***Moses Preserved the Law
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Today, we turn to Romans 10:5-8, and our subject is "The Availability of the Gospel."

**Hanukkah**

The Christmas season is a time which especially reveals the problem that Paul has been dealing with here in the ninth chapter of Romans, and now in this tenth chapter; namely, the problem of the Jewish people and their relationship to Jesus Christ. The Christmas season focuses on the birth of Christ, and the salvation of mankind through Him – this Person, Whom the Jews vigorously reject, and Whom the Jews label as a fraud. The Jewish people today try to take the pressure off themselves, and their children, that inevitably arises at the Christmas season, when everyone is turning in adoration and worship to the Christ Whom they hold in contempt and rejection. They try to take the pressure off by substituting their own celebration called Hanukkah.

The celebration of Hanukkah begins on December 25th, and it lasts for eight days. And I have heard the Jews say, "Our celebration is better than yours because we give a gift every day during the eight-day celebration of the Hanukkah. Whereas you Christians only give gifts one day, on December 25th." Well, of course, the Jews are richer than we are. We poor Christians can't afford eight days of gift-giving. Most of us shouldn't even give one gift. But be that as it may, this is their attempt to sort of take the pressure off, such that they have something too at Christmastime.

I remember when I was a teenager, my folks took me down to a place called Maxwell Street in Chicago. It was a long street of Jewish establishments, and you could buy all kinds of wonderful things. But you didn't go in and say, "What's this price all?" And, oh, that's it. It was like in some countries of the world where you were expected to barter. And you walked in, and you got a price, and you knew that that wasn't the price. And you counter-offered, and you got a counter-offer, and you gave a counter-offer, and you went back and forth. I remember they were buying an overcoat for me. And we gave a counteroffer to how much we'd paid for this splendid overcoat. And the Jewish proprietor said, "Well, I'll come down $10. What's the difference? It's Christmastime." He was appealing to our Christian appreciation of the season.

Well, it's a problem for the Jews – this celebrating of the birth of the Christ child, Whom they hold in utter contempt. So, they came up with this celebration of Hanukkah, which commemorates the victory of the Maccabee brothers over the Syrians who had taken over the Jews. And for a brief period of time, the Jews broke out to independence from Syrian control. And the Hanukkah celebration commemorates this victory, and the re-dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, which had been defiled by the Syrians, by the offering of a pig upon the altar of sacrifice.

So, they had a cleansing ceremony, and a re-dedication ceremony in 164 B.C. And there was the tradition, the story arose, that a cruse of the sacred oil had been preserved – a very small amount. And yet, when they lit it, at the beginning of this festival of re-dedication, it burned for eight solid days, which was impossible, and nothing short of a miraculous event. And this started the eight days of Hanukkah, beginning on December 25th, celebrating this re-dedication of the temple.

**The Feast of Lights**

This is also called, therefore, the Feast of Lights because of the small cruse of oil burning for eight days. And the Jews go through the ceremony of lighting a candle each day during the Hanukkah celebration.

This feast actually was observed in the time that Jesus was here. And in John 8:22, this is the feast that's referred to. It's called the Feast of Dedication, because it refers to this dedication of the temple. It was not a biblical feast, but it was one that the Jews had incorporated.

So, even before the arrival of Christ, Satan was in the wings, trying to substitute something to take the pressure off the Jews, so that they would not accept their appointed Messiah Savior. The poor Jews are still looking for *the* Christ, the Anointed One, to come down from heaven to save them, while Christians rejoice that He has already come as God's unspeakable gift of grace to them.

All discussions with the Jews about the celebration of Christmas in American society readily reveals their zeal for God, and their misdirected seeking of a righteousness that God will not accept – the ignorance of God's truth. As you discuss the Christmas season, they are zealous for God. It is not that they are rejecting God. It is that they are rejecting the God-Man, Jesus Christ, Who is the provision for their salvation.

**The Jews**

Well, the apostle Paul has pointed out that the Jews simply do not understand that God's righteousness is absolute righteousness. Human beings can only produce a relative righteousness: one person better, when compared to the next. Therefore, it's not a matter of degree, but it's a matter of kind. And the Jews still make that mistake today. They think that it's a matter of degree. If they can keep moving ahead, they will eventually arrive at the kind of righteousness that God has, and therefore, they will be qualified for heaven. But the apostle Paul says that no one can ever be good enough, by his own efforts, to go to heaven. But the Jews keep trying, and they all end up in the lake of fire.

For those who trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, however, He is the termination for any demand that one should earn salvation by morality and good works. And that's what we're talking about – people trying to earn eternal life through morality, and through good works or religious rituals.

**Religion**

Well, as we learned last time, Paul says, "When you turn to Jesus Christ, you can turn your back upon all that human doing effort, because it's all pointless. It never was of any value. You can forget it. Seeking righteousness by human works is religion. That's what Satan produces. However, receiving righteousness by trusting in Jesus Christ is an eternal relationship with God.

**Paul Refers to Moses**

So, we come today to Romans 10:5 where the apostle Paul speaks about the righteousness of the Law, and he refers to a statement which Moses made. He's talking to Jews. The Jews respect the writings of Moses (the first five books of the Bible – that which we refer to as the Pentateuch, the five books). Therefore, Paul says, "Now what I am telling you was the same thing that Moses told you. I'm not coming up with something new." So, he proceeds in verse 5 to quote Moses: "For Moses described the righteousness which is of the Law."

He begins with the word "for." That's the Greek word "gar." "Gar" indicates that an explanation is being introduced concerning the principle that he has put forth in verse 4 – that when you turn to Christ, you can forget human doing. He has put an end to all works system salvation. And he says that he is quoting Moses. Of course, they would all know who Moses was immediately. Moses was that great leader that brought them out of Egypt, and he was the one to whom God gave the whole Law system. The word "describes" is actually the Greek word "grapho." "Grapho" means "to write."

So, what he really is saying is that Moses writes something, and he's referring to that which is constantly available to us in the Pentateuch. This had actually been done by Moses himself. This is a statement of fact here. Specifically, he is referring to Leviticus 18:5. Let me just read that for us: "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My ordinances, which, if a man do, he shall live in them. I am the Lord." That is a very interesting statement: "You will keep My moral principles. You will keep My laws: My statutes; and, My ordinances, which if anybody does, he'll go to heaven. If he does these, he'll live. He will have eternal life."

Paul goes back to quote Moses in reference to his proof here in Leviticus 18:5. Moses writes that: "The man who does these things shall live by them." The word "man" is the Greek word "anthropos." "Anthropos" is that generic word which refers to males and females – not just to male persons. It's translated as "man," but it means both. So, he says, "Any human being." He has a statement here for men and women: "Who does." And the word "does" is the word "poieo," which means "to practice something." This is a thing that you do as a way of life. And this is in the aorist tense: at any point in time. It is active voice – when a person himself does this. It's participle mood. A spiritual principle is being enunciated.

**God's Absolute Righteousness**

"If at any point in time a human being practices (he actually does a) righteousness (‘dikaiosune’).” "Dikaiosune" here refers to that quality of character which satisfies the justice of God. Therefore, we call it absolute righteousness. It meets perfectly the requirements of God's moral law. It simply means that a person is right with God. This absolute righteousness, of course, is what characterizes God, and the one who possesses such absolute righteousness cannot be condemned to the lake of fire. If you do not possess this "dikaiosune" absolute righteousness, you will be condemned to the lake of fire. You must have this to go to heaven. God is \ absolute righteousness, and His perfect justice demands that all who share His heaven must also possess absolute righteousness.

So, every human being (every one of you here – some of you younger, and some of you older, but) eventually you're all going to check out of this life, and you are going to face God someplace down the line. If you're young, you don't think too much about that. But it is a kind of a smart thing to do, because you might go out considerably earlier than most people do. But sooner or later, you will meet God. And you will meet Him either with your relative righteousness, which is you compared to other people, and that doesn't mean a Fig Newton with God; or, you will meet Him with absolute righteousness, which means everything to God. The absolute righteousness will take you into heaven. The relative righteousness will take you into hell. Every human being eventually faces God with his own human relative righteousness, which he has gained by morality and good works; or, with God's absolute righteousness, which God has imputed to him through trusting in Christ.

But here, he says, "There is an absolute righteousness which is of." And the word "of" is the Greek word "ek," which means "by means of." This is an absolute righteousness which is by means of the law ("nomos"). This refers to a system of rules. It does not, in the Greek Bible, say, "*the* law." That would equal the Mosaic Law, very specifically. Instead, it just says, "law." And when the Greek says that, it is the quality of human doing. He is saying that there is a righteousness that comes on the basis of what you do. There is an *absolute* righteousness that comes on the basis of what you do. The statement of Leviticus 18:5 very specifically says, "Keeping My statutes and My ordinances," which specifically refers to the details required under the Mosaic Law.

**Eternal Life**

So, we translate verse 5 thus far. The King James translation is a little mixed up, so we're trying to straighten it out. It says, "For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness that is by the law (the man who practices the absolute righteousness which is by the law)." The Mosaic Law expresses the absolute righteousness of God. The reference here is to a person who obeys the Mosaic Law perfectly. And if he obeys the Mosaic Law perfectly, he has absolute righteousness. And the result, he says, is that: "He shall live." The Greek word is "zao." This refers to eternal life in heaven. It is in the future tense, which means that, in the future, after perfect obedience to the laws of God (middle voice), the result will be for your own personal benefit. The middle indicates that the benefit is for you. You will be saved from hell. Here is a statement of fact. And you will be saved from hell by them; that is, by means of them. By means of what? "Those statutes and ordinances," Moses said. If you obey them perfectly (never break one, and never miss a beat), then you will have an absolute righteousness with which to face God. Perfect Obedience to the Mosaic Law would tell us something about the individual. And you probably have guessed what he would have to have.

**A Sin Nature**

He would have to be born without a sin nature. That's the fly in the ointment. If you could be born without a sin nature, then you would be in a position to be able to obey the moral laws of God perfectly, without breaking them in the least. And if you do have the old sin nature, you never will obey the laws of God perfectly.

We have this illuminated for us in some passages in the Old Testament. For example, Ezekiel 20:11 stresses this same idea. God says, "And I gave them My statutes, and showed them My ordinances, which, if a man do, he shall even live by them." Ezekiel is saying the same thing.

Ezekiel 20:13: "But the House of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. They walked not in My statutes, and they despised My Own ordinances." Why? Because they were a bunch of people with old sin natures. They were rebels already against the Word of God and the moral standards of God: "Which, if a man do, he shall live in them. And My Sabbath they greatly polluted. Then I said I would pour out My fury upon them in the wilderness to consume them."

Notice Ezekiel 20:21: "Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me. They walk not in My statutes; neither kept My ordinances to do them, which, if a man do, he shall even live in them. They polluted My Sabbaths, and I said, 'I will pour out My fury upon them to accomplish My anger against them in the wilderness.'" What is Ezekiel saying? Ezekiel is going back to the Leviticus passage, and he says, "Here is the principle that our Lawgiver Moses received from God. If you keep the Mosaic Law, you'll get absolute righteousness. You'll go to heaven. That's the system."

**The Lord Jesus Christ**

Well, there's only one person in the human race that ever kept the Mosaic Law perfectly. And that, of course, was the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Bible tells us that that was his intention, and that is what He accomplished.

Noticed Matthew 5:17-18. Jesus says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law (referring to the Mosaic Law) or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." Not one little mark of the Hebrew alphabet will pass away until everything that God has written in His Law would be fulfilled. And Jesus Christ was the person who intended to fulfill that Law perfectly as a human being. And He is the one indeed who has done just that.

Therefore, He could, on the occasion recorded in John 8:46, face an antagonistic crowd, and make this statement to them: "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do you not believe Me?" Now that is not something that most of us would like to go around saying to anybody: "Does anybody have anything that you can point to me to indicate my being out of line, and wrong?" But the Lord Jesus Christ could do that, because He was indeed sinless. And He was sinless in keeping every item of the Mosaic Law perfectly. And, of course, that's the point of what he was saying.

They said, "Hey, you're changing the Law. You're not telling us what our rabbis tell us." And Jesus said, "That's right. Your rabbis don't know what they're talking about. But I speak with the authority of the God Who knows. Therefore, when you come along and say, 'Oh, as long as I don't hop into bed with somebody to whom I'm not married, it's OK. But I can just fill my mind with all kind of mental adultery, and it's OK.'" And the Lord says, "No, no, no, you've broken the Law when you do it mentally, as if you had done it overtly." They would say, "Oh, I'll never take somebody's life. You can't accuse me of murder one." Oh, but Jesus says, "Yes, I can, because anytime you have hatred toward somebody else, you are guilty of murder one." And they said, "That's not the way it is." And Jesus said, “Yes, that is the way it is. That's exactly what God intended. And that's why God made it clear when He put in that commandment about 'You shall not covet,' because that's something you don't do outwardly. It is something you do up here in the head. It is a mental attitude.”

So the Ten Commandments themselves made it very clear. As the apostle Paul said, "That's when I discovered what a rotten sinner I was – when I looked at that commandment and realized how shot-through I was with mental attitude sins. It's true. I didn't do any of those things outwardly, but when I hit this one, I collapsed."

Now that's the point of: "You will live." Keep the whole Law, and you'll be welcomed into heaven. But only Jesus Christ did that. So, that tells us this about the Son of God: namely, that He had no sin nature. And if He did not have a nature, He was not under Adam's guilt.

See, you and I have two strikes against us. We share Adam's guilt because we were in him when he sinned. Secondly, we share the consequences with the old sin nature, which was genetically passed down to us through our human fathers. Jesus Christ did not have a human father. Therefore, He did not receive a sin nature. He, therefore, without a sin nature, was able perfectly to keep the Law of God, and He did. It is the sin nature which prevents us from obeying God's moral Law.

So, if a person breaks just one of God's laws, that's all it takes for him to be morally guilty before God, and God's justice will demand that he be sent to the lake of fire. Some people are still making that foolish mistake. They think that if they do pretty good, God is going to say, "OK, come in heaven." If I do better than most people, I'm going to make it." No, that is not true. The Jewish people are counting very heavily on that particular principle: "If we do better than other people, God will accept us."

Galatians 3:10 says, "No. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse. For it is written, 'Cursed is everyone that does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the Law, to do them.'" Who is under the curse? The person who does not continue in every principle demanded in the Law of Moses here, particularly.

And the book of James is speaking to people of Jewish background. James 2:10 says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." You have a beautiful China dish – very valuable. You wash it, and you accidentally chip it. You accidentally put a crack into this valuable piece of China. Is it damaged? Yes. Its damage. Has it been broken? Yes, it's been broken. It may not lay shattered. It may have just a little chip out of it, but nobody can sell it as a perfect piece of China, and you cannot display it as a perfect piece of China. It just takes one break, and the whole thing is spoiled. That's the point.

So, anybody who breaks one part of the Mosaic Law – you have finished yourself. And there's nothing you can do then with God. And, of course, everybody with a sin nature eventually breaks the laws of God. Since no one with an old sin nature can keep God's laws perfectly, no one can be saved by keeping the Mosaic Law. That's the principle. Yet, people are still thinking that if they obey the golden rule, and they keep the Ten Commandments (which they can't), that God is going to accept them into His heaven. The Bible says, "No, everybody comes short of God's absolute standard, because everybody breaks it someplace."

Romans 3:20, therefore, says, "Therefore, by the deeds of the Law, there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin." Out of a set of rules like the Mosaic Law, you will see what God expects you to do. And you will see how sinful you are. But will not be saved through the Mosaic Law. You can't keep it.

Romans 3:23, therefore, says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Now that's bad news. The Jewish people conned themselves that they were obeying God's laws perfectly, because they simply lowered the standard of what God required. They ignored the mental attitude sins. They excluded that from the demands of God. And as a matter of fact, the whole system of animal sacrifices under the Mosaic Law should have warned them that they couldn't keep the Law. Why would God give a Law, and say, "This will take you to heaven," and then give them all those animal sacrifices as symbols of what God was going to have to do to cover their sins? They should have made the connection that: "He's given us these animal sacrifices as symbols of what He is going to give us as a final sacrifice to cover our sins. What do we need those for, if we can keep the Law and make it." But they rationalize themselves around it.

So, the path into heaven is totally different than some works system. The only way that a person can secure absolute righteousness, since he has an old sin nature, is as a gift from God through faith in Jesus Christ.

So, Galatians 3:11-12 says, "But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God is evident, for." And then he quotes an Old Testament passage: "'The just shall live by faith.' And the law is not of faith, but the man that does them shall live in them." The Law is a doing system. And if you can keep those 613 regulations perfectly, all your life, you will have demonstrated that you don't have a sin nature, and that you indeed have absolute righteousness, and you are free of Adam's guilt.

Romans 3:21-22 adds to that: "But now the righteousness of God, apart from the Law (apart from human duty) is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by means of faith in Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference." Paul says, "There is a righteousness (an absolute righteousness). It is available, but not on the basis of keeping rules, but on the basis of receiving a gift from God.

**Jesus Christ**

It is the sinless God-Man, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross bearing the guilt of sin of all mankind which had broken God's laws. It is Jesus Christ who paid for that by His own death on the cross. Colossians 2:13-14 tell us that because He did that, we are clear. Because He paid for our breaking the rules, we are free: "And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, under the control of sin nature, He has made spiritually alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against you, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." God took all the bill of indictment that had been written against each of us for our breaking of God's rules. And, as it were, it was nailed to the cross as the reason that Christ died. That's incredible. He died because of what you personally did. That's what this verse is telling us.

So, the path to heaven has been made incredibly easy – I mean, incredibly easy. There's no other way to describe it. God has made the path into heaven incredibly easy – just by accepting Christ's payment for one's sins by trusting in Him to save us. Acts 16:31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (trust in the Lord Jesus Christ), and you shall be saved."

Romans 1:17: "For it is the righteousness of God revealed from faith-to-faith. It is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" People are justified by an act of faith.

The good-works path, with an old sin nature, therefore is impossible and unnecessary. And you should abandon and forget any attempt to make it with God on the basis of your works. The Jews won't do that. They're still pushing and trying to keep the rules to make it with God.

So, the apostle Paul, in Romans 10:5, has pointed out that Moses himself describes a righteousness which is by means of keeping the Law, but which nobody (because all are contaminated with an sin nature) can obey perfectly. Therefore, you cannot gain salvation through the Mosaic Law.

Then he goes on through verse 6 and 8, and he speaks about the knowledge of salvation. In verse 6, he says, "But the righteousness which is of faith." He talks about a righteousness, and he uses the word "but" to show that he's going to have a sharp contrast – an absolute righteousness which is by faith ("pistis"). You know that faith means "trust" – the righteousness here which is secured by trust in Jesus Christ instead of by human works and keeping of rules. This is a righteousness whose source is faith. That is the idea. Paul personifies this righteousness. He treats this righteousness as if it were a person. And he says, "This righteousness says something to us."

So, he says, "This righteousness speaks on this wise." He is referring here, when he says, "This righteousness speaks," actually to another quotation from the writings of Moses. That quotation now is in Deuteronomy 30:11-14. This reference is used by Paul to confirm the principle of securing righteousness by faith instead of by works. The Greek here has a negative (this negative "me"). It has it with the subjunctive mood. So, he says, in verse 6, "But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, say not in your heart." When it puts this in this way in the Greek language, the "say not" means "don't even ever do this. Don't even start saying this." So, he's going to point out something that you shouldn't even bring up. He says, "Don't say this in your heart" – your "kardia." "Kardia" is the mind. This is the mentality of the soul. It indicates a personal thought.

What he is talking about is: "Don't, in your mind, have this statement." Absolute righteousness, speaking to us as a person says, "Don't think this." Then he quotes Deuteronomy 30:11-14. Let's read that as background. Moses says, "For this commandment, which I command you this day – it is not hidden from you; neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea that we should say, 'Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the Word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it."

To fully appreciate this, you have to understand the situation (the background) at the time that Moses delivered this admonition. First of all, be aware of this: Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy. It's the last of the first five books. He writes it as a summary of his leadership of some 40 years of the people of Israel. They have now been brought back out of the wilderness to the port of entry at Kadeshbarnea. They are about to go into the Promised Land, which their parents, 40 years previously, could have done, had they been obedient and not rebelled against God. Instead, everybody who was 20 years old and older has now been wiped out in the wilderness. Their carcasses are rotting all over the wilderness area. They're in graves everyplace. Now this new generation stands on the threshold of the fulfillment of the marvels of the Promised Land. It is their own country – a rich land, flowing with milk and honey, as a poetic description of it.

**Moses' Final Statement to the Jews**

Now Moses says, "I'm going to make one more statement to you. As you prepare to enter the Promised Land, I want to reiterate something that you must never forget. God has given you His word. God has caused me to write the first five books here of the Old Testament Scriptures. And this records His will for you. If you obey, He will bless. If you do not obey, He will curse you." And Moses was very explicit. He was not going in. This is the end of the line for him. And his words are very sober, because the people are standing here looking at this great man. He's 120 years old. He's just as energetic as he was when he was 20. His eyesight is just as good. His hearing is just as good. His muscular tension is just as good. He's just as active. God has maintained his physical capacity so that he could provide the leadership that was necessary under very adverse circumstances. But he's going to die now. The end of the line has come. He's going to die in a prime condition. And they know it.

They're listening to the man who was their source of communication with God. That was a wonderful thing. There were times when they needed to know: "What does God want of us?" All they have to do was go to Moses, and Moses communed with God, and said, "Here's the story. Here's the Word. Here's what the decision is." That was a theocracy. God was the king. He you gave the instruction. Now they're looking at this man, and you know what's in their mind: "Who's going to talk to us for God? Who's going to be our line of communication? What's going to happen as we go into this land filled with terrifying heathen nations (very corrupt)? Moses already has said to them, "When you walk across this border, I want to warn you: don't you dare do what these people do. Do not practice what they practice. Do not imitate the things that you will see going on. They are so degraded and so gross. You must not do this, because the very earth itself, as God's creation, has become nauseated by the immorality of the degradation of these people, and the Bible says, 'The earth is vomiting them out,'" which was a poetic description that God was going to slaughter them, and destroy them completely, and the Jews are going to come in.

Then Moses says, "If you break the rules of God, then the earth is going to get sick of you, and God's land will vomit you out, and you will be scattered and spread over the earth and destroyed." So, this was very serious information. And Moses was very explicit. He said to them, "Here are the curses from God that are going to be poured out upon you if you are disobedient to the Word of God, once you cross over into the land. We have these in several places, but here's an example in Deuteronomy 27:9-26. This is a sample list, and you will notice that sexual morality is at the top of the list. There are several variations such that God says, "I will bring a curse down on you like you wouldn't believe, when you start breaking the laws of sexual morality." How does that sound for the United States of America today, and our general public attitude of what we tolerate in the public media and in the entertainment realm, such that we cannot stop the outflow of this evil being justified in the minds of young people and adults alike?

So, it was very explicit what the problem was going to be. But on the other side, Moses was equally explicit about the blessings from God upon those who would obey the Word of God. In Deuteronomy 28:1-14, we have a little sample of that. Now these are wonderful promises, and these are terrible curses. I must caution you, however, not to read this Scripture and say, "Hot dog, I'm glad to have this information. This is what I've been waiting for. I'm going to do this, and God's going to bless me in this way." I must caution you that this has not been directed to you as a Christian. It would be a distortion of Scripture to say that. However, it is true to say that here is a spiritual principle which is enunciated: If you obey the Word of God, the consequences are blessing. They may be material, but they may not be. They will be spiritual. They will be blessings in a variety of ways. The Jews were very explicitly promised material blessings that have never been made to a Christian.

Secondly, if you disobey the Word of God, you can count on cursings. You can count on the judgment of God. That principle is here. It is characteristic of God. How he expresses it in detail between Israel of old and the church today are variations within the sovereignty of God. But the point I'm making here is that Paul is quoting Moses in a passage that says, "The Word of God is the thing. Take the information that God has given you, and act upon it, and the result will be a blessing." When God brings you information on how to go to heaven, you better believe it. If you reject it, you will pay the consequence of the curse of the lake of fire.

The people of Israel were concerned about the imminent death of Moses, who had for 40 years been their point of communication with God. Moses would not enter into the Promised Land because of striking the rock at Kadesh when they needed water. Kadesh was ordinarily a lush oasis. When they got to it, it was a terrible dry season. So, God said, "Moses, talk to that rock, and water will gush forth." But the people kept complaining and grousing, and Moses had all he could take. He had it up to his craw. And in a moment of losing control, which, as a leader he is not supposed to do, he went up and he took that rod. And on one previous occasion, he had brought water out of the rock by God telling him to strike it. This time he hits it twice. And God in his grace gives him the water. He's not going to make his man look like a fool in front of the people. But God says, "Moses, you shouldn't have done that. You shouldn't have permitted them to egg you over the edge like that, and cause you to disobey Me. That's never justified. You should have obeyed Me. You should have spoken to that rock. You did not obey Me, and you took a course that really made you look pretty good. It almost made you look like a real superman, to go up there and hit that rock like that. And that was very dramatic, Moses. It was a nice touch, but it was bad procedure, because it disobeyed what I told you to."

Perhaps that rock, too, may have represented what the Scripture refers to as Jesus Christ, the Rock upon which our salvation is built. And to strike that rock a second time – they'd already seen a rock struck, and out of that came the waters that preserved them in the wilderness. To come and strike a rock a second time was almost symbolically like suggesting that you're going to crucify Christ twice. Can you imagine the consequences to all the priests on all the altars of the world conducting a mass sacrifice of Jesus Christ again? God said, to Moses, "That's going to cost you going into the Promised Land." What will it cost those priests? This is a serious thing. You can read about this in Numbers 20:6-13. It was a bad scene.

So, Moses is not going to go into the Promised Land, and he knows it. And they know it. And that's why he's giving them this instruction. But their response was: who's going to tell us what God wants us to do when you're gone, so that we can enjoy His blessings instead of His curses?

**Moses Preserved the Law for the Jews**

However, Moses comes up and says, "Hey, no problem." He reassures them that they have nothing to worry about, concerning knowing what God desires of them. What the Jews needed to know was already in hand in the written Scriptures that Moses had prepared. So, the commandments from God were not too hard for them to obey, nor were they unknown. That's what Deuteronomy 30:11 says: "The commandments I command you are not hidden from you; neither are they far off." The Jews did not need to worry about who would go up to heaven to secure the commandments of God for them.

Verse 12 says, "Who's going to go up into heaven if you're not here to get us that information?" Moses says, "Oh, you don't have to worry about that. I'm going to have it in written form for you."

In verse 13, they said, "Where are we going to have to go across the ocean to get the information?" He says, "You're not going to have to go beyond the sea someplace to find that to bring the information from God. You're not going to have to go search some secret monastery out in the hills of the Orient, where some monk is sitting and meditating, and has great truth for you. No, you're not going to have to go looking for that."

In verse 14, he says to them, "The word is very near unto you. In your mouth you're saying it, and in your heart, you're memorizing it." So, Moses says, "I've already written the Word. You've read it. We've spoken about it, and you've memorized it. It's in your heart, and it's in your mind.

So, if the Jews ever have any problem about being blessed by God, it is because they disobey the information they already have. And that's Paul's point: "I am bringing you information." The Promised Land was before the Jews. God's grace had brought them to that point. He was ready to bring them in. And if they went in with cursing, it wasn't because they didn't have the information. The information was at hand. And they didn't have to worry about how they were going to get it. God was going to see to it that they had it, and they already did. And if they would obey it, they could enjoy that land with blessing.

Now, the apostle Paul takes this principle, and he applies it here in Romans 10:6, and makes a very dramatic illustration out of this, of the terrible consequences of the attitude of the Jews today, as in his day, toward the Lord Jesus Christ. And we shall look at that next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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