*Northwest Bible Church – Oct. 17, 2004 – Worship Service – Alan Conner*

**Romans 10:16-21**

*Israel Is Without Excuse*

**INTRO**
    Human nature loves to make excuses for our failures and sins.
        1) outright deny our wrongdoing
        2) "it is not my fault"
        3) "I did it, but . . ."

    Paul’s teaching in this passage is basically to say that ISRAEL HAS NO EXCUSE FOR HER REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL. He has given the steps to salvation to show that Israel had all this and they are without excuse for their unbelief.

        To be saved they must believe,
        To believe they must hear,
        To hear there must be a sent preacher.

**A. Failure #1 - THEY DID NOT BELIEVE (v. 16).**
        1) Understatement. "only a few." Remnant theology.

        2) "Did not heed" = did not obey the gospel by believing in Christ.

            "They" = Possibly both Jews and Gentiles, but with special focus on Israel.

            "did not heed" – or they did not obey. The "did not heed" is linked to the "believed" in the quotation from Isa. 53:1. Thus, all unbelief is also disobedience, they are two sides of the same coin. Unbelief is disobedience, see the "obedience of faith", Rom. 1:5; 16:26. The gospel is a command, Acts 17:30

**B. Failure #2 - THEY DID HEAR (v. 18).**

        1) Rhetorical question. Designed by the nature of the Greek negative particle to deny the assertion, thus "it is not the case, then, that they have not heard. Indeed they have heard."

        2) Whose "voice" and "words" are in view here?
    Ps. 19:4 has creation and the heavens, day and night in view. Similar to Rom. 1:19-20    But Paul is using Ps. 19 as an analogy of what has now become true of special revelation and the preaching of the gospel.

        3) How can this be that the "earth" and the "ends of the world" have heard the gospel?     Such vocabulary today is often interpreted in light of our global society in which we think of every human on the planet. But such was not the way the used this language in the first century and we must interpret it according to what it meant then, not now.
    The NT authors used this kind of language of generally the Roman Empire, not the whole literal earth; or of the general categories of both the Jews and Gentiles. See Rom. 1:8; Col. 1:5-6,23.

**C. Failure #3 - ISRAEL KNEW ABOUT GOD’S PLAN (vv. 19-21).**
        1) Rhetorical question. Expecting the response, "Yes, Israel did know."

            Know what? Not just the gospel, but rather that the Gentiles who believe would inherit their blessings. IN fact, they should not object against Paul’s gospel for even their own Scriptures told them that the gospel would have more success among the Gentiles than among the Jews.

            Paul chooses examples from the LAW AND THE PROPHETS, which was the customary way to summarize the whole OT into these two categories.

        2) Moses’ testimony (v. 19).

            a) Again we see how masterful of a debater Paul was.

            b) The irony of the rebuke. In context of Deut. God is rebuking Israel for making God jealous by what is "not a god," referring to their idols. So in IRONY God will make them jealous by what is "not a nation" (ie. Gentiles, = dogs and despised). And as their idols were without understanding, so he will anger unbelieving Israel by a nation without understanding.

            c) Important truth: believing Gentiles do share in Israel’s blessings. Cf. Mt. 21:43; Rom. 9:25-26; Rom. 11 and 15:27.

        3) Isaiah’s testimony (vv. 20-21).

            a) The Gentile inclusion (v. 20). Paul uses Isa. 65:1 which in context refers to Israel but he applies it to the Gentiles in that the same principle applies to them as it did to the Jews.

            b) Israel’s rebellion (v. 21). Isa. 65:2 refers to Israel where it stresses God’s constant offer of grace to her but their stubborn resistance to that grace.

    SUMMARY: Israel is without excuse. They cannot say they have not heard and they cannot say that preachers did not come to them, nor that they did not know about the Gentiles inclusion and their own rebellion.

**CONCLUSION**

    1) Israel will have no special pleading before the Judge on judgment day. They are without excuse if they reject the gospel and will be judged. Paul shows how indefensible and inexcusable Israel’s position is concerning the gospel. But his ultimate object is not to just indict the Jews but that some might see their error and repent. Rom. 10:1; 11:13-14.

    2) Salvation for any, especially the Gentiles, is always by God’s sovereign grace for "I was found by those who did not seek Me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me" (v. 20). "There is none who seeks for God" (Rom. 3:11). "Many are called but few are chosen" (Mt. 22:14)

        ETERNAL PRAISE BE TO GOD FOR HIS GRACE.