–Save This Page as a PDF–

Understanding the Jewish Community 10: 16-21

Understanding the Jewish community DIG: What is the purpose of Paul's series of questions here? Some have accused Paul of being anti-Isra'el. What do you think? How does this underscore the importance of evangelism? How does God's righteousness motivate us to godly behavior? Which Jews have listened to the message? What was the result of the Jewish rejection? Why were the Isrealites ignorant of God's righteousness? How was sending the gospel to the Gentiles an act of mercy to both Gentiles and Jews?

REFLECT: Do you ever, or have you ever, blamed God for your sin? How can you guard against trying to earn God's approval and acceptance? What can you learn from Isra'el's response to God's plan of salvation? What is wrong with the Jew's zeal for God? What does it mean to trust in Messiah? How does it make you feel? What are the stumbling blocks in your walk with ADONAI? Has the need to have faith been a stumbling block or a stepping stone for you? How might you bring the Good News into the lives of your family and friends this week?

Isra'el rejected the Good News because of their rejection of the Messiah, so the gospel has gone out to the Gentiles, but ADONAI continues to seek after His chosen people.

Blaming **God** for human **sin** is as old as **Adam (Genesis 3:12)**, and **Paul** will have none of it. No! **He** says, your analysis is wrong. **The problem is that** only some of **the Jews**, not **all**, have **paid attention to the Good News and obeyed it. The ones** that have **paid attention** to **the Good News** are **the** Messianic **Jews**. **Paul** supports **his** argument with a question from the same portion of **Isaiah** that was cited by **his** imaginary opponent. **For Isaiah** says, **"Who believed our report? To whom is the arm of ADONAI been revealed" (Romans 10:16; Isaiah 53:1)? From us** emphasizes that **Isra'el** did indeed hear. Thus, the only missing link in the chain is **trust,** which **Isra'el** has refused to supply. **Trust** means that

you not only believe it, but you are living your **faith** to the best of your ability.

In quoting **Isaiah 53:1**, **Paul**, like any good rabbi, expects **his** readers to recall the context. Here, the context extends through **Isaiah 53:12** and includes the most extensive and detailed prophecy in the whole TaNaKh of **Messiah's** First Coming, when **He** would die an atoning sacrificial death for **sins**. Thus, **Paul** is telling **his** imaginary opponent, "**Isra'el** has had **the Good News** that should have led **them all** to **trust** in **Yeshua** – **they** have had **it** in **Isaiah 53**, but **they** didn't **believe it**."

Paul then points out the relationship between **faith** and **hearing**. **So, trust comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through a word,** the content of the message, **proclaimed about the Messiah (10:17).** Therefore, since **trust comes from what is heard**, **Isra'el** should have **trusted**. What is the message that **Isra'el** has neglected to listen to? **Namely this: the Messiah died for our sins, in accordance with what the TaNaKh says; and He was buried; and He was raised on the third day, in accordance with what the TaNaKh says (First Corinthians 15:3b-4).** This is the message that **the** non-Messianic **Jews** must believe to attain the salvation **they** think **they** will attain through legalistic observance of **the Torah**.[277]

Paul's imaginary opponent counters, "You say **Isra'el** should have **trusted**. I am willing to admit, for the sake of argument, in theory, that people were sent to **proclaim**, **but** the problem isn't **Isra'el's** failure to **trust**. **Isn't it rather that they didn't hear?" Paul** replies: **No, they did hear,** as proved by the Scriptures**: The heavens declare the glory of God, the dome of the sky speaks the work of His hands. Every day it utters speech, every night it reveals knowledge. Without speech, without a word, without their voices being heard, their voice has gone out throughout the whole world and their words to the ends of the earth (Romans 10:18; Psalm 19:1-4).** So, the problem wasn't a lack of **hearing**; the problem was a lack of **obedience**. By the time the letter to the **Roman** church had been written, **the Good News** had gone out to every **Jewish** community in **the whole world**.[278]

As a result, if everyone **in the whole world**, including, of course, **the Gentiles**, has had the kernel of **the gospel proclaimed** by **the heavens**, so that anyone could respond by **trusting** in **ADONAI**; how much more should **Isra'el**, who have **the** written **Torah** (in which **Psalm 19:7** calls **it "Perfect, restoring the inner person"**), have paid attention and **trusted**!



The debate continued. “Alright! Granted, they may have heard,” replies the opponent, “**But**, it still isn’t **their** fault that **they** haven’t come to **faith** in **Yeshua**. **I say, isn’t it rather that Isra’el didn’t understand** the message **they heard? Paul** does not deny the possibility that **Isra’el** failed to understand, but **he** does not admit it’s an acceptable excuse. **Isra’el** should have understood. If a **non-nation,** that is, **a nation void of understanding, the Gentiles,** understood the message declared without **words from heaven (10:18),** how much *more* should **Isra’el** have **understood it** from the written **Torah**! But the argument is even stronger.

Paul quotes from the TaNaKh to show that **YHVH** predicted long ago that **He** would use **jealousy** of **the Gentiles** as the very means of **Isra’el’s** deliverance. **I will provoke you to jealousy over a non-nation,** meaning **the Gentiles, over a nation void of understanding,** didn’t have the knowledge, didn’t have **the Torah**, didn’t have the feats. Through **them, Ha’Shem** declared, **“I will make you angry” (Romans 10:19; Deuteronomy 32:21).** The context of **Deuteronomy 32:21**, cited here, shows that **God** is using an **eye-for-an-eye** justice with **Isra’el** – the rest of the verse says that because **Isra’el** has made **God jealous** and **angry** – **God** will make **Isra’el jealous** and **angry**. **Paul** will elaborate on this point further in **Chapter 11** (**to see link click Cy – The Jealousy of the Gentile Believers**).[279]

The TaNaKh clearly predicted a period of time where salvation would be declared to **the Gentiles**, and that **Gentiles** salvation would cause **the Jews** to be **jealous**. This is a parallel passage to **Deuteronomy 32:21**, in which **God** states that **He** would make **His people jealous** because of the zeal **the Gentile believers** have for **Him**.[280]

Moreover, Isaiah boldly says: **“I was found by those who were not looking for me, I became known to those who did not ask for me” (Romans 10:20; Isaiah 65:1). Yeshua** depicted this truth in a parable: **A farmer put a wall around the vineyard, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented it to tenants and then went away on a long journey. When the harvest-time came, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his share of the crop. But the tenants** rebelled and **seized his servants – this one they beat up, that one they killed, another they stoned. Then the farmer sent other servants to them, more than the first group, and they killed them – some they beat up, others they killed. Yet the farmer sent another; this one they also killed. He still had one person left, a son whom he loved; finally, the farmer sent him to them, saying, “I will send My beloved son, surely they will feel shame before him.” But when the shameless tenants saw the son, they said to one another, “This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.” So, they grabbed him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants? The priests in the Temple answered Him, “he will viciously destroy those vicious men and rent out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his share of the crop when it’s due” (Matthew 21:33-39).** Thus, salvation was brought to **the Gentiles**.

Yet ADONAI has been gracious **to Isra’el** in spite of **her disobedience**, and **He** continues to say to this day: **“All day long I held out My hands to a people who kept disobeying and contradicting” (Romans 10:21; Isaiah 65:2). As Jesus** entered **Jerusalem** before being crucified, **He saw the City and wept over it (Luke 19:41)**. Now, as if it were the last time to receive **Him**, **Christ** cried out to the holy **City: Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you.** With such a horrific reception, we might expect **Yeshua** to rain **down burning sulfur** as **the LORD** did **on Sodom and Gomorrah.** On the contrary, **He** spoke tenderly saying: **How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings (Matthew 23:37a).** Whether it was **the Angel of the LORD** who appeared to **Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3)**, or the message of repentance to **Micah (Micah 7:8-20)**, **Messiah’s** desire has always been to gather **His people** together for blessing. **Isra’el,** as a nation, has rejected **the Good News** because of **their** rejection of **the Messiah**; however, **ADONAI** continues to seek after **His chosen people,** and individual **Jewish people** can, and are, being saved.