



*Jewish Believers and Christians working together for Israel's salvation since 1963*



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**S**halom my friend! This month we continue our look at Romans 9, 10 and 11, finishing up chapter 9. Last month, in Romans 9:22-29, we saw Paul delving deeper into the topic of the stubborn Jewish heart as it pertains to the acceptance of Yeshua as Messiah. He extensively cited key passages from both Hosea and Isaiah, shoring up his argument that the salvation of Gentiles actually has a Jewish end: to stir up the Jewish heart to a righteous jealousy for God. The great multitude of saved Gentiles, then, ought to be a humbling force in the sight of headstrong Israel, as those who choose to follow Messiah find themselves not only to be a Remnant among the people of Israel, but dwarfed in numbers by their Gentile brothers and sisters within the much enlarged family of God.

## Righteous by Faith

Bringing this present line of thinking to its conclusion in Romans 9:30-33, Paul draws a sharp—and stinging—contrast between Gentile believers and Jewish unbelievers.

## Update from Israel

I recently received an update from Baruch, one of our ministry friends in Israel who you help support, and he shared about the work God is doing through him. He wrote, “I don’t miss any opportunity to participate in outreach projects. Every time, it’s a blessing to meet new people and serve them. I notice that as the society becomes more and more egotistic, people who bring unconditional love and support shine brighter and brighter! Such an approach does not escape the eye of those who attend our projects—they feel God’s love through us and are amazed. I feel privileged to be a point of contact between God’s love and people’s needs!

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“What, then, will we say? that גוים, Goyim [Gentiles] who are not pursuing righteousness attained righteousness—even righteousness that *is* of faith—but יִשְׂרָאֵל, Yis’rael, pursuing a תּוֹרָה, Torah of righteousness, did not arrive at תּוֹרָה, Torah. Why? Because *it was pursued* not by faith, but as by actions. For they stumbled at the stone of stumbling, as it has been written, ‘Look! I place in צִיּוֹן, Tziyon [Zion] a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who is believing thereon will not be ashamed.’” (MJMT)

Here, Paul is hearkening back to a topic he first introduced in the second chapter of Romans: that those Jews who have not accepted Yeshua as the Messiah arrogantly and stubbornly seek their righteousness by “pursuing a Torah of righteousness”—a perverted and fruitless pursuit that leaves them falling short of their desired destination. Meanwhile, Gentiles who *do* accept Yeshua as the Messiah—who are not even *attempting* to pursue righteousness—simply attain it by doing nothing. How is this possible? Because the self-important Jew tries to achieve righteousness based on his own actions—by his keeping of the Torah (Law) with a wrong heart—while the Gentile, through the Messiah, naturally attains righteousness without the Torah, merely because of his faith (this is how Messianic Jews attain true righteousness as well—by faith).



## A Rock of Offense

When Jews who have been pursuing righteousness through their own actions encounter the Messiah—the One who bestows righteousness *not on the basis of actions*, but solely by faith—Paul calls this (in the words of Isaiah), “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” In other words,

because “the תּוֹרָה, Torah, indeed, *is* holy, and the command holy and righteous and good” (Romans 7:12, MJMT), it is therefore holy, right and good for a Jew to keep the Torah throughout his daily life. But the problem arises when

the Jew stops seeking God and fails to perceive his need for salvation because he relies on the flesh of his Jewishness. This misplaced reliance is then bolstered when he does one of the most Jewish things a Jew can do: keep the Torah.

Yeshua, then, becomes “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense” because He violently interrupts that legalistic belief system, not only by making people righteous by their faith alone (that is, not because of any holy, righteous, or good action they have done), but also by making Gentiles righteous, period! (Not to mention, He makes Gentiles righteous *without* their needing to keep

the Torah. *How offensive!*) For the Jew that finds his entire identity tied to his own strength, actions and abilities, this concept of righteousness without action is utterly offensive, destroying his soul. Yeshua is “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense,” then, to those who pursue a Torah of righteousness by the strength of their own actions. But the good news is that, as Paul says, “he who is believing [upon the rock of Zion (Yeshua)] will not be ashamed.”

## Softening the Jewish Heart

While it is sometimes difficult to swallow some of Paul’s harsher criticisms of his own people, the ninth chapter of Romans is integral to any approach to outreach to the Jewish people. We need to realize that by revealing the natural tendencies of the Jewish heart, Paul has shown us where that heart is most vulnerable, and how greatly that heart needs to be healed. But perhaps more importantly, if the love of the Jewish Messiah can conquer even the most stiff-necked, stubborn heart of a Jewish person, how much more hope can we have for the salvation of the world, who, according to Paul, have an even easier path to salvation?

Understanding the Jewish mind and heart is key to reaching Jewish people with the Good News of Yeshua in this hour, and this is why MJMI continues to need your support: so that we can effectively educate about how the Scriptures teach you to reach your Jewish neighbor, and also so that MJMI can continue doing its part to help save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Your donation



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“Last time, so many people arrived that the food packages ran out. The next day, I delivered new packages to those who had not received during the distribution. I visited Larisa and her large family from Nikopol (Ukraine). She moved to Israel in May 2017 with her son, his wife and two children, as well as her daughter, her husband and their two children.



“With no doubt, they were very appreciative of the help they have received. I had the opportunity to testify about the real support that God provides to the people of Israel. I also invited Larisa and members of her family to participate in one of the trips through Ashdod, and she and her daughter-in-law Tanya joined me the next week.

“It was my first trip in a new season, and everything was great. I saw deep interest among most of the participants in discovering the Holy Land more. I can’t wait for when I get my tour guide license, in order to organize more outreach trips on a larger scale. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to touch the hearts of the people of Israel and bring them really Good News!”



of \$10, \$25, \$100 or more will help us accomplish our mission and vision to see all Israel come to know their Messiah. You can use the enclosed card and envelope,

or visit [www.mjmi.org](http://www.mjmi.org) to send your much-needed donation today. And if you aren’t already, please consider becoming a ministry partner, so that I will know we can count on your support each month.

Next time, we will begin our look at Romans chapter 10. Until then, may ADONAI’s blessings and unmerited favor be upon you.

For the sake of the Messiah,

Kevin Geoffrey, President, MJMI