

## September 22

**Romans 9: 30: What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31: But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32: Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33: As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.**

Sinner, are you trying to attain righteousness by your works? Here is a word from God that is as clear as language can be which declares that the law of Moses and our works have nothing to do with how sinners are made righteous.

Indeed, we must have righteousness. Righteousness is a state of moral perfection equal to and approved of by God. To enter God's presence we must be righteous as God, as holy, just and good as God. This text shows us how some sinners attained righteousness and why some sinners did not attain righteousness. All God's people, no matter who they are, attain righteousness the same way. So the way in which those in our text attained to righteousness is the same way in which all God's people attain to righteousness.

First, we are told that the Gentiles did nothing to attain righteousness. They "followed not after righteousness." (Rom 9: 30) The Gentile nations were totally ignorant of God's righteousness. They never had the law which God gave to Israel at Mt. Sinai and were never under that law. Until God sent the gospel, God never gave the Gentiles any of the advantages he gave to Israel: no revelation from God, no word from God and no promises from God. Worse, they were ungodly, sinful, spiritually dead idolaters, "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." (Eph 2; 12)

Secondly, we are told that Israel did try to attain righteousness. They "followed after the law of righteousness." (Rom 9: 31) God gave Israel the law at Mt. Sinai. Israel went to work trying to attain righteousness by keeping the law. They toiled and labored after righteousness, meticulously attempting to keep the law. The ten commandments were their rule of life.

Yet, the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, "have attained to righteousness." But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, "hath not attained to the law of righteousness." (Rom 9: 30-31) Why did Israel's works, and ours, not count for something? We all died in Adam and are all guilty. (Rom 3: 10-12; 5: 12) The law was not given for us to attain righteousness thereby; it was given to declare us guilty. (Rom 3: 19-20; 5: 20)

The Gentiles attained to righteousness by the grace of God. God sent them the gospel, gave them new hearts, gave them the gift of faith and thus they believed on Christ. Therefore they "attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith." (Rom 9: 30) Israel did not attain to righteousness because when they heard the gospel declare that Christ is the Righteousness of God provided for his people, they rejected Christ, "they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Rom 9: 31-33)

Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is the righteousness of God. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom 10: 1-4) Sinners do not attain righteousness by our doing but only by submitting to the Righteousness of God. How do we submit to moral perfection which is equal to and approved of by God? We do so by submitting to Christ through faith. Christ is the end of the law for the believer because Christ is the believer's righteousness. (Rom 8: 3-5) Christ is the Righteousness of God and the Righteousness which every sinner must have to be accepted of God. Look at the Gentiles who never had the law and were yet saved by God and understand that the law has nothing to do with our salvation before or after conversion! We are made righteous by God by his Son by his grace through God's gift of faith, not by any work of ourselves. (Eph 2: 8-9) Believe on Christ, publicly confess him and you shall be saved. (Rom 10: 6-11)