

“Christ, The End Of The Law ...”

“For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone that believeth ...” (Rom. 10:4). This passage is sometimes misunderstood and thus misapplied to teach something it was not discussing. Some use the passage to show that Christ removed the law, a truth taught in the scriptures, but not the intent of the Roman writer in this place. This passage states that Christ is the *“end of the law ... to the believer.”* It should be evident that Christ removed the law not only for the believer but the unbeliever as well. It is not of this conclusion of the law of which Paul writes here. True, the word *“end”* ordinarily means the conclusion or termination of a matter. It also may mean an aim or goal to be reached. That is its meaning in this passage.

“Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness.” This section begins with Paul’s expression of deep desire for the salvation of Israel. *“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God is for them that they might be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own (i.e., righteousness, jm), they did not subject themselves unto the righteousness of God”* (Rom. 10:1-3). Paul’s words are directly connected with the closing verses in chapter nine. There Paul raised the question why Gentiles, who had not followed after righteousness, attained it; yet Israel, who had followed after a law of righteousness did not obtain unto it (9:30-32). Paul answered that question by showing that Israel sought not God’s righteousness by faith but by works.

Israel had stumbled at Christ. Yet, Christ was the end of the law unto righteousness to the believer! That is, had they accepted rather than rejected Christ, they would have attained the righteousness they were seeking to acquire through the law. Paul personally knew the folly of such efforts. He wrote the Philippians that, as touching the righteousness which was of the law, he was *“found blameless”* (Phil. 3:6). Yet his soul longed for something more. He acknowledged he was the *“chief of sinners”* which led him to count as but refuse all things which might have been gain to him. He did this willingly that he might *“gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith ...”* (Phil. 3:8b-9). It was this righteousness which is spoken of which is *“through faith”* that is the theme of the Roman letter and of which he has repeatedly written about (Rom. 1:16f; 3:21; 4:9; 9:30f).

And so, once again, Paul explains the difference between the "*righteousness which is of the law*" and the "*righteousness which is from God by faith ...*" "*For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby*" (Rom. 10:5). Seeking righteousness through such means resulted in that it was not attained by any for such required perfect law keeping and neither Jew nor Gentile had done this, thus they were sinners for "*sin is the transgression of the law*" (1 John 3:4). All have sinned (Rom. 3:23). The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). No man has ever attained righteousness in this means. This explains Israel's lost state because it was precisely through such means she sought righteousness. She failed. Yet Gentiles found it! They found it because they sought it and found it in a different way than Israel. They attained "*the righteousness which is of faith*" through faith (Rom. 10:6)! NEXT: "The righteousness Which Is Of Faith."

Jim McDonald