

Romans 10:4

Illustration:

Ignorance is the “key word” here in this passage. They misunderstood the scriptures concerning the purpose and function of the law, and as a result of that ignorance, they would die in their sin and suffer the Judgment and wrath of God. Israel rejected Christ because did not understand God’s plan of salvation... They “**thought**” that righteousness was a result of living to God’s law. By adhering to the commandments of God, and the laws of God given by Moses, many of Israel “**thought**” that they were “right with God.” But they weren’t, and the sad part was, they “**didn’t have a clue!**” They had “**no idea**” that they were under the judgment and wrath of God. By their *external* submission to God’s law, they “**believed**” they were living righteous lives before God. (review 10 commandments-external)

Paul declares, they were, ³ ...going about to establish their own righteousness... They were “*going another way*” than the way God has ordained. The law would bring about righteousness...**but not** the way they “**thought**” it would. They “**thought**” by keeping the law, they were made righteous, but as we shall see, it would be by not keeping it that they would attain righteousness.

They “**misunderstood**” the teachings of what scripture taught concerning righteousness. Paul points to that fact in verses 6~8, where he refers to the fact that Moses spoke of the fact that righteousness would not come by man’s works in the law...but by faith. A “**misunderstanding**” that would prove deadly, for Israel was “*dying in their sin*” as a result of their ignorance of the purpose of the law.

The Law, in itself, was not “*a means of righteousness!*” **In itself**, it could never bring about “*Saving Righteousness*” because that was not the “*function*” or “*goal*” of the law! No where is the “*purpose*” of the law made more clear, than in Romans 3:19~20...

(Romans 3:19~20) ¹⁹Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Paul declares the “*sole purpose*” of the law was to stop the mouths of men, and declare all men guilty before God! No flesh shall be justified by the law...for the only thing the law does is reveal sin!

A man who sees himself as “*Innocent*” will never ask for Mercy! Israel did not receive Christ because he offered mercy and forgiveness for sinners... His message was a call for sinners to repent, “*to turn from their sin*” and follow him. That’s why he was so readily accepted by the Gentiles. They knew they were guilty before God. They knew they were sinners. He offered mercy for the condemned, a way of escape for sinners under the wrath of God. Regardless of their past, in spite of their transgressions, all who would “*come to him*,” would be saved from the wrath to come. To the gentiles, the message of Christ was a message of HOPE! As Isaiah proclaimed, *He was a “Light” that shined in the “Darkness.”* He was HOPE in the midst of DESPAIR!

But he was “*Seen*” much differently by Israel... Israel saw him as little more than a “*blasphemer*.” Listen, the reason Israel could not “*See*” that he was the Messiah, was they were “**blinded**” by their “*Self-Righteousness*.” Only **sinners** see a need for Christ. The “*outward righteousness*” produced by their adherence to the Law, had resulted in them believing that they had *lived a life* that was pleasing to God.

True, outwardly they were a picture of integrity, the example of holiness... **But that was not true inwardly, in the heart!** Outwardly, there was a “*Vast difference*” between the Jews and the Gentiles. But

inwardly, in the heart, there was “*No difference.*” Rather than help Israel, the Law had actually hindered them, by “*masking*” the problem. As Jesus said, “*they you cleaned up the outside of the cup and platter, but the inside is dirty.*” The Gentiles were very aware of their sin, they fully understood they were guilty before God, condemned. But that’s why they were so receptive to Christ, they saw their need!

Until Israel “Saw” their sinfulness...they would **never** “See” their need of a Savior.

They were “***blind***” to their sin...thus they were “***blind***” to Christ... And this is what broke Paul’s heart. They “*Thought*” they were OK with God by the “*clean living*” which resulted by their adherence to the law. But they weren’t! It was only outwardly! Inwardly, they were no differently than the Gentiles.

When Jesus came on the scene, the first thing he did was to “*use the law*” to expose their sin. In what’s known as the “*sermon on the mount,*” Jesus explained the true meaning of the law, in that it was speaking not to just outward actions, but to the desires of the heart.

(Matthew 5) ¹⁷*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.* ¹⁸*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* ¹⁹*Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

²⁰*For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

At first hearing, this was a “*devastating*” declaration! If these guys, who attended daily to the things of God and the law of God, and served in the house of God...if you had to be better than them to make it in, it seemed hopeless! But as you read on, you find that its not so hopeless, for their righteousness is not righteousness at all!

²¹**Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time**, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: ²²*But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

The Law may restrain you from killing someone...but there is still murder in the heart...

²⁷**Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time**, Thou shalt not commit adultery: ²⁸*But I say unto you, whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

The Law may restrain you from committing physical adultery...but there is still “*adultery*” in the heart.

He continues on there, but his point is clear... The “*Righteousness of the Pharisees*” was not righteousness at all! It was self-righteousness, or “FLESH righteousness” produced by an external adherence to the law.

His whole point was, that they were no closer than the publicans listening. The point here is, that the righteousness that “*exceeds*” the righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes, is that of the heart yielded to Christ, not the law! Throughout the rest of the sermon, he exposes the hypocrisy of the Pharisees righteousness in the law and calls for his listeners to come to himself!

In “*Itself*,” the Law was not “*a means of righteousness!*” **In itself**, it could never bring about “*Saving Righteousness*” because that was not the “*function*” or “*goal*” of the law! The “*end result*” would be righteousness...just not in the law, but rather in Christ.

(Vs 4) ⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

The Greek word translated “end” is *telos*. It carries two meanings; one is “*goal*,” referring to the “*intended result*.” *Telos* also carries the meaning of “*termination*,” referring to the *end of something*. Both are true in this statement, Christ is both the “*goal*” of the law, and the “*termination*” of the law.

⁴For Christ is the “*goal*” of the law for righteousness...

The “*aim*” of the Law, the “*goal*” of the law, was to “*make men righteousness*” by pointing people away from itself...and pointing them to Christ!

Q: This passage answers the question of...

How did the law achieve the goal of “*pointing people away from itself, and point to Christ?*”

By condemning the offender... By declaring the “*transgressor*” guilty before God!

Then calling for men to “*Repent*” and turn to God for salvation!

⁴For Christ is the goal of the law...in that **IT was given to lead men to Christ!**

The law was given to reveal that our hearts were not right...and then point us to Christ!

⁴Christ is the goal of the law...in that **IT was given to lead men to Christ!**

⁴Christ is the end of the law ...in that, once that's accomplished, **IT'S no longer needed!**

Christ “*terminates*” the law in the life of a believer. The law is rendered *inactive*; it is no longer operative in our life... We who have come to Christ, have left the law. For by bringing us to Christ, it has attained its goal!

By “*shedding light*” on the sinfulness of our hearts, there’s nothing more it can do. By declaring a man a *transgressor of God*, the law has served its purpose! Once the law has revealed to us that we are sinners, separated from God, Christ calls for us to “*repent*” and return to God! The which, if a man does not do, will result in the judgment and wrath of God on his life!

(Romans 1:18) ¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

To be made aware that you are in rebellion to God, by yielding your heart to this world, living for self, is to “*hold the truth in unrighteousness!*” It is to “**Know**” the claims of scripture, that Jesus died to make save, and to not repent, thus rejecting “*God’s offer*,” will seal your fate!

Listen, I don’t want you to be “*ignorant*” as was the case with Israel...

That man’s FATE lies in his own hands...He has but one of two choices...

- Repent of his rebellion against God in his heart...by yielding his life to Christ!
- Or DIE in his sin...
- To live your life by the “*Moral Laws*” of God **is not enough!**
- The “*External*” obedience to God’s law **will not help you** in the least!
- Hear me... That kind of righteousness **will NOT SAVE a man!**

Israel “*thought*” it would...they “*thought*” they were righteous...but they “thought” WRONG!

- True...outwardly they appeared right with God by their submission to God’s laws...

- But inwardly...their heart was far from God!

Like many, in our churches today...they attended church; they never did anything “evil.” They tried to do what’s right. They would never kill anybody, they’d never steal from anyone, and they’d never cheat on their spouse... **But even so, that kind of righteousness will not save a man!**

Because like Israel, a man can live outwardly clean...*yet his heart be far from God!* And brethren, it is the heart of a man that God is concerned with!

When he says that...⁴*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes..*

In NO WAY is he saying that obedience to God no longer matters! God forbid. What he’s saying is that obedience to the Law **is not obedience at ALL!** Paul looks to Israel and proclaims that the “*outward righteousness*” produced by their submission to the holy law of God, **is not enough!** It cannot and will not save a man! The problem is within! Even though outwardly they appear godly, inside they reveal hearts that are far from God. They continue to live for themselves, God is not on the throne! Thus they are living in rebellion against God, they have rejected the Lordship of God, their creator to live their lives to themselves. And this grieved Paul, because he realized, that unless they repented of their sin (**which in Israel’s case was not physical adultery, theft, murder, etc...**) Those are simply the “apples” on the tree. The people Paul was referring to here, did not bear such fruit.

Its like a dog and a trash can... It is the nature of dogs to get into the trash. Dog’s are naturally scavengers, they seek out food. The only way to really ensure that a dog doesn’t get into trash is to chain him up! Does that make him a “*good dog?*”

Much the same way, like a chain, the law restrains a man from committing sins of adultery, stealing, etc... But the point here is, that doesn’t make him right with God! The “*Righteousness of God,*” the thing that makes a man “*Right with God,*” **is that of a surrendered Heart** to Jesus Christ as Lord of their life! The call of the gospel is for all men to “*humble themselves*” before God, (*to take SELF off the throne*), and submit yourself to God, (by placing Jesus Christ on the throne of your heart). That’s reconciliation with God, made possible not by the law, but by the grace of God. God offers forgiveness to sinners who will repent from their sin, and come to him!