

THE GOSPEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH IS UNIVERSAL ROMANS 10:12–21

Introduction

God loves the whole world and every person in the world. His love is not limited to any one nation or people or type of person. The gospel is universal; it is for the world.

- I. Proof 1: the Lord treats all men alike (v. 12).
- II. Proof 2: all people are saved by the same promise (v. 13).
- III. Proof 3: the world cannot be saved apart from the gospel (vv. 14-15).
- IV. Proof 4: Scripture says the gospel is universal (vv. 16-17).
- V. Proof 5: Israel's disobedience proves the gospel is universal (vv. 18-21).

I. *Romans 10:12 The Universal Gospel*

The gospel is universal — the Lord God treats all men alike.

1. There is no distinction between men, not in God's eyes. All men are related to God in the very same way. In God's eyes, all men...
 - are His creatures
 - are sinful and alienated from Him
 - are loved by Him
 - are saved only through the righteousness provided by His Son

God does not save one man a certain way and another man some other way; neither does God reject a man because he is a Jew or a Greek. God does not show partiality; He has no favourites. No person is favoured over another person in being saved or condemned.

Rom 2:2 *Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.*

Acts 10:34-35 *Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.*

Job 34:18-19 *Is he not the One who says to kings, 'You are worthless,' and to nobles, 'You are wicked,' who shows no partiality to princes and does not favour the rich over the poor; for they are all the work of his hands?*

2. The Lord God "richly blesses all who call on him." Scripture clearly declares:

Exo 34:6 *And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness." (see 2 Chr 30:9; Psa 103:8; 116:5; 145:8; Joel 2:13)*

The Lord God is rich in mercy and grace and in all else that is good and beneficial. He is so wealthy that every good gift and every perfect gift that exists in the world has flowed from His mercy and grace (Jas. 1:17). Note two significant points.

- a. God has enough supply to richly bless all who call upon Him. There is no limit to the riches of His grace.

Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

Eph 1:18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

Eph 2:4-7 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Phil 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

- b. A man must call upon God to receive the riches of God's mercy and grace. (See note, Rom 10:13.)

II. Romans 10:13 Salvation by the Same Promise is for All

All people are saved by the same promise. Note that this promise was foretold in the Old Testament (Joel 2:32). This verse is one of the great promises of God. God loves every person, no matter his nationality or race. God is not willing that any person should perish; He wants every person to be saved (2 Pt.3:9). In fact, God promises salvation to every man if the man will do but one thing: "Call on the name of the Lord." Note what God says.

1. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." The word "everyone" means anyone, whoever, no matter who they are.

=> It means any person, any nationality, any race, any colour.

=> It means any person from any environment, condition, background, country, government or family.

=> It means any person, whether immoral or moral, unjust or just, bad or good, poor or wealthy, mean or nice, lonely or befriended, unpopular or popular, deformed or attractive, diseased or healthy, needful or without need.

"Everyone" means that any person can be saved, no matter who he is. No matter how terrible a person and his circumstances may be, he can be saved. He may be in the

depths of the inner city or in the depths of the jungle, and he may be enslaved by the most terrible spirit of sin and evil imaginable — God will still save him.

John 7:37 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.”*

1 Tim 2:4 *Who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

1 John 5:1 *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

Isa 45:22 *“Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.”*

Isa 55:1-3 *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”*

2. “Everyone who *calls on the name of the Lord* will be saved.” To “call on the name of the Lord” means at least two things.
 - a. It means that a person *calls* on the name of Lord Jesus Christ: he believes Jesus Christ can and will save him. It means that the person looks upon and believes that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, that He is the Son of God who came to earth to save men. Very simply, it means that a person believes the message of John 3:16.

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

John 5:24 *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

- b. It means that a person calls Jesus Christ *Lord*, that he looks upon Jesus as the Lord God of the universe and upon himself as His servant. It means that a person surrenders and dedicates himself to serve Jesus Christ throughout life — in everything and through everything, no matter the cost. To “call on the name of the *Lord*” means total surrender and dedication of all one is and has. (See *Cross and Discipleship*, Lk. 9:23; *Lord*, Acts 2:36.)

Luke 9:23 *Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*

Rom 12:1-2 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed*

by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Phil 2:11 *And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

1 John 4:15 *If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.*

3. "Everyone who calls...will be saved." (See *Salvation*, Rom 1:16.)

III. Romans 10:14–15 Gospel, the Only Source of Salvation

The world cannot be saved apart from the gospel. Remember what has just been said: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" "Everyone" refers to the whole world. But note the critical point: a person has to "call" in order to be saved. A person cannot "call on the name of the Lord" unless he has heard about the Lord. Therefore, the gospel has to be carried to the whole world. This is the point of the present two verses.

1. The world cannot call or believe or hear without a preacher. To prove the point, Scripture reverses the order of what actually happens.
 - a. How can a person call on Jesus Christ if he has not believed in Him? It is impossible. Even in dealing with secular purposes, a person has to really believe in the purpose before he will give his life to it. Imagine giving all one is and has! No person is going to do that unless he really believes in something. The same is true in dealing with the Lord. No person is going to call upon the *Lord* to save him, nor is any person going to surrender and dedicate all he is and has to the Lord, unless he truly believes in the Lord.
 - b. How can a person believe in Christ if he has not heard about Christ? How can a person know that Jesus Christ came to earth and died for his sins, and that Jesus Christ arose from the dead conquering death so that he might live eternally? Is a person born with the knowledge about Jesus Christ?
 - => Picture the native in the depths of the jungle. Does he know that God's Son died for his sins? Was he born with knowledge of Jesus Christ? The answer is obvious: No! The native in the depths of the jungle has to hear before he can believe and call upon the Lord to save him.
 - => Picture the man in the depths of the inner city, the city dweller who has never been exposed to the gospel, who has interest only in the things of the city and the world. Does he know that God's Son died for his sins? The answer is obvious: No! Not if he has never heard. The city dweller has to hear before he can believe and call upon the Lord to save him.
 - => Picture the religionist in the depths of religion, the religionist who has never been exposed to the clear-cut presentation of the gospel, who has only heard about the life

of Jesus and the form, ceremony and ritual of religion. Does the religionist know that God's Son died to set him free from sin, death and hell so that he might not serve sin any more? The answer is obvious: No! Not if he has never heard a clear-cut presentation of the gospel. Even the religionist has to hear before he can truly believe and truly call upon the Lord to save him. (What an indictment and warning to Christian ministers and teachers — a warning to present the gospel in simple, clear-cut terms.)

- c. How can a person hear without a preacher? How can a person hear that Jesus Christ died for him if a preacher or some Christian does not tell him? To hear anything requires a person who either speaks or writes. To receive communication requires a communicator. To hear a message requires a messenger. The message of the Lord Jesus Christ must be carried to the world, but in order to be carried, a messenger is needed. Christian believers must preach the message if people are to hear the message.
2. Now note that the basis of missions and evangelism is the preacher or witness himself. In the present context the "preacher" means any believer who bears witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. It takes a preacher to proclaim the message of the Lord Jesus so that people can hear and believe and call upon Him. However, note what this verse says: the preacher cannot preach unless he is sent.
 - a. God is the One who sends forth preachers and witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is the One who commissions, qualifies and instructs the preachers and witnesses of the gospel.

John 15:16-17 "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."

2 Cor 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Eph 3:7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.

1 Tim 1:12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.

2 Tim 1:11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.

1 Pet 5:2-3 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

- b. Christian believers have a part in sending forth labourers as well as God. We are to pray for diligent workers (Mt. 9:37).

=> We are to go forth ourselves.

Mat 28:19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Mark 16:15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”

=> We are to pray for labourers, for diligent workers.

Mat 9:37-38 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

c. We are to give to meet the needs of the world.

2 Cor 8:7 But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

2 Cor 9:6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Eph 4:28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

1 John 3:17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

3. The gospel is the message of peace and good news, the glad tidings of good things. Note three points.

a. The message of the gospel is peace (see notes, *Peace*, Rom 5:1; Jn. 14:27).

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

b. The message of the gospel is good news (see note, *Inheritance*, Rom 8:17. Also see *Salvation*, Rom 1:16; and notes, Rom 8:1-39.)

John 5:24 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

John 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

1 Pet 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade kept in heaven for you.

- c. The feet of the preacher and witness are beautiful; that is, they are a welcome sight to the world. The world desperately needs the message of peace and good news. (Note: this verse is a quotation from Isa 52:7.)

IV. Romans 10:16–17 Scripture Affirms the Gospel is Universal

Scripture says the gospel is universal. Isaiah says that many Jews did not “believe the message of God” (see Isa 53:1). Therefore, they prove that salvation is not by race, heritage, tradition, religion, institution, nor by works established by the Jewish nation or any other people.

Note a second thing: Isaiah used the phrase, “believing our message.” Isaiah was saying that *believing the message* is the way of salvation. The message was to stir faith.

There are three steps involved in faith. (See *Saving Faith*, Jn. 2:24.)

1. The step of hearing. A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ.

Mat 13:16 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

Mat 13:23 “But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Luke 10:39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said.

Luke 18:15 People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them.

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

1 Th 2:13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

James 1:19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

Prov 8:34 *Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.*

Prov 15:31 *He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise.*

Prov 18:15 *The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out.*

2. The step of mental assent. A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behaviour to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harms his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He is a double-minded man: he agrees to the truth and knows the truth, but he does nothing about it. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.

James 1:18 *He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of all he created.*

James 4:8 *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

Luke 16:12 *“And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?”*

1 Cor 10:21 *You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons.*

Hosea 10:2 *Their heart is deceitful, and now they must bear their guilt. The Lord will demolish their altars and destroy their sacred stones.*

3. The step of commitment. When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of *commitment*, a personal commitment to the truth. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it. He commits and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behaviour and life.

Saving faith is believing in the name of Jesus Christ and committing one’s life to Him. It is trusting Jesus Christ, completely putting one’s trust in Him, who He is and what He has done. It is casting one’s life into His hands, believing He will take care of one’s past (sins), present (looking after), and future (delivering from death unto life eternal).

John 3:15 *That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*

John 3:36 *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”*

John 5:24 *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

John 6:28-29 *Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”*

John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.”*

John 20:31 *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Acts 10:43 *“All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”*

Acts 13:39 *Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.*

Acts 16:31 *They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household.”*

Rom 10:9 *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

James 2:17 *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

ROMANS 10:16 FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” **Romans 10:16**

Note that the gospel is to be obeyed. Obedience and belief are synonymous terms when dealing with the gospel. It is totally contradictory to have one without the other. A person who truly believes in Jesus Christ will obey Him. (See *Saving Faith*, Jn. 2:24.) There is no such thing...

- as true belief without obedience.
- as truly believing in Jesus Christ and not following Him.
- as truly believing Jesus Christ has forgiven one’s sin and then living in sin.
- as truly believing the gospel and living like the world.

2 Cor 6:17-18 *“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,” says the Lord Almighty.*

Heb 5:9 *And, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. □*

V. **Romans 10:18–21** *Israel’s Rejection and the Gentiles’ Acceptance*

Israel’s disobedience proves the gospel is universal. Why did Israel not obey the gospel?

1. Israel’s disobedience was not because they did not hear the Word of God (v. 18). The very opposite is true. Israel was the very custodian of the Scriptures, the very people

whom God had chosen to bring salvation to the world (see note, Jn. 4:2). No matter where the Jewish people were scattered, they had the Word of God and heard it. (Note that Paul quotes Psa 19:4 as Scriptural proof of what he says.)

2. Israel's disobedience was not because the people did not know the truth (v. 19). They knew the truth, and they had a dynamic example and demonstration of the truth. They had the example of the Gentiles who turned to the gospel in great numbers.

Note how Scripture words this: "I will make you envious." Israel had the stirrings of jealousy and envy to help them turn to the gospel. They heard and knew. Their disobedience to the gospel was not because they were ignorant of the gospel. The gospel was actually lived out before their faces in the person of Jesus Christ and in the Gentiles turning to Christ for salvation. (Again, Paul supports his point from the Old Testament, Dut. 32:21; Isa. 65:1.)

3. Israel's rejection was because they were a disobedient and obstinate people. Note how good God had been to Israel.
 - a. God "held out His hands": inviting, offering forgiveness and peace and reconciliation, pleading and begging for Israel to return to Him.
 - b. "All day long": being patient and long-suffering and forbearing, bearing for a long time, waiting until the last moment to turn away.

***Ezek 33:11** Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?'*

***Hosea 6:1** "Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds."*

***2 Cor 5:20** We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

***Rev 3:20** Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

However, Israel refused and rejected God's gracious invitations. Israel chose to remain disobedient and obstinate. They closed their minds despite the clear evidence and refused to consider the truth of Christ as the true Saviour of the world (see *Religionists*, Mt. 12:10; *Beelzebub*, Mt. 12:24; 21:33-46; 22:1-14).

***Psa 95:8** Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert.*

***Prov 28:14** Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.*

Prov 29:1 *A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed — without remedy.*

Rom 2:5 *But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.*

Heb 3:13 *But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ■*