

Romans 1:18-25

Is Salvation Only Available for those who Profess Faith in Yeshua?

by J.K. McKee o8 July, 2008 www.tnnonline.net

ROMANS 1:18-25 – RSV

[18] For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. [19] For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. [20] Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; [21] for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. [22] Claiming to be wise, they became fools, [23] and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. [24] Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, [25] because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.

ROMANS 1:18-25 – GREEK

[18] *Apokaluptetai gar orgē Theou ap' ouranou epi pasan asebeian kai adikian anthrōpōn tōn tēn alētheian en adikia katechontōn, [19] dioti to gnōston tou Theou phaneron estin en autois ho Theos gar autois ephanerōsen. [20] ta gar aorata autou apo ktiseōs kosmou tois poiēmasin nooumena kathoratai, hē te aidios autou dunamis kai theiotēs, eis to einai autous anapologētous, [21] dioti gnontes ton Theon ouch hōs Theon edoxasan ē eucharistēsan, all' emataiōthēsan en tois dialogismois autōn kai eskotisthē ē asunetos autōn kardia. [22] phaskontes einai sophoi emōranthēsan [23] kai ēllaxan tēn doxan tou aphthartou Theou en homoiōmati eikonos phtharou anthrōpou kai peteinōn kai tetrapodōn kai herpetōn. [24] Dio paredōken autous ho Theos en tais epithumiais tōn kardiōn autōn eis akatharsian tou atimazesthai ta sōmata autōn en autois [25] hoitines metēllaxan tēn alētheian tou Theou en tō pseudei kai esebasthēsan kai elatreusan tē ktisei para ton ktisanta, hos estin eulogētos eis tous aiōnas, amēn.*

[18] Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσεβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, [19] διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφανέρωσεν. [20] τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθοράται, ἢ τε αἰδίου αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους, [21] διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠυχάρισθησαν, ἀλλ' ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά. [22] φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν [23] καὶ ἥλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνοσ φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἔρπετων. [24] Διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς. [25] οἵτινες μετέλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, ὅς ἐστιν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

Most Believers, be they Christian or Messianic, widely make the assertion that in order to be redeemed one must profess an open faith in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ), but questions inevitably arise when one considers the destiny of those who have not heard the gospel. While we often divide the world into two camps: the saved and unsaved, is this a completely valid way at looking at things? What about people who do not hear the gospel not because they reject it or refuse to listen to the message—but because they do not have the message proclaimed to them? Might there be a “gray zone” between those who know the good news, those who reject the good

news, and those who do not know about the God of Scripture? My thesis is that while *the vast majority* of human beings fall under the category of being redeemed or unredeemed as a direct result of receiving or rejecting Yeshua the Messiah, there might be a *few* who may find redemption via God's natural revelation. Using Romans 1:18-25 as my guide, I will demonstrate:

1. The wrath of God dispensed upon sinners is a universal condition from which all humanity suffers.
2. All of humanity has subjected itself to idolatry.
3. All people must seek after the true Creator.

**The wrath of God dispensed upon sinners
is a universal condition from which all humanity suffers:**

The essence of Paul's opening argument to the Romans is that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness" (1:18). *Apokaluptetai* (Ἀποκαλύπτεται) appears in the present tense, and is better rendered as "is being revealed" (NIV), indicating a present ongoing action in God's judgment against sin. This same verb form is used earlier in v. 17 to note the revealing of God's righteousness via the gospel.¹ C.E.B. Cranfield notes the interconnection that God's righteousness and wrath have together, indicating "the most natural way of taking v. 18 is to understand Paul to mean that ὀργή θεοῦ [*orgē Theou*] also is being revealed *in the gospel*, that is, in the on-going proclamation of the gospel."² This would mean that as the good news is proclaimed and heard, God's message of punishment is somehow also proclaimed. Douglas J. Moo adds that "this same verb in v. 17 has a 'historical' sense."³ He prefers to see the revelation of God's wrath as the "judgment of the world that the present infliction of God's wrath is intended to reveal." This not an eschatological wrath, but rather "the present...sentence of condemnation under which all people outside Christ stand."⁴

This wrath of God is not something that your average human alone is subjected to, but also those "who by their wickedness suppress the truth" (1:18b). What Paul specifically means set against a Roman audience that he is preparing to visit is certainly a matter of worthy speculation.⁵ James D.G. Dunn says that "in a Jewish or Jewish-influenced context [this] would carry the connotation of God's reliability and trustworthiness."⁶ Here, we could conclude that while the human condition—be it Jewish or not—is sinful (hence Paul's usage of *pasan asebeian* [πᾶσαν ἄσέβειαν] or "all ungodliness"), there is a sector who actively "suppress" the truth of the One God. The verb *katechō* (κατέχω) gives us a range of possibilities to consider, including "to hold back with design" (BDAG).⁷ While all of humanity is subject to a sinful condition, there are those who purposefully and deliberately keep others from hearing the truth. But is this everyone who suppresses the truth because of their sinfulness, or only a certain sector of people who suppress the truth? Consider that in a Roman context, this could be applied in understanding that the Roman leaders and politicians greatly frowned on Romans hearing about the "Jewish God." But even while anti-Semitic attitudes were common in Rome, God who is larger than these things can still declare who He is. It was via the "Jewish God" that Gentile Romans could hear about His Messiah, Yeshua, and thus be fully reconciled to Him.

In spite of those who suppress or attempt to hold back the truth of the One God, Paul testifies "what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them"

¹ "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed [*apokaluptetai*] through faith for faith; as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live' [Habakkuk 2:4]" (Romans 1:17).

² C.E.B. Cranfield, *International Critical Commentary: Romans 1-8* (London: T&T Clark, 1975), pp 109-110.

³ Douglas J. Moo, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 101.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Consult the editor's entry on the Epistle to the Romans in *A Survey of the Apostolic Scriptures for the Practical Messianic* for a summary of what necessitated Paul's composition of this letter.

⁶ James D.G. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans*, Vol. 38a. (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 56.

⁷ Frederick William Danker, ed., et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, third edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 533.

(1:19). Here, it is probably best for us to understand *autois* (αὐτοῖς), “them,” as relating to all humans—even if there are people who suppress the truth from them. Moo notes that here Paul “is interested in the knowledge of God available to all people through the nature of the world itself.”⁸ In spite of civic leaders or other religious teachers wanting to hold back knowledge of the true God, HaShem (YHWH) in His almighty power still proclaims who He is in what He has created. Thoughts that Paul may be considering as he is composing this might be seen in Psalm 97:5-6: “The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth. The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory.” Here we see the Psalmist assert that God’s presence will melt mountains (presumably in judgment of sin) and that the heavens or sky (Heb. *ha'shamayim*, שָׁמַיִם) declare His glory. Somehow HaShem has declared His nature and eternal power to all the world in spite of those wishing to disregard Him.

Paul substantiates his assertion that God has declared Himself via His Creation in v. 20: “Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.” Cranfield remarks, “The point made is that the self-revelation of God here referred to has been continuous ever since the creation.”⁹ Somehow, God is able to communicate to the remnants of humanity—who do not know of HaShem or the Scriptures of Israel—and hold them accountable. It is probably significant that the verb *noeō* (νοέω) is used to describe “perceived” (RSV) or “understood” (NASU, NIV) in this verse, as it can specifically mean “to direct one’s mind to” (*TDNT*).¹⁰ Is it possible that Paul is not just talking about God declaring His existence through His Creation—but that people should be able to focus their thoughts on the Creator and contemplate who made the Creation and why?

It is easy for us who are Believers today to know that the answer to this dilemma is placing our faith and trust in Yeshua the Messiah. We sit 2,000 years on the other side of the life and ministry of Yeshua, and know that only He can accomplish the redemption that all people so desperately need. However, if God has proclaimed who He is to the world through the revelation of His Creation—can they somehow acknowledge Him and not acknowledge other foreign gods? Everett F. Harrison only says, “Natural revelation is sufficient to make man responsible, but is not by itself sufficient to accomplish his salvation.”¹¹ While nature surely cannot accomplish God’s salvation, can it communicate enough of the basic message to humans at large in order for them to be redeemed? This surely becomes a major debate when we consider that those who have not heard of Yeshua or Jesus are still going to be accountable before Him.

All of humanity has subjected itself to idolatry in one way or another.

All human beings are “without excuse” (1:20) before the God of Creation via His natural revelation. This may leave some interpreters with some room to maneuver concerning those who seek after the One God of Creation without hearing the gospel. This space, however, is very small given Paul’s following comments in v. 21: “although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened.” Paul says that humanity has widely rejected God by failing to acknowledge the One God as being God. The verb *doxazō* (δοξάζω) is rendered in the NIV as “they neither glorified him.” Cranfield points out, “Having experience of God’s self-manifestation, they ought to have glorified Him as God and given Him thanks; but they did not do so.”¹² In this case, are we forced to consider that they “knew” God in the sense of knowing about Him? Moo remarks, “The

⁸ Moo, 104.

⁹ Cranfield, 114.

¹⁰ E. Würthwein, “*noeō*,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abrid. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 636.

¹¹ Everett F. Harrison, “Romans,” in Frank E. Gaebelin, ed. et. al., *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 10:23.

¹² Cranfield, 117.

outward manifestation of God in his created works was met with a real, though severely limited, knowledge of him among those who observed.”¹³

Indeed, while Paul has expressed a view that all humans know of the One God and are accountable before Him, because most have failed to acknowledge Him they have instead fallen into sinful activities. Dunn observes, “in Hebrew thought there was a strong sense of knowledge as an acknowledging, a motivational recognition which expressed itself in the appropriate worship and obedience.”¹⁴ From Paul’s perspective, once one has failed to acknowledge HaShem as the true God, sin and ungodliness are inevitable. These sinful activities began with those rejecting God becoming “futile in their speculations” (NASU). The term *dialogismos* (διαλογισμός) can mean either “the process of reasoning” or “content of reasoning or conclusion reached through use of reason” (BDAG).¹⁵ Are we justified to speculate that Paul is making a direct criticism against pagan philosophy? Or, is he simply referring to humans’ innate urge to self-justify themselves in light of their sin? The aorist *eskotisthē* (ἐσκοτίσθη), “darkened,” seems to suggest that this is a past state that all humans suffer from, likely emanating from the Fall—something that the philosophers of Greece and Rome would have certainly criticized and denied.

The thoughts of Paul in this regard are expressed well in vs. 22-23: “Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.” Aside from Paul’s obvious Jewish bias of these things being in violation of the Second Commandment (Exodus 20:4; Deuteronomy 5:8), he describes another aorist action with *emōranthēsan* (ἐμωράνθησαν) used for “became.” Cranfield notes, “The idea that Paul is here alluding to the philosophers in particular is rightly rejected...since idolatry did not originate with them. The reference is more general and fundamental.”¹⁶ While previously there may have been passing thoughts to the philosophers as Paul is writing the Romans, here his thoughts are best considered pertaining to the whole scope of fallen humanity. Psalm 97:7 should probably be in view: “All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him.”

Paul describes a variety of idolatrous practices that not just the Greeks or Romans, but every culture in human history—including Israel with the incident of the golden calf (Exodus 24)—has fallen prey to. Moo indicates, “Paul wishes his readers to see how foolish it is to substitute for direct contact with God’s awesome presence the indirect, shadowy relationship found in idolatry.”¹⁷ In this construct, while all of humanity has been shown the natural revelation of the One God in His Creation (1:19-20), the vast, vast majority of humanity rejects Him by participating in some kind of idolatry. Those who know Him most expressly include those who recognize Him and serve Him via the transformative power of the gospel, perhaps only with an extremely limited handful of exceptions.

All people must seek after the true Creator.

Is there a solution for those who have been turned over to idolatry? Having just described that God has revealed Himself to all humanity (1:19-20) and that all people have succumbed to idolatry by worshipping graven images (1:23), Paul describes base sins that concern the human body itself. He tells the Romans, “Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves” (1:24). It is important that we take note of the preposition *dio* (διό), reading in most translations as “therefore” (RSV, NASU, NIV, ESV, et. al.) or “wherefore” (KJV)—introducing the result of such sin. As Cranfield concludes, “διό, indicates that what is related in this verse was God’s response to the perverseness of men.”¹⁸

¹³ Moo, 107.

¹⁴ Dunn, 59.

¹⁵ BDAG, 232.

¹⁶ Cranfield, 119.

¹⁷ Moo, 109.

¹⁸ Cranfield, 120.

This would seem to suggest that in response to their rejection of Him, God “has given them up to the vileness of their own desires, and the consequent denigration of their bodies” (NEB).

This statement itself is extremely difficult to comprehend, as a God who does not tempt humans (James 1:13) is *possibly* said to be responsible for turning them over to sin. Are we to interpret this phrase on its own, or synthesize it with other Scriptures? Moo suggests that we counterbalance this with Ephesians 4:19, where Paul says the nations “have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness.” He concludes that the sin that God hands these rebels over to is like Him not just letting a boat go downstream, but pushing the boat downstream. In this way “the depths of sin in which the idolater is plunged are designed to awaken the sinner to the awful seriousness of his or her situation.”¹⁹ Of particular importance is Paul’s usage of *akatharsia* (ἀκαθαρσία) for “impurity,” which can specifically relate to “vileness esp. of sexual sins” (BDAG).²⁰ Paul has not specified in v. 24 whether this is heterosexual or homosexual activity that God has turned sinners over toward, so at this point it is likely a reference to both. Paul would tell the Corinthians of those who fall into sexual sins, “I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Yeshua” (1 Corinthians 5:5, NASU). Is such an idea also present in Romans? Recall that Paul is only listing these sinful activities because he is concerned about the power of the gospel (1:16) and the gross things that the Messiah offers redemption from.

Falling prey to idolatry and sexual sin are the two main consequences of rejecting the final power and authority of the One God. Paul says that this happens “because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever!” (1:25). Both the verbs *metēllaxan* (μετήλλαξαν) for “exchanged,” and *esebathēsan* (ἔσεβάσθησαν) for “worshipped” appear in the aorist tense, indicating some kind of action that has already occurred in humanity’s past. All are effectively guilty in placing themselves in the service of the Adversary rather than the One God. But Paul’s objective here is not to condemn his Roman audience, or all of humanity to an eternity distanced from God. On the contrary, the fact that Paul is able to assert that God is *hos estin eulogētos eis tous aiōnas* (ὅς ἐστιν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας), “who is blessed forever,” is quite significant indeed—as *estin* indicates a present action of God’s being blessed. Dunn notes, “Paul uses the blessing as a way of distancing himself from worship which does not recognize that all blessing and blessedness lies in God alone and from any life not lived in dependence on that blessing before all else.”²¹ Paul’s declaration that only God is the way to be blessed—and not the creature—is affirmed by his usage of *amēn* (ἀμήν), a common Jewish term derived from the Hebrew *amein* (אָמֵן), the root of which means “verily, truly” (BDB).²² The God from which redemption can be accomplished is One who is trustworthy and faithful—contrasted against idols representing human beings or animals (1:23).

Romans 1:18-25—Synthesis

In this short passage we see the firm reality that the Almighty God will dispense His wrath upon those who are wicked and who suppress the truth of who He is (1:18a). On the one hand, this certainly means that all human beings are subject to God’s punishment. Yet on the other there may be a sector of people who withhold the truth of the One God from the world, instead forcing their own religion upon them (1:18b). In spite of this taking place, the One God reveals Himself to the world via His natural revelation in what He has made—demonstrating His power and supremacy in His Creation (1:19-20). This means that all human beings, regardless of their race and/or religion, will be held accountable before HaShem, being “without excuse” (1:20). Those who reject the One God via His natural revelation are those who turn themselves over to futile thoughts or reasonings (1:22), falling prey to idolatrous worship (1:23), and possibly also to

¹⁹ Moo, 111.

²⁰ BDAG, 34.

²¹ Dunn, 64.

²² Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 56.

sexual immorality (1:24). The consequence of these actions is serving the great adversary, Satan (1:25a)—rather than the Supreme God who made the universe, the One who is blessed and faithful (1:25b).

With these things to consider, it is quite clear that the widescale bulk of humanity—Jewish or not—is going to be held accountable before God as to whether or not they have fallen into the idolatry and sexual immorality listed by Paul. These are two definite identifiers that indicate people have placed themselves outside of the authority of the One God. Yeshua the Messiah offers redemption from these sins, and the transforming nature of the gospel is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (1:16). Faith in the Messiah will definitely rectify the problem of those who have succumbed to these temptations.

But what about those who do not receive Yeshua or Jesus because they do not know about Him? Is it possible that via God’s natural revelation that there are some—instinctively knowing that idolatry and sexual immorality are wrong—who can be redeemed without a direct knowledge of the Messiah? Certainly in the First Century, there were many Jews in both Judea and the Diaspora who were faithful to HaShem who did not know that the Messiah had come, and will still be in the Kingdom. However, today there are remote parts of the world where the gospel has yet to be proclaimed. Could a member of a tribe in a distant Amazonian rainforest commune with the One God—without the direct intervention of Yeshua—because He is demonstrated in His Creation? Does Romans 1:18-25 allow for such a possibility, however unlikely it may be? Based on what Paul has said, this must be determined by two things: (1) a life that definitely has overcome the sins of idolatry and sexual immorality, (2) what God Himself knows about the heart condition of such a person. One of these factors can be determined by an outsider looking in, but the more critical of these two factors can only be known by an Almighty Creator.

As Believers in Yeshua, we admittedly have difficulty conceding that there may be people “saved” after His resurrection who may have never heard of Him. We do not like unknowns and we would prefer things to be more “black and white” on this issue. However, does everyone who professes faith in Yeshua and claims to be His follower truly know Him? If we can concede that only God knows the ultimate destiny of certain people to whom He may have revealed Himself via His Creation—perhaps we also have to concede that only God knows the ultimate destiny of those who claim to know Him via His Son. This should cause us as individuals to turn to Him with all of our hearts and make sure that we demonstrate His saving power in a life transformed by the Holy Spirit. It should motivate us to make sure that *we truly know Him*, and redouble our efforts to see the salvation of the lost.

Romans 1:18-25 and the Salvation of the Jewish People

How does Romans 1:18-25 affect today’s Messianic community, and specifically how it approaches the subject of the salvation of the Jewish people? It is certainly well known in sectors of Messianic Judaism that when the subject of one’s Jewish relatives, who do not claim faith in Yeshua, arises, that most do not know what to do. Are these people condemned as unrighteous sinners, even though they were born Jewish? Was not Israel chosen as God’s special nation?

Romans 1:18-25 offers the very, very small possibility that a very, very small number of people *may be saved* without ever hearing about Yeshua or Jesus, when the only thing people have to consider who the God of Creation is—is in fact His Creation. Yet, this excludes those persons who have heard the basics of the gospel, that Yeshua the Messiah was crucified for the sins of humanity and was resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:3-4), and being aware that they have a responsibility to respond to this message in some way. Most Jews—and indeed most in the West for sure—know about Yeshua in some kind of historical sense, and know of His selfless sacrifice. Some believe that Jews can be saved without having to follow after the Christian “Jesus,” but when the essentials of the good news of redemption are adequately declared “in accordance with the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:4), there can be no question that any person *whomever he or she*

is remains accountable. In spite of a great many Christian flaws over the centuries, the basic gospel has still been able to be grasped by the masses.

Later in his Epistle to the Romans, Paul warns the non-Jewish Believers in his audience not to be arrogant against the Jewish people. He says, “if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the richness of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you” (11:17-18), meaning that the nourishment of their faith comes from Israel. He specifically says that God allowed some Jewish people to be broken off of the root of Israel because of their unbelief (11:20), so that room could be made for wild olive branches of the nations. His specific warning is: “For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you” (11:21). If God allows for some of His own chosen people to be broken off, the consequences that the wild branches will suffer should they be broken off will doubtless be more severe.

One’s belief or unbelief in Yeshua the Messiah is what qualifies an individual to be considered a true part of Israel (cf. Galatians 6:16; Ephesians 2:11-12), per Paul’s sober word “For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel” (9:6, NRSV).²³ Simply because a person is born Jewish does not automatically make him or her a part of Israel: “it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants” (9:8). The requirement that Paul gives to his non-Jewish audience in Rome is, “through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous” (11:11). Only by demonstrating fulfilled lives of faith, knowing the Jewish Messiah Yeshua and performing the mission Ancient Israel was given to be a light to the world (Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 42:6), can those of the nations truly provoke the Jewish people to jealousy to desire the redemption they possess. These are plain mandates first given in the Torah. Unfortunately for much of Christian history, non-Jewish Believers have not done this very well. *Repentance for a failure to fulfill what Paul originally intended needs to be accomplished by non-Jewish Believers*, especially in today’s Messianic movement.

In spite of some historical abuses, though, enough has been declared about Yeshua of Nazareth that people somehow acknowledging the God of Israel, both Jews and Christians alike, are accountable before Him. The advent of today’s Messianic movement indicates that it is time for us to see more Jewish people come to faith in Yeshua, and non-Jewish Believers claim their faith heritage in Israel. It is time for us to put the past behind us, and look ahead toward the future. Within the faith heritage of Israel, is knowing that to Israel “belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises” (9:4, NASU). Corporately to Israel belongs the process of *hē huiiothesia* (ἡ υἰοθεσία) or “the adoption” (cf. Ephesians 1:5), meaning that Israel is the vehicle whereby God’s salvation is to be accomplished. The word originally given to Abraham was, “in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:3, NASU), something that God’s people are surely to accomplish today (cf. Galatians 3:8).

One has to be adopted into Israel to be redeemed, whether one is a natural born Jew or one of the nations. While God alone is the only One who ultimately knows the heart condition of a person, any Jew wishing redemption still has to be adopted into God’s family by recognizing Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah. When the basic message of the gospel is known by a Jewish person, that person is just as accountable as a non-Jewish person who has heard it—save a Damascus Road experience like Paul himself had where the Lord Himself appears to a person (Acts 9:1-18), which seldom happens. Knowing these things should once again cause us to redouble our efforts to see the salvation of the lost, particularly our Jewish brethren who have not adequately been provoked to jealousy!

²³ Grk. *ou gar pantes hoi ex Israēl houtoi Israēl* (οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ), “for not all who are of Israel are these Israel” (YLT).

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