

LESSON FIVE**GOD'S SELECTION, OUR DESTINY (2)**

Scripture Reading:

SECTION 1

Through Christ
Rom 10:4-21

a. Christ, the End of the Law - v.4

10:4 For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone who believes.

b. Christ, Incarnated and Resurrected - vv.5-7

10:5 For Moses writes concerning the righteousness which is out of the law: "The man who does them shall live by them."

10:6 But the righteousness which is out of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven?" that is, to bring Christ down;

10:7 Or, "Who will descend into the abyss?" that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.

SECTION 2 & 3

c. Christ, Who Is Near - v.8

10:8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of the faith which we proclaim,

d. Christ, Believed In and Called Upon - vv.9-13

10:9 That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10:10 For with the heart there is believing unto righteousness, and with the mouth there is confession unto salvation.

10:11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes on Him shall not be put to shame."

10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all and rich to all who call upon Him;

10:13 For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

SECTION 4

e. Christ, Proclaimed and Heard - vv.14-15

10:14 How then shall they call upon Him into whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe into Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without one who proclaims Him?

10:15 And how shall they proclaim Him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who announce the news of good things!"

f. Christ, Received or Rejected - vv.16-21

10:16 But not all have obeyed the gospel, for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"

10:17 So faith comes out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

10:18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes surely: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth and their words to the ends of the inhabited earth."

10:19 But I say, Did Israel not know this? First, Moses says, "I will provoke you to jealousy by them who are not a nation; by a nation without understanding I will anger you."

10:20 And Isaiah is very bold and says, "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me."

10:21 But with regard to Israel he says, "All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a people who disobey and contradict."

OUTLINE:

V. Through Christ—Rom. 10:4-21

- A. Christ, the end of the law—10:4
- B. Christ, incarnated and resurrected—10:5-7
- C. Christ, near to you—10:8
- D. Christ, believed in and called upon—10:9-13
- E. Christ, preached and heard—10:14-15
- F. Christ, received and rejected—10:16-21

QUESTIONS:

Section 1:

1. What does it mean that “Christ, the end of the law”? What is the result of this?
2. How does Christ’s incarnation and resurrection relate to Deuteronomy 30:12?
3. What is the long process that Christ passed through? How is this related to us?

Section 2:

1. Where can we see in the Bible that Christ, in His resurrection, is both the Spirit and the Word? How is this related to us?
2. What is the result of believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth?
3. Please explain the difference between an instrument and a vessel; and point out one way that we as vessels of God can be filled with the riches of Christ.

Section 3:

1. Please present the matter of calling on the name of the Lord with five verses from both the Old and New Testament of the Bible.
2. Why is calling on the name of the Lord considered as our spiritual breathing?
3. What does the Greek word for "call on" or "call upon" mean? What do we get when we call on the name of the Lord?

Section 4:

1. What is our experience of the gospel that leads us to call upon the Lord?
2. How do we get "beautiful feet"?
3. Please use explain the sentence: "the faith of the believers is actually not their own faith but Christ entering into them to be their faith." Use verses in your explanation.
4. How can we cooperate with God in His selection?

[Section 1]

GOD'S SELECTION, OUR DESTINY (2)

V. THROUGH CHRIST

A. Christ, the End of the Law

Romans 10:4 says, "For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone who believes." Christ is the end of the law. This means that He has completed and terminated the law. He came to fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17). By fulfilling the law He ended and terminated the law. The result of Christ's terminating the law is that God's righteousness is given to everyone who believes in Christ. When He died on the cross, Christ completed and terminated the law. The law ended in Him. Since the law was terminated on the cross of Christ, we should be under it no longer. We may simply receive God's righteousness by believing in Christ.

The Jews treasured the law and tried to keep it that they might establish their own righteousness before God. They did not see that the law had been fully completed and terminated by Christ. If they had seen this, they would have stopped their attempts to keep the law. They would never again have tried to establish their own righteousness before God, but would have taken Christ as their righteousness.

The principle is the same with a great many Christians today. After being saved, they make up their minds to do good to please God. As a result, they spontaneously make regulations for themselves, regulations which may be considered as their self-made laws, and they endeavor to fulfill them in order that they may be pleasing to God. Like the Jews, they do not see that Christ is the end, the termination of all regulations and that they should take Him as their life that they may live righteously before God. Furthermore, they need to see that the genuine righteousness before God is Christ, the One who has terminated the law that He might be the living righteousness to everyone who believes in Him. Romans 10 unfolds so much of Christ that we may know how to participate in and enjoy Him as our real and living righteousness before God.

B. Christ, Incarnated and Resurrected

We need to read verses 5 through 7. "For Moses writes that the man who does the righteousness which is out of the law shall live in it. But the righteousness which is out of faith speaks in this way, 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 among the dead." Paul's writing is very deep. Apparently these verses do not mention the

incarnation and resurrection of Christ; actually both are included in this portion. Although Paul did not use the words incarnation and resurrection, he nevertheless had both of them in mind when he wrote this part of Romans. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 30:12 saying, "Do not say in your hearts, Who will ascend into heaven?" He then points out that this means "to bring Christ down" and that this refers to Christ's incarnation, for Christ came down from the heavens in His incarnation. Furthermore, Paul says that we should not ask, "Who will descend into the abyss?" To "descend into the abyss" means "to bring Christ up from among the dead," and this refers to Christ's resurrection. To descend into the abyss means to die and to enter into hades. When Christ died He descended into the abyss, and in resurrection He was brought up from among the dead, that is, out of the abyss. Christ is the One who has passed through incarnation and resurrection. Therefore, we may say that He is the "processed" Christ, Christ incarnated and resurrected.

Christ has passed through a long process from incarnation through resurrection. In this process He accomplished everything that is required by God's righteousness, holiness, and glory and all that is needed to enable us to partake of Him. He was God incarnated to be a man, and, as a man, He was transfigured through resurrection into the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Now in resurrection as the life-giving Spirit He is so available to us that we may receive Him and take Him in at any time and in any place.

We need to say a word about the "abyss" mentioned in verse 7. In Greek the word rendered as "abyss" is *abyssos*. This word is used in Luke 8:31 (translated "deep" in KJV) referring to the dwelling place of the demons. It also occurs in Revelation 9:1, 2, 11 (always translated "bottomless pit" by KJV in Revelation) denoting the place out of which the "locusts," whose king is Apollyon, will come; in Revelation 11:7 and 17:8 signifying the place out of which the beast which is the antichrist will ascend; and in Revelation 20:1, 3 specifying the place into which Satan will be cast and imprisoned during the millennium. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, uses this word for the word "deep" in Genesis 1:2. Here in Romans 10:7 it points to the place Christ visited after His death and before His resurrection, which place, according to Acts 2:24, 27, is hades. For Acts

2:24, 27 reveals that Christ went into hades after He died and rose from that place in His resurrection. So, according to biblical usage, the word abyss always refers to the region of death and of Satan's power of darkness into which Christ after His death descended as into the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9), which He conquered, and from which He ascended in His resurrection.

[Section 2]

C. Christ, Near to You

Please pay attention to what Paul says in verse 8. "But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart: that is, the word of the faith which we preach." The resurrected Christ as the living Word is near us, in our mouth and in our heart. In this verse Paul suddenly uses the term "the Word" interchangeably for Christ, indicating thereby that this Word undoubtedly is Christ Himself. Christ in resurrection as the life-giving Spirit is the living Word. This corresponds to the New Testament revelation that the Word is the Spirit. If you read Ephesians 6:18 in the Greek, you will discover that the Spirit is the Word. Hence, Christ in His resurrection is both the Spirit and the Word. He is the Spirit for us to touch and He is the Word for us to understand. We may receive Him as both the Spirit and the Word. The resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit is the living Word that is so near to us. He is in our mouth and in our heart. Our mouth is for calling, and our heart is for believing. Thus, we can call upon Him with our mouth and believe in Him with our heart. When we call on Him we are saved; when we believe in Him we are justified.

After being processed through incarnation and resurrection, Christ today is both the Lord sitting on the throne of God in heaven and the life-giving Spirit moving on the earth. Thus, He is near and available to us. He is so near that He is even in our mouth and in our heart. No one can be nearer than this. He is so available that whoever believes in Him with his heart and calls on Him with his mouth will partake of Him. He has accomplished everything and He has passed through every process. He is now moving on earth, ready for and available to anyone who will receive Him.

D. Christ, Believed In and Called Upon

We need to read verses 9 through 13. "That if you confess with your mouth, Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from among the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth man confesses unto salvation. For the scripture says, All who believe on Him shall not be put to shame. For there is no difference between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord of all is rich to all who call upon Him. For, Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Paul says that with the

heart "man believes unto righteousness." "Unto" is an equivalent of a Greek preposition which, in many instances, means "resulting in." Therefore the result of believing with the heart is righteousness, while the result of confessing with the mouth is salvation. If we want to be justified, that is, to have the righteousness of God, we must believe in the Lord Jesus. If we want to be saved, we need to confess the Lord Jesus, that is to call upon Him.

In Romans 9:21, 23 we are told that under God's selection we, the called ones, have been made vessels of mercy unto honor and glory. However, we still must realize that such vessels by themselves are empty. Vessels need content. Although Romans 9 tells us that we are vessels, it does not give us the way to be filled. It is wonderful to be a vessel of mercy unto honor and glory, but it is pitiful to be empty. We need to be filled. The way to be filled is found in Romans 10. Every vessel has a mouth, an opening. If it has no mouth, it is not a vessel. Instruments such as hammers, knives, and axes have no mouths. However, we are vessels, and as vessels we have an opening—our mouth. Do you know why you have a mouth? You were made with a mouth that you might be filled with the riches of Christ. Our mouth was made for calling on the name of the Lord Jesus. The Lord is so rich! He is rich to all who call upon Him. There is a verse in the Psalms which says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (81:10). As empty vessels with a mouth we should open our mouth wide that we may be filled with the riches of the Lord.

In order to be saved we need to call upon the name of the Lord. However, calling upon His name is not only for salvation; it is also the way in which we receive the riches of Christ. The Lord is rich to all who call upon Him. When we call upon Him, we participate in and enjoy His riches. Do you want to participate in and enjoy the riches of Christ? If you do, do not be silent; open your mouth and call upon Him. In recent years the Lord has revealed very much to us regarding this matter of calling on His name...We thank the Lord that He has made us clear. We appreciate Romans 10, especially verse 12. "For there is no difference between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord of all is rich to all who call upon Him." Verse 13 has been used a great deal in gospel preaching. But we also must use it with verse 12, not for gospel preaching, but for filling up all the empty vessels with the riches of the Godhead. If you will open your mouth

wide and call upon the Lord, the riches of divinity will be your portion. Now, we have the way to fill the empty vessels. We have a mouth to call on Him that we may be filled with Him, and we have a heart to believe in Him and to retain Him.

[Section 3]

The Bible reveals clearly that calling on the Lord is the way to partake of and enjoy the Lord. Deuteronomy 4:7 (ASV) says that the Lord is “nigh unto us whenever we call upon him.” Psalm 145:18 says, “the Lord is nigh to all them that call upon him.” Psalm 18:6 and 118:5 say that David called upon the Lord in his distress. In Psalm 50:15 the Lord asks us to call upon Him in the day of trouble, and in Psalm 86:7 David did it accordingly. Psalm 81:7 says that the children of Israel did the same thing (Exo. 2:23) and that the Lord told them, “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it” (v. 10). Psalm 86:5 says that the Lord is good, ready to forgive, and is plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Him. Psalm 116:3-4 says, “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord.” Verse 13 of the same Psalm says, “I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.” In order to take the cup of salvation, that is, to participate and enjoy the Lord’s salvation, we need to call upon the name of the Lord. Isaiah 12:2-6 tells us that the Lord is our salvation, our strength, and our song, and that we can draw water out of the wells of His salvation with joy. The way to draw water out of the wells of the Lord’s salvation, that is, to enjoy the Lord as our salvation, is to praise Him, to call upon His name, to sing unto Him, and even to cry out and shout. In Isaiah 55:1-6 we find God’s wonderful calling to the people. He calls the thirsty ones to come to the waters, to enjoy the riches of the Lord’s provision, such as wine, milk, and good food, and to delight themselves in fatness. The way to do this is to seek the Lord and to “call upon him while he is near.” Isaiah 64:7 shows us that by calling upon the Lord we can stir up ourselves to take hold of Him.

Lamentations 3:55-57 makes it clear that when we call upon the Lord He draws near to us and that our calling upon Him is our breathing, our cry. By this we can realize that to call upon the Lord is not only to cry to Him, but also to experience a spiritual breathing (Exo. 2:23) in which we breathe out all that is within us, whether it be agony, pain, pressure, etc. Jeremiah did this when he called upon the Lord out of the low dungeon, that is, out of the lowest pit. Whenever we are in a spiritual dungeon or pit, under a certain suppression, we can call on the Lord, breathing out the heaviness within us, and thus be delivered from the lowest pit. This kind of calling on the Lord not only enables us to breathe out the negative things from within us, but also to breathe in the Lord Himself with all His riches as our strength, enjoyment, comfort, and rest. In this way we

partake of the riches of the Lord. Hence, here in Romans 10:12 Paul tells us that “the Lord is rich to all who call upon Him.” Today in resurrection the Lord is ready and available for our participation in Him and He is rich for our enjoyment of Him. We simply need to call on Him all the time. Calling on Him, we partake of and enjoy all His riches.

Calling on the Lord is different from merely praying to Him. The Greek word for “call on” or “call upon” means to invoke a person, to call a person by name. Although it is possible to pray to the Lord silently, calling on the Lord requires that we cry out to Him or address Him audibly. The Hebrew word for “call” in Genesis 4:26 firstly means to “call out to” or to “cry unto.” Isaiah 12:4 and 6 show that to call upon the Lord’s name is to “cry out and shout.” Lamentations 3:55 and 56 reveal the same thing—to call upon the Lord’s name is to “cry” to the Lord. Hence, David said, “I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God” (2 Sam. 22:7). To call upon the Lord is to cry to Him.

According to the Scripture record, this matter of calling on the name of the Lord began with the third generation of mankind. From the time of Enos “men began to call upon the name of the Lord” (Gen. 4:26). Then Abraham (Gen. 12:8), Isaac (Gen. 26:25), Job (Job 12:4), Moses (Deut. 4:7), Jabez (1 Chron. 4:10), Samson (Judg. 16:28), Samuel (1 Sam. 12:18), David (2 Sam. 22:4; 1 Chron. 21:16), Jonah (Jonah 1:6), Elijah (1 Kings 18:24), Elisha (2 Kings 5:11), Jeremiah (Lam. 3:55)—they all practiced this matter of calling on the name of the Lord. Moreover, in Joel 2:32, Zephaniah 3:9, and Zechariah 13:9 it is prophesied that people will call on the name of the Lord.

On the day of Pentecost the New Testament believers also called on the name of the Lord to receive the outpoured Spirit as the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2:17-21). God poured out His Spirit, and the believers opened their mouths to receive the Spirit by calling on the name of the Lord. The Spirit has been poured out by God, but we have to receive Him. The way to receive Him is to open our mouths and call on the Lord. Hence, the New Testament believers, like Stephen (Acts 7:59), practiced this. By practicing this they made it known that they were followers of the Lord (Acts 9:14). When Paul was Saul, the persecutor of the church, he intended to arrest the believers, recognizing them by their calling on the name of the Lord. After he was

converted, he was advised to wash away his sins (mainly his persecution of those who called on the Lord) by calling on the name of the Lord himself (Acts 22:16). Undoubtedly, this practice was common among the early saints.

In addressing his first epistle to the church at Corinth Paul said, “All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:2). This indicates that all the early believers practiced this matter of calling. In his second epistle to Timothy Paul charged him to pursue spiritual things “with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2:22). So, we must practice it too. The Old Testament saints called on the Lord daily (Psa. 88:9) and throughout their entire life (Psa. 116:2). How about us? We should practice it more, calling on the Lord “out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22) and with “a pure lip” (Zeph. 3:9, Heb.). If we practice this, we will certainly partake of the Lord’s riches and enjoy them. To call on the Lord is not only for salvation, but also for the enjoyment of the Lord with all His riches.

First Corinthians opens with calling on the name of the Lord, revealing that it is a book of the enjoyment of the Lord. It tells us that Christ is our wisdom and power (1 Cor. 1:24) and that He has been made our righteousness, sanctification, redemption (1:30), and so many other items for our enjoyment. Eventually, in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit of whom we may drink (1 Cor. 15:45; 12:13). The way to drink of Him as the life-giving Spirit is to call on His name. Thus, 1 Corinthians 12:3 indicates that if we say, “Lord Jesus,” we are immediately in the Spirit. To say, “Lord Jesus” is to call on the name of the Lord. Jesus is the name of the Lord, and the Spirit is His person. When we call on the name of the Lord, we get the person of the Lord. When we call, “Lord Jesus,” we get the Spirit. This kind of calling on the name of the Lord to receive the Spirit is not only spiritual breathing, but also spiritual drinking. When we call on the name of the Lord, we breathe Him in as the breath of life and we drink of Him as the water of life.

[Section 4]

E. Christ, Preached and Heard

In verses 14 and 15 Paul says, “How then shall they call upon Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without one who preaches? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who announce glad tidings of good things!’” Calling upon the Lord requires believing in Him, believing in Him requires the hearing of Him, and the hearing of Him requires the preaching of the glad tidings. If the gospel is to be preached, someone must be sent by God. Those who are sent by God preach the glad tidings that people may hear, believe, call upon the name of the Lord and

be saved. After we have believed in the Lord and called upon Him we must also preach Him. Christ has been preached and heard throughout the whole earth. He has been preached by the sent ones and heard by both the Jews and the nations. Many of them have believed unto righteousness and have called unto salvation.

The faith of the believers is actually not their own faith but Christ entering into them to be their faith (Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16). Now we need to consider how and when Christ entered into us to be our faith. When we repented unto God, the pneumatic Christ as the sanctifying Spirit of God (1 Pet. 1:2a) moved within us to be our faith by which we believed on the Lord Jesus (Acts 16:31). Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” As sinners we did not have faith. Faith came into us by our hearing the word. This word is just Christ Himself.

When we heard the gospel, the preacher described Christ to us. The more we heard, the more we saw Christ and were attracted to Christ.... The preachers preach Christ to present Christ's beauty. After hearing such a word about Christ, that is, after seeing such a Christ, within you there is an appreciation of Christ, and your appreciation of Him is the reaction to His attraction. We can believe in the Lord Jesus because we hear about Him, that is, we see Him. We read the Bible, and in the Bible we see something about Him.

F. Christ, Received and Rejected

In verses 16 through 21 we see Christ received and rejected. On the one hand Christ has been received by the nations, but on the other hand He has been rejected by Israel.

Both chapters nine and ten of Romans cover one point—the selection of God. God’s selection is our destiny. This selection is of God who calls; it is of God’s mercy and sovereignty; it is by the righteousness of faith, and it is through Christ.

Of all the chapters in the book of Romans, chapter ten presents the most about Christ. In 10:4 Christ is called “the end of the law.” In no other chapter in the whole New Testament is Christ designated in such a way. Hence, Romans 10 gives us a very crucial title of

Christ: the end of the law. This Christ was incarnated by coming down from heaven and was resurrected by coming up from the abyss. Having passed through this process, Christ, who is the end of the law, has become the living Word. He is near us, even in our mouth and in our heart. The two phrases “in your mouth” and “in your heart” imply that Christ is like the air. Only air can be in our mouth and in our heart. The resurrected Christ is the living Word, which is the Spirit; He is like the air, the breath, that we take into our being. All we need to do is exercise our mouth to breathe Him in, our heart to receive Him, and our spirit to retain Him. If we do this, we shall be saved and supplied with all His riches by calling on His name. We also need to preach Him. As we preach Him and people hear Him, some will believe and others will reject.

Romans 10 presents an excellent description and definition of Christ for our participation. We not only have to believe in Him with our heart, but also call on Him with our mouth. We have to call on Him, not only for salvation, but also for the enjoyment of His riches. We were made vessels to contain Him; we were selected and predestinated to be His containers. This requires our cooperation in receiving Him and taking Him in. In order to do this we need to open ourselves from the depths of our being and call upon Him with our mouth from deep within our spirit. Thus, in chapter nine we have the vessels and in chapter ten we are given the way to have the vessels filled with the riches of Christ. This is the economy of God’s selection, the purpose of His heart’s desire.