousness** and **salvation**. Only the person who is righteous before God is truly saved.

Those two truths represent the positive and the negative sides of God's redemptive grace. The positive side reflects His own perfect **righteousness**, which He graciously imputes to and bestows on those who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. The believer is simultaneously *declared* righteous (justified) and *made* righteous (regenerated). It is about that complete divine righteousness that Paul exults to the Philippians: "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Phil. 3:8-9).

The negative side of God's work in the believer is **salvation**, divine deliverance from the sin that separates fallen man from holy God.

**Righteousness** has to do with what we become, and **salvation** has to do with what we escape. The first has to do with the eternal life we receive but do not deserve, the second with the eternal punishment we deserve but do not receive. The first relates to entering into blessedness, the second relates to escaping cursedness.

Unfortunately, those two aspects are often out of balance in evangelism and personal witnessing. When deliverance from sin and hell is made paramount, God's gracious bestowal of His **righteousness** on believers is left in the shadows. Consequently, unbelievers who have been repeatedly asked by Christians, "Are you saved?" might well give an ear to the gospel if they were asked instead, "Have you been made holy in Christ?" On the other hand, when God's love and grace are presented to the virtual exclusion of the need for **salvation** from sin and its judgment, cheapening of the gospel is almost inevitable.

Another contrast between the two verses is that, whereas verse 9 is a personal invitation to **believe**, focusing on the individual (**you**), verse 10 presents gospel truth concerning **man** in general.

Scripture never approves, much less commends, contentless faith, a "faith in faith" as it is often described. Paul here specifies two truths that must be believed in order to be saved. The first is that **Jesus is Lord**, the second that **God raised Him from the dead**.

Many people acknowledge that Jesus is both the Son of God and Lord of the universe. But Paul is speaking of the deep, personal, abiding conviction that, without any reservation or qualification, will **confess . . . Jesus as Lord**, that is, will confess that **Jesus** is the believer's *own* sovereign, ruling **Lord**, in whom alone he trusts for salvation and to whom he submits.

James teaches that even demons acknowledge truth about God. In a purely factual sense, they are completely orthodox in their theology. "You believe that God is one," he writes. "You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder" (James 2:19). In other words, demons are monotheists. Satan and his fallen angels are also confirmed creationists, having watched God form the heavens and the earth simply by speaking them into existence. Demons have observed more of God's work and know more about His nature and power than all human beings combined, apart from the incarnate Christ.

And, having originally dwelt there, they know exactly what heaven is like. They also know with great certainty that they are destined for judgment, and, knowing something of what judgment means, they “shudder.”

James’s point is that men can hold such demon belief, belief that is theologically correct but that does not include reception of Jesus as Lord. People may be well aware of their sin, be under deep conviction about it, and even have a great emotional sense of guilt from which they long to be delivered. But they do not repent and forsake the sin that causes the guilt, nor do they trust in the Savior who can forgive and remove the sin. Speaking about such people, the writer of Hebrews gives one of the most sobering warnings to be found in Scripture: “For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame” (Heb. 6:4–6).

In other words, a person can hold orthodox theology, lead a moral life, acknowledge his sin, desire eternal life, be scrupulously religious, and yet go to hell. Jesus encountered such superficial and spurious “believers” early in His ministry. “When He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men” (John 2:23–24). Those disciples apparently acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah (believing “in His name”), and, unlike the Pharisees (see Matt. 12:24), they believed that His supernatural powers were from God. But they did not submit themselves to Him as their Lord and Savior.

That was also the response of the rich young ruler, who appeared willing to do what Jesus told him in order to inherit eternal life—except acknowledge his sin and repent, as well as relinquish the riches which were his first love and then serve Jesus as Lord (see Matt. 19:16–22). Similarly, three other men professed willingness to follow Jesus but put their own preferences above His authority, proving themselves to be false disciples (Luke 9:57–62).

The Father repeatedly declared publicly that He had committed authority, power, judgment, and lordship into the hands of His Son, Jesus Christ. At Jesus’ baptism the Father announced from the heavens, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). After Jesus manifested His glory at the transfiguration, the Father said to the awestruck Peter, James, and John, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am wellpleased; listen to Him!” (Matt. 17:5).

Submitting to Christ’s lordship is such an integral part of salvation that Paul testified, “I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus is accursed’; and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). When the Holy Spirit brings faith and salvation to a heart, that heart proclaims the lordship of Christ. “For to this end Christ died and lived again,” Paul says, “that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living” (Rom. 14:9).

In Philippians, Paul teaches that God has bestowed on Jesus Christ “the name which is above every name,” a name that requires bowing submission (2:9–11). Obviously, that name is “Lord.” God gave Christ that name, and all men must acknowledge it and bow to it to be saved.

Contrary to much teaching today, Scripture never separates Christ's lordship from His saviorhood. **Lord** is from *κύριος* which signifies sovereign power and authority. In the book of Acts, Jesus is twice referred to as Savior but ninetytwo times as Lord. In the entire New Testament, He is referred to some ten times as Savior and some seven hundred times as Lord. When the two titles are mentioned together, *Lord* always precedes *Savior*. And even if, as some erroneously contend, *Lord* were simply a synonym for *God*, the very term *God* by definition includes the idea of sovereign authority, that is, of lordship. (For a full treatment of this issue, see the author's book *The Gospel According to Jesus* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988].)

The second truth that must be believed in order to be saved is that **God raised Him [Jesus] from the dead**. There are many important truths about Jesus that Christians are to believe. The New Testament makes clear, for example, that Christ became incarnate, that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit to a mother who was a virgin, and that He experienced every kind of temptation while living a sinless life.

But the truth of Jesus' resurrection **from the dead** was the supreme validation of His ministry. At the beginning of this letter, Paul states that Jesus Christ "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:4). When **God raised Him from the dead**, the Father was declaring again that the Savior was His beloved Son, with whom He is well pleased.

The resurrection of Christ also demonstrated that He was eternally victorious over sin, death, and Satan. It was "for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4:24). Men must believe the resurrection of Christ because it proves that He accomplished their salvation on the cross. To believe that **God raised Christ from the dead** is to identify ourselves with the One who purchased our redemption on the cross and rose to share His eternal life with those for whom He is Lord and Savior. Had Jesus not been raised, sin and death would have been victorious over fallen mankind, who then would have had no hope of attaining the perfect righteousness that God requires.

In Antioch of Pisidia, Paul told the assembled Jews in the synagogue, "We preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art My Son; today I have begotten Thee'" (Acts 13:32-33). Proclaiming the same foundational truth of the gospel, Peter said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:3-4).

Apart from Christ's resurrection, there could be no salvation. Paul warned the church at Corinth that "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:14-17).

The resurrection was the Father's final stamp of approval on His Son and the final feature in the provision of salvation for those who trust in Him. The resurrection divinely certifies that Jesus is the Messiah, the only Savior, the sovereign and sinless Lord, the sacrificial Lamb who paid the price for our redemption, the judge of all men, the conqueror of death, the coming King of kings.

Verses 9 and 10v = Rom 10:10 both clearly state that *true belief* in Christ's lordship and in His resurrection comes from the **heart**. The Hebrews considered the heart to be the core of personhood and the residence of the soul, the deepest, innermost part of man—where thought, will, and motive are generated. That is why the ancient writer admonished his fellow Israelites, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life" (Prov. 4:23).

It is **with the heart** that **man believes**, and it is therefore with his heart that man determines his eternal destiny. Early in His ministry Jesus spoke the beautiful words, "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). Later He declared, "I am the light of the world; he who follows [believes in] Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). In both instances the positive and the negative aspects of the gospel are again clearly seen. In 3:16, "eternal life" is the positive and "perish" is the negative. In 8:12, "the light of life" is the positive and walking "in the darkness" is the negative.

John's very purpose for writing the fourth gospel was that "you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). Belief in Christ brings an entirely different kind and quality of life—a holy life, a righteous life, an eternal life.

It is **with the mouth** that man **confesses**, Paul says. *<ca c`c/[Yc{confess}* has the root meaning of speaking the same thing, of being in agreement and accord with someone. The person who confesses Jesus as Lord (v. 9) agrees with God the Father, and that confession mixed with genuine trust brings **salvation**.

Israel misunderstood the place of this saving faith. So do many people today.