



Israel
Responds...

Romans
Chapter 10:16-21

*...And God's
Reaction
Introduced!*

ROMANS

10:16-21



Introduction

The merciful call of God's enduring Word has been summarized in 9:6-29 and the opposing avenues of attempting to seek righteousness from human works versus receiving it from Faith in the proclaimed Word (Gospel) of Jesus Christ were laid out and diagnosed from 9:30 to 10:15. Beginning with an emphatic *"But"* in v.16, St. Paul now shifts from the topic of how God sends His Word to people to a discussion of how people, and Israel in particular, respond to the Good News in the past and in the present.

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Paul will bookend his argument by stating negative human reaction in vv.16 and 21. However, he will also express the same, though in a lesser degree, in vv. 18 and 19. At the same time, in v.17, Paul will provide a key summation for the previous section (6-15) and, once again, Paul is using vv.16-17 as a hinge. So let's take a look at:

Another Hinge (vv.16-17)

Introduction

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10:16-17

Another Hinge

¹⁶But not all listened responsively [to] the Good News. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷So then faith [is] from hearing, and hearing through [the] Word of Christ [the Messiah].

What is necessary is that Paul adds a little “oil” to the hinge. So let’s briefly review 10:4 which says, ***“For [the] end of the law [is] Christ, unto righteousness to everyone believing.”*** Please note that the first half of this verse states the definitive end of the Law! This was Paul’s focus in 9:30-10:5. The second half of the verse was a “stage setter” for 10:6-15. It provides the “oil” for St. Paul’s hinge as he will now “swing” into a new topic!

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10:16-17



Another
Hinge

¹⁶But not all listened responsively [to] the Good News. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷So then faith [is] from hearing, and hearing through [the] Word of Christ [the Messiah].

Paul begins the hinge by stating: **“But not all listened responsively [to] the Good News.”**

We have studied that the Good News came near to Israel in 10:8, 14-15; yet, they did not listen to, they did not hearken unto the Good News. It's true that St. Paul does not clearly identify who he means by **“not all...”** even so, the context from 9:31-32; 10:19-21, makes it quite clear that St. Paul is addressing unbelieving Israel. The quote from Isaiah 53:1 also point to Israel and finally, in vv.19 and 21, St. Paul explicitly says that he is talking of unbelieving Israel.

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10:16-17



Another
Hinge

16 ***But not all listened responsively [to] the Good News. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?”*** ***17*** ***So then faith [is] from hearing, and hearing through [the] word of Christ [the Messiah].***

What does Isaiah (and Paul) mean by the statement: ***“Lord, who has believed our message?”*** Paul uses Isaiah as a prophetic affirmation that ***“not all”*** in Israel heard Isaiah and they would not accept/believe their Messiah when He arrived. Paul uses Isaiah to show how the two major verbs of v.16 (***“listened”*** and ***“believed”***) are used together as the objects of these two verbs also make Paul’s point: ***“Good News”*** and ***“message.”*** So unbelieving Israel did not listen and did not believe in the Good News and the message concerning the coming and present Messiah, Jesus Christ!

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Another
Hinge

17So then faith [is] from hearing, and hearing through [the] Word of Christ [the Messiah].

Now that Paul has made his argument in v.16, he will now make his Christological understanding of the fulfillment of Isaiah's message explicit in v.17. This verse draws together a number of themes and clarifies the interrelationship between Faith, Hearing, and the Word of Christ! And, as Paul has previously used an unusual, but effective teaching method, he makes his argument in reverse sequential order!

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Another
Hinge

17 So then faith [is] from hearing, and hearing through [the] Word of Christ [the Messiah].

Notice the order: “faith” then “hearing” then the “Word of Christ.” The first event in the sequence of conversion to the faith is that the “Word of Christ” comes “*near*” (cf. v.8). It’s very important for you to know that the word that Paul uses is the same Greek word he used in v.8 (ῥῆμα). This may be a word that is proclaimed orally, but in the context of Deut 30:14, which Paul used in v.8, it is also the written word! So this “Word” is both oral and written and it’s about and is “Christ”, who has come “*near*” to you by way of His incarnation and resurrection!

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10:17



Another
Hinge

17 So then faith [is] from hearing, and hearing through [the] Word of Christ [the Messiah].

Second, what occurs through the Word of Christ is “hearing!” In this context and in accord with the prophecy of Isaiah, “the message” (τῆ ἀκοῆ) of the Good News is the Word of Christ. Indeed, hearing, the kind of hearing that can lead to Faith can only happen if there is a definite salvific Word from God that is proclaimed! Therefore, this is why God sends “proclaimers” or “preachers” to speak His salvific Word into the ears of those who do not yet believe, and the result is “hearing!”

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10:17



A Short Excursus

It is very important to point out to each of you the great necessity of Greek. The Greek noun that St. Paul uses for “*hearing*” is (ἀκοή). The translation of this word into English is tricky and creates difficulties (same with “faith” and “righteousness”). At times, this noun can mean “*what is heard*” or “*hearing as reception.*” In v.16, its use as a compound verb: “*listened responsively*” (ὑπακούω). As a result, the ability to recognize the presence of all these related Greek terms has been problematic in English, since English isn’t a “picture” language. So the translations from the Greek lose their “elegant beauty and deep nuanced meanings.”

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Another
Hinge

17 So then faith [is] from hearing, and hearing through [the] Word of Christ [the Messiah].

Third: Now we move back to the future...I mean, beginning! Paul concisely states what God intends to happen as a result of such “hearing.” “Faith [is] from hearing, and hearing.” What Paul has stated comes together concisely as his topic reaches its apex! This verse teaches that Faith come from a source, “from hearing,” and that hearing comes through a message, “through [the] Word of Christ!” So v.16 has shown you the only possible active human role in regard to the Good News of Christ Jesus and it is stated negatively!

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10:17



Another
Hinge

¹⁷So then faith [is] from hearing, and hearing through [the] Word of Christ [the Messiah].

Melanchthon stated in the Epitome of the Formula of Concord, Art. II that,

“...they are not willing to believe the Gospel.”
Humans can and do
“...stop their ears!”

ROMANS

10:18-21

Why the Problem?

***18** But I ask: Did they not hear? Indeed: “Into all the earth has gone out the voice of them; and to the ends of the world, the words of them.” **19** But I ask, did not Israel know? First, Moses says: “I will provoke you to jealousy by [those] not a nation; by a nation without understanding, I will anger you.” **20** Isaiah then is very bold and says: “I was found by those not seeking Me; I became manifest to those not inquiring after Me.” **21** However, as for Israel, he says, “All the day, I have stretched out my hands, to a people unpersuaded and contradicting.”*

Through the remainder of the chapter, Paul seeks to explain the improper response of Israel, a matter, as you may remember, causing him, **“great sorrow and unceasing anguish in [his] heart” (9:2)**. Paul proceeds by insisting that the fault in NO way resides with God, His Word, or His Messiah! The sending and proclaiming of the Word of Christ has gone according to His plan and purpose (vv.14-15). So Paul will demonstrate this by quoting from Ps 19:4 in v.18:

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10:18



The Psalm
Say That
All Heard!

18 ***But I ask: Did they not hear? Indeed: “Into all the earth has gone out the voice of them; and to the ends of the world, the words of them.”***

What St. Paul does is quite interesting! Remember, he is under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so Paul changes the psalmist’s graceful depiction of the heaven’s glory into a description of the universal scope of Christian preaching! What Paul does is the appropriation of the language of Ps. 19:4 to lend rhetorical force to his discussion. Paul cites the psalmist to refute any notion that the message was not received or not heard. Is it not clear: the “voice” and “words” went out to Israel and beyond to the Gentiles...to the “ends of the world.”

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10:18



The Psalm
Say That
All Heard!

“But I ask: Did they not hear? Indeed: “Into all the earth has gone out the voice of them; and to the ends of the world, the words of them.”

Paul, therefore, applies the psalmist’s words about creation to the Good News as proclaimed by Isaiah, Paul, and many others (cf. 14-15). Through many and various ways, in written and oral form, the message has resounded to “the ends of the world.” Paul makes it abundantly clear that the Good News of Christ Jesus is for everyone!

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10:18



The Psalm
Say That
All Heard!

“But I ask: Did they not hear? Indeed: “Into all the earth has gone out the voice of them; and to the ends of the world, the words of them.”

The early church father, John Chrysostom observes concerning v.18, ***“If the ends of the world have heard, how can the Jews claim that they have not”***¹ The fact is clear, not all Jews listened responsively to the Good News of their Messiah, because they chose not and do not to believe His message.

¹Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans*, 18 (Bray, *Romans*, ACCS NT 6:271).

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10:19



**The Torah
Affirms
That They
Knew!**

19 But I ask, did not Israel know? First, Moses says: “I will provoke you to jealousy by [those] not a nation; by a nation without understanding, I will anger you.”

The first half cited from Deut 32:21, you may have noticed, is actually God’s action! It’s clear that Yahweh’s future action in making Israel jealous isn’t arbitrary, but a response to Israel’s idolatrous apostasy! You should note the use of the verb for “jealousy” can also connote (“to *boil over* with desire”) – properly, to apply heavy (“*hot*”) pressure to provoke change, especially in an “*up-close-and-personal*” way. Yahweh does describe Himself as a “*jealous*” God and this vocabulary is in a positive sense.

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10:19



The Torah
Affirms
That They
Knew!

***19** But I ask, did not Israel know? First, Moses says: “I will provoke you to jealousy by [those] not a nation; by a nation without understanding, I will anger you.”*

For instance, a husband who is “jealous” in regard to his dear wife, i.e., in loving her with such a deep and abiding love he will not “share” her with any other. Thus, when used of Yahweh, His “jealousy” means that He is their only God, the only One who loves them, and He protectively enjoins them to be exclusively devoted to Him; Yahweh will not share Israel with other god(s), who are false, abusive, and having no salvation!

ROMANS

10:19



The Torah
Affirms
That They
Knew!

***19** But I ask, did not Israel know? First, Moses says: “I will provoke you to jealousy by [those] not a nation; by a nation **without understanding**, I will anger you.”*

“by [those] not a nation;”

This short phrase is quite descriptive and though it is in the singular; in Deut the Hebrew conveys a plural, “those who do not belong to groups professing faith in Yahweh the God of Israel; in other words, *“the nations, Gentiles and all unbelievers!”* All these nations are *“without understanding.”* What all the nations, all Gentiles, and all unbelievers lack is what Israel knows, since Yahweh revealed Himself and His Word to Israel.

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10:19



**The Torah
Affirms
That They
Knew!**

***19* But I ask, did not Israel know? First, Moses says: “I will provoke you to jealousy by [those] not a nation; by a nation without understanding, I will anger you.”**

The Father’s Intended Outcome:

“I will anger you.”

In God’s plan of salvation, the “nations” now encompasses non-Israelite Christians, Gentiles of Christians congregations composed of more than one nationality and not limited to the people of Israel. This resounded throughout Romans (1:16 to 16:4; cf. Eph 2:11 – 3:12). So God making Israel “angry” should not be taken as sinful, as often the case in regard to jealous or envy.

ROMANS

10:19



**The Torah
Affirms
That They
Knew!**

***19* But I ask, did not Israel know? First, Moses says: “I will provoke you to jealousy by [those] not a nation; by a nation without understanding, I will anger you.”**

The Father’s Intended Outcome:

“I will anger you.”

The notion of being understandably or even properly “jealous” “envious” or “angry” of the blessing that someone else has received communicates the contextual meaning quite well and anticipates a point of development that will be seen in 11:11, 14.

ROMANS

10:20-21

Applying
the
Prophets!

²⁰Isaiah then is very bold and says: “I was found by those not seeking Me; I became manifest to those not inquiring after Me.” ²¹However, as for Israel, he says, “All the day, I have stretched out my hands, to a people unpersuaded and contradicting.”

St. Paul concludes Romans 10 by engaging in another rather extraordinary use of yet another OT passage. Paul uses only the first half of each of the first two verses of Isaiah 65. Thus, Paul completes his triumvirate of citations in Rom 10:18-21 by drawing from each section of the Hebrew Bible. Did you notice that he quoted from Psalms (the Writings in v.18), the Torah in v.19, and finally the Prophets in vv.20-21?

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10:20-21



Applying the Prophets!

²⁰Isaiah then is very bold and says: “I was found by those not seeking Me; I became manifest to those not inquiring after Me.” ²¹However, as for Israel, he says, “All the day, I have stretched out my hands, to a people unpersuaded and contradicting.”

Here are three observations:

1. Paul quotes only the first half of each of the first two verses of Isaiah 65;
2. Paul keeps the words and forms, but he does change the word order. Isaiah’s order is “*I was sought...I was found*” in 65:1. (The Hebrew word for “sought” can also mean to be made manifest or visible). Paul switches the order to “*I was found...I became manifest.*” Paul changes the order to emphasize the verb which he places first, “*I was found.*” He does the same in v.21 by placing “*All the day*” first; whereas, Isaiah wrote: “*I have stretched out...all day long.*” Again, Paul does this for emphasis!

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10:20-21



Applying
the
Prophets!

*²⁰Isaiah then is very bold and says: “I was found by those not seeking Me; I became manifest to those not inquiring after Me.” ²¹However, as for Israel, he says, “All the day, I have stretched out my hands, to a people **unpersuaded and contradicting.**”*

3. The Hebrew supports the interpretation that Paul is not merely describing a (passive) stubbornness of obstinacy, but willful disbelief; the rejection of the Word of Christ is active rebellion against God. Rather than confessing, Israel is **“contradicting,”** literally, **“speaking against.”** Rather than believing, Israel is **“unpersuaded,”** which is the exact opposite of belief (cf. St. John 3:36)! This is what grieves Paul, since Israel, his countrymen, has not attained righteousness and salvation. None of this is new in regard to Israel. Isaiah has already spoken in this way; as did Jesus, as we close with our Lord’s words from St. Matthew 23:37:

ROMANS

10:20-21



**Applying
the
Prophets!**

²⁰Isaiah then is very bold and says: “I was found by those not seeking Me; I became manifest to those not inquiring after Me.” ²¹However, as for Israel, he says, “All the day, I have stretched out my hands, to a people unpersuaded and contradicting.”

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”

Next Week!



**God Responds
to Israel!**

*Romans 11:
1-6*



*I'm ready for
your questions!*