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Witnessing to the Jewish Community
10: 8-15

Witnessing to the Jewish community DIG: What is Paul's tone in this passage? What is Paul's point in saying, "How beautiful are the feet of those announcing good news about good things?" What do our thoughts and words have in our response to salvation? What is the promise to those who believe and profess Yeshua as Lord? If, unexpectedly, you found yourself in a situation where you had the opportunity to lead someone to the Lord, could you use the Romans Road to salvation to do it? If not, what do you need to do?

REFLECT: Have you publicly acknowledged Yeshua as your Lord and Savior? Have you been immersed? If not, why not? Do you, or your place of worship, witness to the Jewish community where you live? How can they trust in Yeshua Messiah if they don't know He's Jewish? Most Jews today think Jesus is Catholic. This is a real issue today, especially in the Church. Why is it often difficult for people to follow Yeshua Messiah?

Some people are exposed to the message of salvation through Yeshua Messiah hundreds of times but never really hear it. The Good News is lost to them among the many other messages that provide little purpose or hope. Others seem to respond the first time they hear about Him. Who told you about Yeshua and the gospel? What was your initial response?

If you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord and trust in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be delivered.

Paul was aware that he was walking on holy ground with **his** writing. The Jewish history **he** used to illustrate **the LORD's** amazing plan of grace for the whole world was the same history **the Jewish people** used as proof of being **God's** exclusive **people**. **Paul** felt great **love** for **his** fellow **Israelites. He** even wished **he** could take their place under the judgment of **Ha'Shem** if it would ensure their understanding of the gospel. In this next portion of **his** letter, **Paul** begins to

highlight **ADONAI's** ongoing plans for **Isra'el, His chosen people.**[268]

What, then, does [God's Word] say? "The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (Deuteronomy 30:14a) in order to give us the means by which it is applied to us **(10:8a).** To many Christian "theologians" who think that **the Torah** offers only works-**righteousness** and not **faith-righteousness** (and **Jewish** critics of the B'rit Chadashah who wrongly, but understandably, suppose that they can rely on such Christian commentators to understand the B'rit Chadashah correctly) say that in **10:8, Paul** intentionally stopped short of quoting the second part of the verse: **nor is it beyond your reach (Deuteronomy 30:11b),** because **he** knew **it** was **beyond their reach.** In other words, these "theologians" think **Paul** knew something that **Moshe** didn't, namely that no one was capable of keeping the 613 mitzvot of **the Torah**; and that therefore **he** extracted phrases from context and gave them the opposite meaning from the one they have in their original setting. Can **Jewish** critics be blamed for calling **Paul** deceptive, if this is what **he** did? No. **Paul** certainly was no deceiver, as **he himself** protested when he was accused **(First Corinthians 9:20-22; Second Corinthians 4:2)**. Rather, in this *d'var* (a short talk on topics relating to a parashah, the weekly **Torah** portion) **he** is referring **[God's Word]** in the **Deuteronomy** passage to **God's** requirement that **Isra'el** is to **trust** in **the Messiah** when **He** comes, **the prophet like me** whom **Moses** wrote about (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Dk – A Prophet Like Moses**). Furthermore, even though **he** doesn't quote the words: **nor is it beyond your reach, he** implies them by including them in **his** *d'var* in **10:8b-10**. This is not deception but midrash exposition.[269]

The Jews were ignorant of the channel of salvation: The Romans Road 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 to **be saved**, how **God** provided **salvation**, how we can receive **salvation**, and what are the results of **salvation**. We start by saying: **For all have sinned and come short of earning the glory of God's praise (3:23).**

That includes you and me, doesn't it? Most people feel that being good gets you into heaven and being bad keeps you out. That simply is not true; **for all have sinned**. What would you say **sin** is? I think we can agree that we are both **sinners**; now let's define **sin**. Some have said, "I'm not perfect," or "I have made some mistakes." But what do you think the Bible means by **sin**? Well, the Bible says that **everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah . . . indeed, sin is violation of Torah (First John 3:4).** Have you ever disobeyed your parents? Have you ever misused the name of **God**? Have you ever told a lie? This is what **sin** is. It's breaking **God's Torah**.

The Bible is clear about this. **Isaiah** declared: **ADONAI's arm is not too short to save, nor is His ear too dull to hear. Rather, it is your own crimes that separate you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you , so that He doesn't hear (Isaiah 59:1-2),** and **all of us are like someone unclean, all our righteous deeds are like menstrual rags (Isaiah 64:5a).** In **King Solomon's** prayer when dedicating the Temple, **he** said: **There is no one who doesn't sin (First Kings 8:46a),** and later at the end of his life, he reiterated: **For there isn't a righteous person on earth who does [only] good and never sins (Ecclesiastes 7:20).** This applies equally to pagans who have never heard anything of **God** (see **Ak – The Pagan Gentile**), to good, moral people (see **Ao – The "Good" Person**), and to the religious **Jew** (see **At – The Religious Jew**).

The question of why this is true, and how it comes about, that everyone **sins** (in other words, original **sin**) is discussed by **Paul** later in his letter (see **Bm – The Consequences of Adam**). But the truth of this verse, which epitomizes Bad News (see **Aj – The Universal Need of Mankind**), is basic to understanding the **sinful** nature of mankind, and the Good News that **God** offers the only solution to the problem **through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah.**

The second leg of our journey on the Romans Road to **salvation** teaches us the consequences of our **sin**: **For the wages of your [sin nature] is death (6:23a). The wages** of work **is** money, but **the wages of sin is death**. In other words,

what I earn – the penalty, the punishment of **sin – is death**. **Death** is separation. The Bible speaks of two kinds of **death,** that is two kinds of separation. The first **death** is separation of the body and the soul. If I were to **die** right now my body would fall to the floor, but my soul, the real me, would go somewhere else. But the Bible speaks of another **death**, one it calls **the second death**. This is separation of the soul from **YHVH**. Now, the penalty of **sin** is **death**, spiritual **death**, and separation from **the LORD**. To put it simply – hell. All this is really bad news. But there is good news.

The third verse on the Romans Road to **salvation** picks up where **Romans 6:23a** left off: **But the gift of God is eternal life** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ms – The Eternal Security of the Believer**) **in Messiah Yeshua, our Lord (6:23b NIV).** And since we can do no works to gain our **salvation**, we can do no works to lose salvation.

*Dear Loving Heavenly **Father**, Praise **Your** great merciful **love** which opened the door to heaven by **Your** giving **Yeshua's righteousness**. **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).** You gave your **righteousness** to all who **love** and follow **Yeshua** as their **Lord**. **They** said: **Put your trust in the Lord Yeshua and you will be saved (Acts 16:31).***

*Thank **You** that **salvation** is not given because of works, so it cannot be taken away because of works. Works are not the key to **salvation**. It is the **love** that prompts the works that is important. Works done without l**ove** will not get any reward. **The fire itself will test each one's work – what sort it is. If anyone's work built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss (First Corinthians 3:13c-15a)**. **You** graciously gave us your **righteousness** thru our faith/trust, not by our works. **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves – it is the gift of God. It is not based on deeds, so that no one may boast. (Ephesian 2:8-9). Faith** springs from **love** that trusts you completely. Faith is forsaking all and trusting in **Him**!*

*How great is your l**ove** that you call us **Your children**! **See how glorious a love the Father has given us, that we should be called God's children – and so we are (First John 3:1)!** We **love You** back and desire to please **You i**n all we do and say and think. Though there are many trials on this earth, they will soon be over. **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be***

compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18)*. We will spend all eternity in heaven with* ***You*** *our wonderful* ***Father****, worshiping and praising* ***You****! I* ***love You****! In* ***Yeshua's*** *holy name and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*

The fourth verse on the Romans Road to **salvation** declares: **God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (5:8).** We were spiritually dead and unable to make the first move toward **God** because we inherited Adam's **[sin nature]** that rebelled and separated us from **Him**. So, **YHVH** made the first move toward us by sending **His one-and-only Son** to **die** in our place for the payment for our **sins**. We stand before **the Son of God**, guilty of **sin**, and facing a **death** penalty. But **Yeshua**, as **judge (John 5:27)**, comes down from behind the seat of judgment, takes off **His** judicial robe and stands beside us. It is there that **He** says to us, "I will take your place. I will **die** for you." And if you were the only person in the world, **He** still would have **died** for you. The penalty for **sin** is **death**, but **Messiah died** and paid for **sin** so we do not have to go to hell. **Messiah's** resurrection proves that **Ha'Shem** accepted **Yeshua's death** as the payment for our **sins**.

Here, the point that **Moses** was making in **Deuteronomy 30:14** above is now applied to **Messiah** on the last stop on the Romans Road to **salvation**. **"The Word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the Word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, "Yeshua Messiah is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (10:8b-9).** The Greek word for **acknowledge publicly** is *omologein*, and is usually translated *to confess*, but literally meaning *to say the same thing* – in this case, to agree with what **God** has revealed in **His Word** about **Himself** and **His Son**.[270]

Many people *confess* that **Yeshua** is both **the Son of God** and **Lord** of the universe. But **Paul** is speaking of the deep, personal, permanent conviction that, without any reservation or qualification, will **acknowledge . . . Yeshua as Lord,** that is, will *confess* **the Messiah** as the believer's own personal sovereign, ruling **Lord**, in whom he **trusts** for **salvation** and to whom he submits and obeys. **James** teaches that even **demons acknowledge** the truth about **YHVH (James 2:19)**. People may be 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

to the **Hebrews** gives one of the most sobering warnings to be found in Scripture (see the commentary on **Hebrews Bb – Once Fallen Away, It is Impossible to be Brought Back to Repentance**).[271]

An important consequence, especially for Jewish people, of **acknowledging publicly that Yeshua is Lord,** is that there are no "secret believers." Or people who believe that **Yeshua** is **the Messiah** but do not tell their family or friends, and have little fellowship with other believers. True, **trusting** in **Yeshua** is often a process and not an instantaneous event, and during this period a person may not yet be **ready to give a reasoned answer to anyone who asks you to explain the hope [they] have within [them], with humility and fear (First Peter 3:15).** If this person is in touch with other believers and being taught properly, this period should rarely be longer than a few days to a few weeks. In unusual cases it could last a few months, but it should never take years. Without exception, those who fail to **acknowledge** their faith **publicly** are aborted in their spiritual growth; and in the end, **Yeshua** will not acknowledge them: **Moreover, I tell you, whoever acknowledges me in the presence of others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge in the presence of God's angels. But whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before God's angels (Luke 12:8-9).**[272]

Paul clearly teaches that true **belief** in **Messiah's lordship** and in **His resurrection** comes from **the heart**. **The Jews** considered **the heart** to be the core of personhood and the residence of the soul, the deepest, innermost part of mankind – where thought, will, and motive are generated. That is why the ancient writer warned **his** fellow **Israelites, "Above everything else, guard your heart; for it is the source of life's consequences" (Proverbs 4:23).**

Here, **Paul** echoes that belief when **he** says: **For with the heart, one goes on trusting and thus continues toward righteousness, while with the mouth one keeps on making public acknowledgement and thus continues toward deliverance (10:10).** It is therefore, **the heart** that determines our eternal destiny.[273] You don't get to heaven by what you do; you get to heaven by what you **believe i**n your **heart**. **Isra'el** misunderstood the place of this saving **faith**. And, unfortunately, so do most people today.

The Jews were ignorant of the universality of salvation: Because most **Jews** strongly rejected the idea that **God's** grace extended to **Gentiles**, **they** were willingly ignorant of the full measure and extend to **His** provision for redemption. Because they were **God's chosen people**, **they** believed **they** were also **His** only

saved people. **They** knew that **Ruth**, a Moabite, was the great-grandmother of **David** (see the commentary on **Ruth Bd – Coda: The Genealogy of David**), and therefore in the line of **Messiah**. But they insisted that those **Gentiles** who converted to **Judaism**, and blessed by **God**, were the exceptions rather than the rule.

But **Paul** declares that **YHVH's** extending **His salvation** to all **Gentiles** was nothing new. **For the passage quoted says that everyone who rests his trust on Him will not be put to shame (Romans 10:11; Isaiah 28:16). ADONAI** had always been calling **Gentiles (everyone)**. In fact, **Isra'el** was to have been **His** witness nation, **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:6),** to preach **salvation** in the true **God** to the rest of the world. **ADONAI** had said to **Abram** long ago: **By you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:3c).**

The barrier to **salvation**, therefore, is not racial or cultural but personal rejection of the **God** who offers it. In the modern state of **Isra'el**, most **Jews**, including many who are secular, still strongly resent and oppose Messianic witnessing in their country. Although they consider all other religions to be false, they are particularly fervent in their opposition to Messianics. Like **the Jews** in Jerusalem who mistakenly thought **Paul** had brought **Gentiles into the Temple and defiled [their] holy place, Jews** in **Isra'el** today view Messianics as defiling **their holy Land**, and are specifically **against the Torah and against [their] place (Acts 21:28).** And **they** make little or no effort to convert **Gentiles** to **Judaism**.

Nothing could have been more devastating to **Jews** than when **Paul** reminded **them, "That means that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – ADONAI is the same for everyone, rich toward everyone who calls on Him."** Those whose greatest pride was in the belief that they were far superior to all other peoples could not tolerate that humbling truth. Proclaiming the same message to the believers in **Galatia**, **Paul** wrote: **There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor freeman, neither male nor female, for in union with the Messiah Yeshua, you are all one. Also, if you belong to Messiah, you are the seed of Avraham and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:28-29).** Then, to prove his point, **Paul** quotes **Joel**, who centuries earlier had declared to **Isra'el** the extent of saving grace when **he** said: **Everyone who calls on the name of ADONAI will be saved (Romans 10:12-13; Joel 2:32).**[274]

The Jews were ignorant of the universal preaching of the gospel: Paul then

begins a debate with an imaginary non-Messianic **Jewish** opponent, by saying: **But how can [the Jewish people] call on someone if they haven't trusted in Him? And how can they trust in someone if they haven't heard about Him? And how can they hear about someone if no one is proclaiming Him** (see the commentary on **Acts Bb – An Ethiopian Asks about Isaiah 53**)**? And how can people proclaim him unless God sends them? – as the TaNaKh puts it, "How beautiful are the feet of those announcing good news about good things" (Romans 10:14-15; Isaiah 52:7)!** In other words: there is no **calling** without **faith**; there is no **faith** without **hearing**; there is no **hearing** without **preaching**; there is no **preaching** without **sending**. But this universal offer of **salvation** to both **Jews** and **Gentiles** is the very thing that **Jews** today have stumbled over. Next, **Paul** shows that it isn't that **they** haven't heard, it's just that **they haven't all paid attention to the Good News and obeyed it**.[275]

Life Lessons: ADONAI's perfect plan involves a two-part response from us: internal **belief** and external behavior. We accept with our **hearts** and *confess* with our **mouths**. Genuine **faith** always involves both the inside and the outside. It is not just a public formality or a private **belief** – it's both. And once it begins, it continues. The internal response connects us with **ADONAI**, while the external response confirms our **belief** and gives others the opportunity to experience the same benefits of **the Lord's** plan that we have received.[276]