*Northwest Bible Church – Aug. 22, 2004 – Worship Service – Alan Conner*

**Romans 9:30-33**

*The Road to Righteousness*

**INTRO**
        So far in Romans 9 Paul has been dealing with the divine side of salvation. This salvation is granted according to God’s sovereign mercy, as Rom. 9:16 says "So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs but one God who has mercy"; and in v. 18 "He has mercy on whom He desires and He hardens whom He desires."
        But now Paul shifts his focus and begins to look at the human side of salvation. He wants to spell out in clear terms why Israel in general is not being saved and why the Gentiles are streaming into the church. The divine side is the canvas upon which the human response is now being traced. The divine side determines the human response but Paul’s teaching is that Israel is still responsible and accountable for taking the WRONG ROAD which leads to death. The doctrine of divine sovereignty does not nullify the doctrine of human responsibility.
        So, in Rom. 9:30 - 10:21, Paul is laying the blame at the feet of the Jews for rejecting Christ and being on the road to destruction.

**I. GENTILES BECAME RIGHTEOUS BY FAITH (v. 30).**

    A. The Gentiles did not pursue righteousness (v. 30)

        "Righteousness" = in the context of Romans is a righteous standing with God.
        "Pursue" – to chase after, to try to get.

        In general the Gentiles were not pursuing a righteous standing before God. Cf. Rom. 1.

    B. The Gentiles attained righteousness (v. 30)

But such is the amazing mercy of God that the righteous God of heaven would turn His merciful and gracious gaze upon such "children of wrath" and rescue them from their abominable ways and adopt them as His children.

They "attained" righteousness. Paul uses this same word 1 Cor. 9:24 probably in the Olympic games in the background of "winning" the race. So the Gentiles were not even in the race and yet by the grace of God they won the gold medal of righteousness. BUT HOW?

    C. The Gentiles attained righteousness by faith (v. 30)

Faith is the key to receiving the free gift of God’s righteousness. Rom. 1:16-17; 3:22, 24-25, 28; 4:3; 5:1. Cf. Phil. 3:9.

**II. ISRAEL FAILED TO BECOME RIGHTEOUS BY WORKS (vv. 31-33).**

    A. Israel pursued a law of righteousness (v. 31)

The "law of righteousness" = the law which by keeping it would make them righteous. See Rom. 10:3 where Israel was seeking to establish their own (righteousness) by keeping the law.

    B. Israel did not arrive at the law of righteousness. (v. 31).

The word "arrive" means they did not achieve the righteous standard of the law they were pursuing. In other words, they could not keep the law, they failed, they could not measure up. The standard was too holy, too lofty, too out of their reach.

    C. Israel did not arrive at the law of righteousness because they pursued it by works and not faith. The           result was they stumbled over the stumbling stone (v. 32).

        1) They pursued righteousness by works, not faith.

        2) They stumbled over the stumbling stone (vv. 32b-33).

            CHRIST IS THE STONE. Cf. 1 Pet. 2:4-8. (See also Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11).

                "stone of stumbling" (Isa. 8:14) –

        3) "He who believes in Him will not be disappointed (Isa. 28:16)." Quoted also in Rom. 10:11.

**CONCLUSION**
    There are only two roads that claim to get you to heaven. ARE YOU ON THE RIGHT ROAD? Whose righteousness are you trusting in to get you to heaven. Your own? Then you have no hope for it will never be good enough to please a righteous God. Turn to Christ, He alone can forgive your sins and at the moment of faith will pronounce you righteous in God’s sight. You must attain to God’s righteousness by faith, not your own righteousness by works.