

Romans – An In-Depth Study

[Chapters 9-16]

[Part 3]

Romans 9:33 [NIV] *“As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that **causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall**, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”*

What or who is the “*stumbling stone*” mentioned in **verse 32**.

1 Peter 2:6-8 [NIV] *“For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious **cornerstone**, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” and, “A **stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall**.” They stumble because they disobey the message, which is also what they were destined for.”*

“Zion” in both Old and New Testaments refers to God’s dwelling place. By extension it means the Christian church in which the Holy Spirit dwells.

The “*precious cornerstone*” or foundational rock on which Christ will build His church is the fact that He is acknowledged by the church as the Son of God.

Matthew 16:13-18 [NIV] *“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church**, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*

Peter the Greek “*pětrōs*” means a piece of rock or pebble, but the rock on which the church would be built was Greek “*pětra*” a massive foundational rock.

This rock was the acknowledgement by Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that Jesus the Son of Man was also the Son of God.

On this fact the church is built.

A vast number of religious people will **not** acknowledge Jesus Christ as the very Son of God, therefore their faith is built on sand **not** a massive rock.

Matthew 7:24-27 [NIV] *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into **practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock**. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

The only sure foundation for the Christian church and the individual Christian is to build their life on the words of Jesus Christ.

God has provided this sure foundational rock for the church but for some it will cause them to stumble because they do **not** accept the words of Jesus Christ.

For others who trust in the words of Jesus Christ, including the promises He made, will not stumble or be put to shame.

Isaiah 28:16 [NIV] *“So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the **one who trusts will never be dismayed.**”*

Once again Paul quotes an Old Testament prophet to fortify his statement.

Romans 10:1-2 [NIV] *“Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, **but their zeal is not based on knowledge.**”*

Israel was very zealous, at times in their relationship with the Creator God, but this zealous attitude was **not** based on knowledge of God’s words and promises.

Many throughout the history of the Christian church have also been zealous but without knowledge of God’s word.

Romans 10:3 [NIV] *“Since **they did not know the righteousness that comes from God** and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.”*

Again Paul is reminding all Christians that righteousness does **not** come through our efforts to live a “righteous” life, but through faith in what Jesus Christ has done for us through His birth, life, death and resurrection.

Romans 1:16-17 [NIV] *“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, **a righteousness that is by faith from first to last**, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”*

Only a life of faith will bring us true righteousness that comes from God, **not** something we can generate ourselves by good works.

Romans 4:18-25 [NIV] *“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead, since he was about a hundred years old, and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, **being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.”** The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but **also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.**”*

This true righteousness is credited to us as a result of our faith in the saving works of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 64:6 [NIV] *“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and **all our righteous acts are like filthy rags**; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”*

In God’s eyes all our righteous acts are like a filthy rag that we would only reject or even burn in disgust.

Romans 10:4 [NIV] *“**Christ is the end of the law** so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.”*

With the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the keeping of the ritualistic laws ended as a way to become righteous before God.

In fact all these ritualistic laws pointed to Jesus Christ, the Messiah, as the **only way** we can become righteous in God's eyes and receive salvation from death.

Galatians 3:23-25 [NIV] *“Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.”*

The rituals that guided the lives of the Israelites and many present-day Christians, are no longer a means to make us righteous but can lead us to Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:20 [NIV] *“Therefore no-one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.”*

The law was given to make us aware of sin that needs to be repented of and forgiven by accepting the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1:8-11 [NIV] *“We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.”*

The law is for this list of people, to convict them of their sins, **not** to make them righteous by keeping it.

Romans 13:8-10 [NIV] *“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.”*

We fulfil the law by loving other human beings, even our enemies [**Matthew 5:44**].

Romans 10:5 [NIV] *“Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: “The man who does these things will live by them.”*

The Jews established customs and traditions in addition to God's law given through Moses, to try to make themselves acceptable in God's sight. [Paul was quoting **Leviticus 18:5**]

Human effort, no matter how sincere, can **never** be a substitute for the righteousness God offers through faith.

The **only way to earn salvation** is to be perfect by keeping God's laws perfectly which Israel proved was impossible for any human or nation to do.

Nehemiah 9:29 [NIV] *“You warned them to return to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, by which a man will live if he obeys them. Stubbornly they turned their backs on you, became stiff-necked and refused to listen.”*

Israel failed miserably to obey these laws that God gave them.

Ezekiel 20:11-13, 21 [NIV] *“I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy. “Yet the people of Israel rebelled against me in the desert. They did not follow my decrees but rejected my laws, although the man who obeys them will live by them, and they utterly desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and destroy them in the desert.” ... “But the children rebelled against me: They did not follow my decrees, they were not careful to keep my laws, although the man who obeys them will live by them,*

and they desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in the desert.”

Each generation followed the rebellion and failure of previous generations.

Romans 7:10-13 [NIV] *“I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognised as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, **so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.**”*

Paul, himself a Pharisee, one who dedicated his life to seeking to keep the law perfectly [see **Acts 23:6**] at last realised why the law was given. To expose sin for what it is, a death-giving act. This must have been hard for Paul to admit as a Pharisee.

Romans 10:6-8 [NIV] *“But **the righteousness that is by faith** says: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:”*

Again Paul uses what is well-known to Jews to confront them with righteousness through faith alone.

Deuteronomy 30:11-14 [NIV] *“Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, “Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so that we may obey it?” Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, “Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so that we may obey it?” **No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so that you may obey it.**”*

God has made it very clear what He expects of human beings.

His word has always been available, through the Christian Bible, Old and New Testaments, to those He has chosen to offer salvation.

Romans 10:9-10 [NIV] *“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. **For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.**”*

Two major things are expected of all Christians, belief and confessional witness.

Matthew 10:32-33 [NIV] *“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”*

We **cannot** be secret Christians, God expects us to be a light to all we meet with in our day-to-day living [read **Matthew 5:12-16**].

Matthew 10:34-38 [NIV] *“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn “‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; **and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.**”*

Such an exposure of our faith will bring persecution and rejection by our family and friends.

Luke 12:11-12 [NIV] *“When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.”*

We may even have to face human judges because of the expression of our faith.

It is then that the Holy Spirit will take over and vindicate what we say and confound the words of those who accuse us of doing wrong, by preaching the gospel message.

Romans 10:11 [NIV] *“As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”*

God will always support those who put their faith and trust in Him.

Isaiah 28:16 [NIV] *“So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; **the one who trusts will never be dismayed.**”*

If we put our trust in Jesus Christ, the foundational cornerstone of the church and our Christian life, we will never be let down by our Saviour.

Romans 10:12 [NIV] *“For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, the same Lord is Lord of all and **richly blesses all who call on him,**”*

Whatever our background or our former life, if we look to Jesus Christ for our salvation, He will bless our witnessing life.

Romans 3:22-26 [NIV] *“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,** and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished, he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”*

All humans are alike, we have all sinned and been separated from God the Father.

Isaiah 59:2-3 [NIV] *“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things.”*

God the Father has turned His back on us because He will **not**, in His holiness and perfection, look on sin.

Isaiah 59:1 [NIV] *“Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.”*

Only when God reaches out to save us through the sacrifice of the righteous life of Jesus Christ, can we be cleansed of our past sins and God will look on us as His children.

But we have to call out to God for His mercy and repent of our previous sinful life, such a prayer God will hear.

Galatians 3:23-28 [NIV] *“Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

The law having done its work of convicting us of our sins, we are through Jesus Christ accepted as created children of God.

Note that baptism by full immersion is part of this transformation [read again **Romans 6:1-4**].

Colossians 3:1-17 [NIV] *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.** Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*

This is a vivid description of the new life we have been called to live.

We need to study this thoughtfully often to see if we are really conforming to a changed lifestyle as listed in these verses.

Romans 10:13 [NIV] *“for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

This is a promise we can claim if we have made this life change.

Joel 2:32 [NIV] *“And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.”*

This scripture refers to what will happen after Jesus Christ’s return to the earth, but can also be applied to all in every generation who call on God for mercy and forgiveness.

Acts 2:21, 36-39 [NIV] *“And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ... “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, **“Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call.”*

When we are convicted of our sins, realising that it is because of our sins that Jesus Christ the very Son of God had to come to earth in human form and die an horrific death for the Holy Spirit to empower us to live this new life for God.

Romans 10:14-15 [NIV] *“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And **how can they hear without someone preaching to them?** And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*

All Christians are commanded by God to take His message of salvation to others so that they can respond.

We are to do this first by our personal example of living a different lifestyle, one of love towards all we meet.

This will in some cases cause people to ask us why?

We should then be ready to give them this message of hope in a world that has little hope for a better future.

1 Peter 3:15 [NIV] *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,”*

Are we able to do this directly from God’s Word, the Christian Bible?

In the next few verses Paul answers certain objections that Jews and Gentiles may have.

Romans 10:16-18 [NIV] *“But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “**Lord, who has believed our message?**” Consequently, **faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”**”*

The first objection is:-

You cannot call on God unless you believe in Him.

You cannot believe in God unless you hear about Him.

You cannot hear about God unless there is someone to proclaim the Good News.

Paul deals with these objections by quoting Isaiah.

Isaiah 52:7-8 [NIV] *“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those **who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!” Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes.”**”*

Isaiah reminds Israel that there have been many messengers from God proclaiming the soon-coming Messiah [Saviour].

Isaiah 53:1-9 [NIV] *“**Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?** He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.””*

This is a direct message describing the Messiah.

Jesus Christ fulfilled all of this at His first coming.

Another objection is what if I do not accept the fact that they did hear, that they did **not** get a chance to hear?

Paul's answer is to quote from the Psalms.

Psalms 19:1-6 [NIV] *“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. **Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.** In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.”*

All of God's physical creation cries aloud that there is a loving merciful God.

Paul had already addressed this objection in his letter to the church at Rome.

Romans 1:18-21 [NIV] *“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since **what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.** For since the creation of the world **God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.** For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*

All thinking humans are without any excuse, it is only those who follow blindly without questioning what their leaders say, leaders who are blinded themselves..

The biggest example of this is blindly accepting the theory [“theory” meaning we think it may be true] of evolution, which if we apply our minds to this theory we can see it is full of unanswered questions.

[Download our articles on this website on evolution for a full explanation on the errors of the Theory of Evolution.]

All through this passage Paul is driving home the personal responsibility of the Jews and Israel.

They ought to have known better, for they had every chance to know better than to refuse the Messiah and His message when He came.

Romans 10:19-21 [NIV] *“Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, **“I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.”** And Isaiah boldly says, **“I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”** But concerning Israel he says, **“All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.”***

God even tried to reach Israel by making them jealous.

Deuteronomy 32:18-21 [NIV] *“You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth. The LORD saw this and rejected them because he was angered by his sons and daughters. **“I will hide my face from them,”** he said, **“and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful. They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.”***

Because of Israel's rejection, God called the Gentiles to receive the blessing that should have been theirs.

Isaiah 65:1-2 [NIV] *“I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, ‘Here am I, here am I.’ All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations.”*

God has and continues to reach out His arms to the Jews and Israel inspite of their rejection of His message and messenger.

Alongside these scriptures we have to also consider other scriptures that tell us that God, by His own selection, has allowed Satan to blind vast numbers of Gentiles [non-Jews] to the truth at this time.

Revelation 12:9 [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”*

Most people led astray by Satan.

2 Corinthians 4:4 [NIV] *“The god of this age has **blinded the minds of unbelievers**, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”*

The “*god of this age*” is Satan who at this time rules this world.

1 John 5:19 [NIV] *“We know that we are children of God, and that **the whole world is under the control of the evil one.**”*

In control of this world.

Luke 4:5-6 [NIV] *“The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.”*

Jesus did **not** tell Satan he did **not** own the world’s society at this time, that it was **not** his to give to anyone.

John 6:44 [NIV] *“No-one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

God the Father chooses whom He will call to have their chance of salvation at this time, although all eventually have this opportunity of salvation.