



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

ROMANS 9-16

Week 1

Copyright © 2015 by Plain Truth Ministries Worldwide

All rights reserved. Written permission must be secured from the publisher to use or reproduce any part of this book, except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles.

Unless noted otherwise, scriptures are quoted from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Printed in the United States of America.

Before You Begin Your Journey...

When was the last time you found yourself in the middle of a conflict in your church? A classic church conflict, where people chose sides over an issue—complete with hurt feelings, anger and recrimination. Perhaps it was not a major doctrinal issue. Perhaps it was something like worship or music styles—or what color to make the new choir robes—or whether to have choir robes at all.

If you think your church is unique because it has conflicts, think again. The congregation at Rome had the same problem.

Although Paul had not yet visited this church, in the second part of the book of Romans, Paul goes to work teaching the principle of Christian tolerance—a virtue needed in every congregation.

Not all scholars agree on what the specific issue in the Roman church was. Some think that some Christians thought they needed to avoid eating certain foods—or to avoid eating at all—on certain days. Others think that the issue went beyond food, and that it had to do with how some people considered some days more sacred than others, and were judging those who did not agree with them as inadequate, sub-standard and second class Christians.

The church in Rome was composed of new Christians, made up of two peoples—Jews and gentiles—who had been culturally separate before, but who now found themselves being one in Christ. In some ways, this makes the challenges you and I have of getting along with others seem insignificant by comparison.

Yet surprisingly, Paul does not judge either side. Instead, he judges the *judgment*.

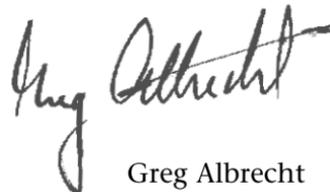
We Christians have always had a monumental battle trying to get off our high horses of condemnation and judgment. In our efforts to do the right thing we have often emphasized rules over relationship, dogma over love. It is so easy to try to scare people into obedience, to try to save them with fear, to point a finger at the sins and shortcomings of others. And this is exactly why many people see Christianity as an *intolerant* and *judgmental* religion.

But in fact, Christianity should be one of the most tolerant and least judgmental faiths. Outside of the core doctrinal issues—the main things and plain things—there are thousands of issues about which Christians are free to make up their own minds. If we believe differently, then we should be tolerant, and not judge others who do not agree with us on such peripheral matters. We should stop such judging, because Jesus Christ is the judge of us all.

A major message that Paul has for all of us in the book of Romans is to *mind our own business*.

Perhaps one of the most striking themes we see in these final chapters is Paul's regard for all the Christians in Rome as family. He thinks of them as brothers and sisters in Christ. He thanks them for being fellow workers in the cause of the kingdom of God. He expresses thanks and gratitude for those who have helped him at other times and places.

As we read and consider the words of Paul, let us also recall the diverse members of the body of Christ who have touched and helped shape our lives. They are all part of God's family—accepted by him, as are all who place their faith in Jesus Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Albrecht". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

How to Use the CWR Bible Survey...

1—Read and study at your own pace. This is a devotional. It is designed to help you consider and ponder the great truths of God's written revelation. It is designed to help you worship and come to know God. We plan to cover the entire Bible in 43 volumes, and while that sounds like a long time, don't be in a hurry. Take your time! Even though each volume is divided into bite-size daily lessons, you may want to take two days on each "daily" lesson.

2—We suggest you set aside a special time for the *CWR Bible Survey* every day. We recommend allowing 30-45 minutes, but even if you can only spare 15 minutes, try to make it part of your regular schedule. You will find that the *CWR Bible Survey* will be an invaluable resource for facing your daily challenges.

3—You will need a good Bible. This might be an excellent time for you to consider purchasing a study Bible. Plain Truth Ministries has reviewed many of the study Bibles that are available, and in cooperation with Thomas Nelson and Zondervan, we are pleased to be able to offer two superb study Bibles that will be an excellent resource and help to you. Please see the back pages of this book for more details.

4—Always read the assigned passage of the daily lesson in your Bible first. Each daily lesson builds upon the portion of the Bible being covered that day. You may want to begin by praying about what God has in store for you as you read, and then look at the questions and background information.

5—Consider the format of each daily lesson. Almost every daily lesson will include:

- **Opening Up to the Word** —a section designed to help you open your mind to the teaching God has inspired.
- **Digging Into the Word**—this section will encourage you to get your nose into the Bible and think deeply about what it says.
- **Living Out the Word**—here you will be challenged to consider the practical implications for your life. How does this passage help you live?

• **Window On the Word**—will offer key insights to help you more clearly understand the daily Bible passage.

6—After you finish the daily lesson, take some quiet time. You may simply think, look out the window, take a walk, or even get down on your knees. But use this time to let this daily lesson sink in. Ask God to show you what he wants you to understand from your reading and study.

7—Consider the *CWR Bible Survey* for small groups in which you may be involved. Tell your friends about it. If you are involved in a small group that meets for prayer and Bible study, introduce your group to it. Many are seeking an easy-to-read guide to help them understand the Bible and to help them know God. The *CWR Bible Survey* can do that!

• **Abbreviations Used in the *CWR Bible Survey***—

Genesis	Ge	Nahum	Na
Exodus	Ex	Habakkuk	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	Zephaniah	Zep
Numbers	Nu	Haggai	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zechariah	Zec
Joshua	Jos	Malachi	Mal
Judges	Jdg	Matthew	Mt
Ruth	Ru	Mark	Mk
1 Samuel	1Sa	Luke	Lk
2 Samuel	2Sa	John	Jn
1 Kings	1Ki	Acts	Ac
2 Kings	2Ki	Romans	Ro
1 Chronicles	1Ch	1 Corinthians	1Co
2 Chronicles	2Ch	2 Corinthians	2Co
Ezra	Ezr	Galatians	Gal
Nehemiah	Ne	Ephesians	Eph
Esther	Est	Philippians	Php
Job	Job	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Timothy	1Ti
Song of Songs	SS	2 Timothy	2Ti
Isaiah	Isa	Titus	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	Philemon	Phm
Lamentations	La	Hebrews	Heb
Ezekiel	Eze	James	Jas
Daniel	Da	1 Peter	1Pe
Hosea	Hos	2 Peter	2Pe
Joel	Joel	1 John	1Jn
Amos	Am	2 John	2Jn
Obadiah	Ob	3 John	3Jn
Jonah	Jnh	Jude	Jude
Micah	Mic	Revelation	Rev

ROMANS 9-16

Living in
Christian Harmony

Introduction to Romans 9-16

Authorship: The apostle Paul.

Date: Many scholars believe that Paul was in Corinth near the end of his third missionary journey (see Ac 20:1-5) when he wrote this letter. This dates the book around A.D. 58.

Setting and purpose: Paul was planning to visit the Christians in Rome and wrote to them prior to his arrival. Paul was aware that they did not know him well because he had not established that Christian community. Perhaps he was eager to reassure the Christians in Rome that, in spite of any rumors they may have heard about him, his message was in line with that of the disciples. Most of the other letters of Paul were written to churches he had established. Thus, those letters often deal with local problems, issues and controversies. The Book of Romans is not dominated by such localized issues. It is Paul's most thorough writing on theology, but it does not address some subjects, such as the resurrection. Many scholars view Romans as the most important book, theologically, in the New Testament.

Distinctive features: This is Paul's most comprehensive outline of the Christian faith. There is something in the book of Romans for every person. For those who do not know Christ, Paul provides a clear exposition of God's plan for their salvation. For those new to the faith, Romans teaches them about their identity in Christ and of victory in life through the power of the Holy Spirit. For people deeper in the faith, there is ample discussion of a wide spectrum of Christian truths such as sin, salvation, righteousness, holiness and the nature and work of Jesus.

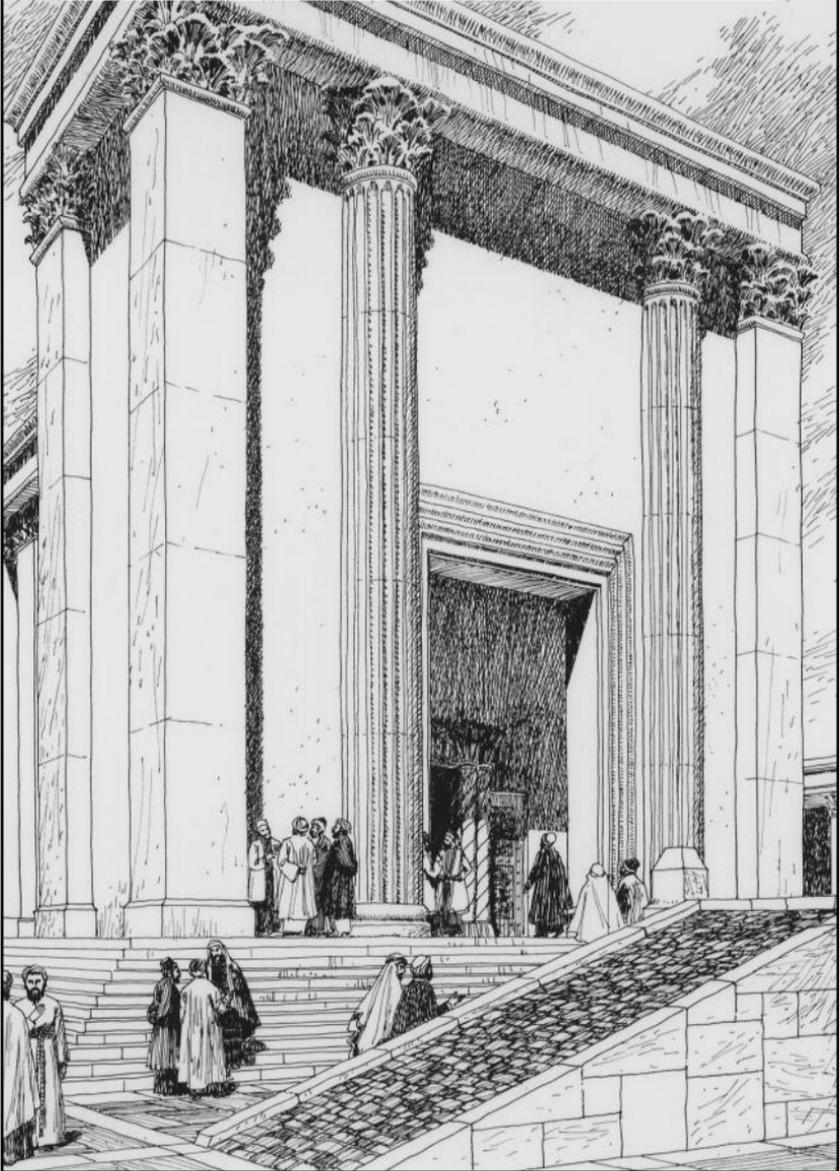
Reading outline:

Day	Text	Theme
1	Romans 9:1-5	Tragic Rejection
2	Romans 9:6-18	God Is Definitely in Charge

Day	Text	Theme
3	Romans 9:19-29	Does God Play Favorites?
4	Romans 9:30-33	The Treasure Hunt
5	Romans 10:1-4	How to Be Saved
6	Romans 10:5-13	Who Is Lord?
7	Romans 10:14-21	Good News Messengers
8	Romans 11:1-10	When Zeal Gets in the Way
9	Romans 11:11-24	Holier Than Thou Attitudes
10	Romans 11:25-36	The Grandeur of God
11	Romans 12:1-2	Living Sacrifices
12	Romans 12:3-8	One for All and All for One
13	Romans 12:9-16	Christian Life in Action
14	Romans 12:17-21	Overcoming Evil With Good
15	Romans 13:1-5	Respect for Civil Authority
16	Romans 13:6-10	The Supremacy of Love
17	Romans 13:11-14	Clothe Yourself With Christ
18	Romans 14:1-4	Respect for Other Viewpoints
19	Romans 14:5-6	Dangers of Ecclesiastical Tyranny
20	Romans 14:7-12	A Red Flag for Christians
21	Romans 14:13-18	Roughriders Not Welcome
22	Romans 14:19-23	Practicing Mutual Support
23	Romans 15:1-6	The Obligation of the Strong
24	Romans 15:7-13	The Inclusive Church
25	Romans 15:14-22	"I Glory in Christ Jesus"
26	Romans 15:23-33	Requesting Prayer
27	Romans 16:1-16	The Prominent Role of Women
28	Romans 16:3-4	The Home as a Center of Fellowship
29	Romans 16:17-24	Helpful and Faithful Friends
30	Romans 16:25-27	Glory Forever!

“Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.”

Romans 9:4



Artwork by Jay Vance

Tragic Rejection

DAY 1

Romans 9:1-5

Do you have a brother, sister or other family member who is in need of some kind of help? Is there a limit to the sacrifices you would make for them?

1. Paul explains the rejection of Jesus by many Jewish people in the first century. How would you describe Paul's position on this issue (vs. 1-2)? Is he angry, sad, depressed, hostile or defensive?

2. What personal sacrifice was Paul willing to make in order for things to be different concerning his fellow Jews (v. 3)? Is Paul exaggerating to make his point?

3. As the people chosen by God in the Old Testament, the Jews had certain privileges. What are the ones mentioned by Paul in this section (vs. 4-5)?

4. Was "Christ, who is God over all, forever praised" by his own people (v. 5)?

1. Is there someone you know well who rejects the Christian faith? How do you relate to that individual?

2. Has anyone ever made a sacrifice of love in order to help you? Have you ever made a sacrifice of love in order to help someone else?

"The adoption as sons" (v. 4) refers to Paul's view that God chose Israel in the Old Testament and adopted the nation. Paul realized that Israel was undeserving and without rights as natural children. However, God adopted them and gave them status, rights and responsibilities as children of God.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

God Is Definitely In Charge

Romans 9:6-18

OPENING
up to the Word

Look back over your life and identify a time when you experienced a major difficulty. Did it feel like God was absent and not supportive? Now that the issue is in the past, what can you say about God's intervention and his faithfulness?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How has God been faithful to his word (v. 6)? Are his promises fulfilled for all the descendants of Abraham (vs. 7-9)?
2. Was God's selection of Isaac and Jacob based on their works or God's grace (Ro 9: 9-13)?
3. Is God unjust (vs. 14-18)? If God were not free to be merciful, could anyone receive grace? Can anyone earn God's grace?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How faithful are you to the promises you have made?
2. The quote in verse 15 (from Ex 33:19) makes some Christians uncomfortable because God appears to act so arbitrarily. How would you explain this verse?
3. If someone told you they felt God was unjust, how would you respond?

WINDOW
on the Word

***"Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated"** (v. 13) is a quote from the Old Testament prophet Malachi. To our modern way of thinking this may sound as though God is playing favorites. Keep in mind, however, that Paul is appealing mainly to a Jewish audience who would understand the statement as a reference to his selection of Israel to be an example to the world. God is fair and just even though we may not always see it that way.*



“For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: ‘I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.”

Romans 9:17-18

DAY 3

Does God Play Favorites?

Romans 9:19-29

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever been accused of playing favorites? Were the accusers angry? Jealous? Selfish? Justified?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Were the people justified in talking back to God (vs. 19-20)? Were they deceived in believing that their rejection of Jesus was not a rejection of God's will?

2. How does the image of the potter and the clay—artist and raw material—explain the apostle's argument (v. 21)?

3. Does Paul see God as patient or impatient (vs. 22-25)? How has his mercy extended beyond his call to the Jewish people?

4. How did God provide understanding of his plan through the prophets Hosea and Isaiah (vs. 25-29)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Has God made his power known to you recently (v. 22)? Have you been an object of God's mercy (v. 23)?

2. Verse 24 indicates that people other than Israelites were used by God. Who are some non-Christians who have helped you grow spiritually?

WINDOW
on the Word

*God told **Hosea**, the Old Testament prophet, to marry a prostitute to represent how God had to suffer Israel's unfaithfulness. The book of Hosea is a metaphor for Israel's adultery against God when Israel followed other gods. By following these false gods, Israel fell into a lack of social concern and responsibility. Greed, injustice and oppression became commonplace.*

The Treasure Hunt

DAY 4

Romans 9:30-33

Have you ever been lost while traveling in your car in a strange city? What did you do? (a) drove faster, (b) stopped and prayed, (c) drove and prayed, (d) looked at a map, (e) asked for directions.

1. In the previous passage, Paul has explained how God had saved a remnant of faithful Israelites by his grace. Here, who else has benefitted from God's message (v. 30)?

2. Contrast the experiences of the gentiles and the Israelites (vs. 30-32). Which people were seeking righteousness? Which people stumbled across it? Who sought righteousness by works in order to earn it? Who simply received righteousness by faith?

3. How do gentiles stumble onto Jesus and salvation, while Israel in general "stumbled over the 'stumbling stone'" (vs. 32)?

1. Have you ever known of a situation where the message of Jesus is rejected by one person, yet bounces off that person to affect the life of another person?

2. Did you seek Jesus or did you stumble across him? In Matthew 13, compare verse 44 with 45.

3. Have you ever stumbled over something Jesus taught?

*Paul refers to Isaiah 8:14-16 to introduce **Jesus as a stone** which can be stumbled over. He was the rock that so many fell over. Yet the only way to eternal life comes through recognizing the Rock.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

DAY 5

The End of the Law

Romans 10:1-4

OPENING
up to the Word

When did you first realize that Jesus is the end of the law?

DIGGING
into the Word

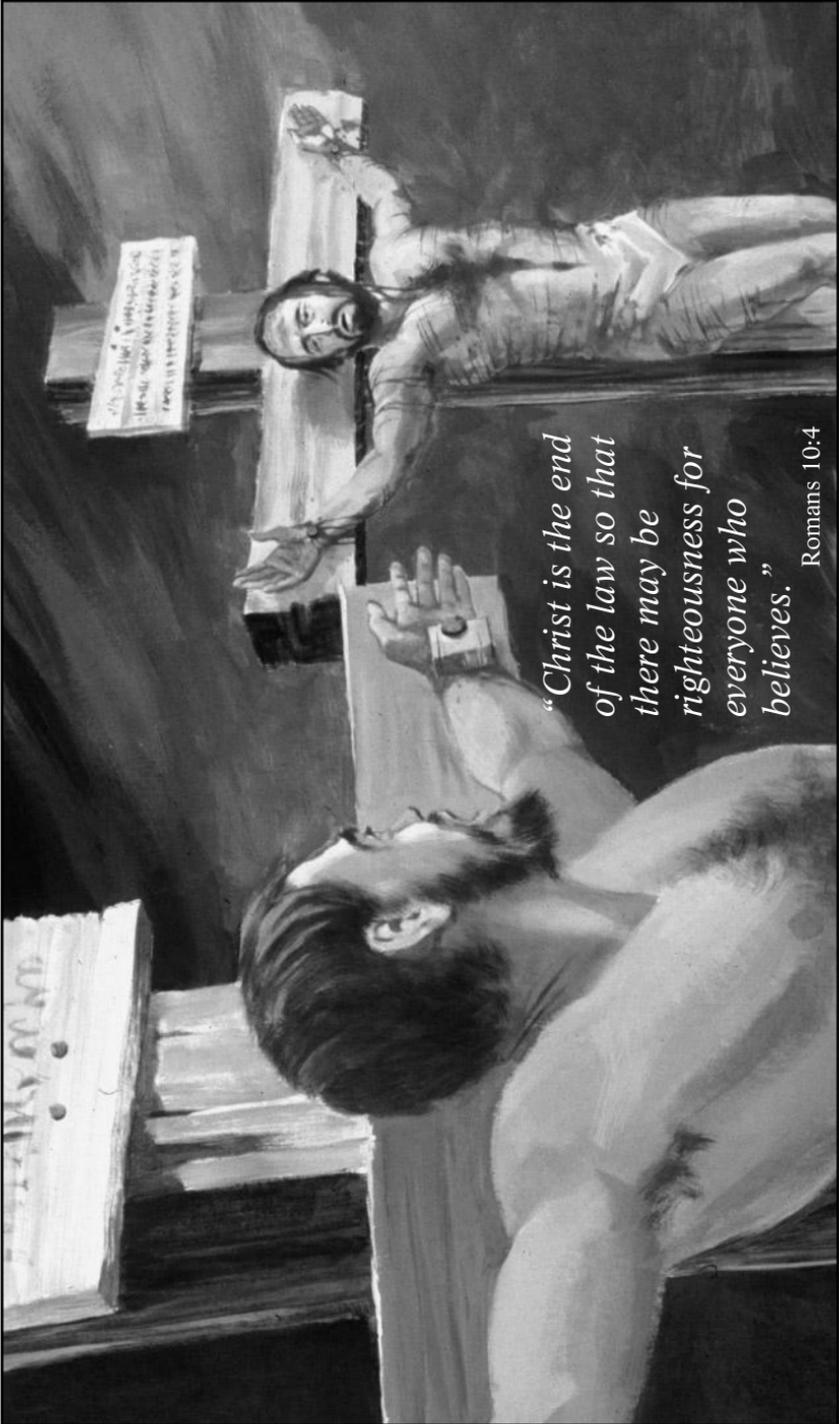
- 1.** What is the apostle's deepest desire? What positive things does he say about the Jewish people (v. 1)?
 - 2.** What was the weakness in their way of approaching God? Can one's zeal become misplaced?
 - 3.** According to Paul, are the Jewish people saved (see 11:1, 11)? How does one attempt to establish one's own righteousness (v. 3)?
 - 4.** How can anyone be saved? What was the goal of the law (v. 4)?
-

LIVING
out the Word

- 1.** Have you ever been so zealously concerned about something that you found yourself being consumed by it? Did you miss the greater picture?
 - 2.** How do you apply your faith in Jesus so that your zeal is effective?
 - 3.** How would you answer this important question for a friend: "How can I be saved?"
-

WINDOW
on the Word

"Christ is the end of the law" (v. 4) can also be translated "Christ is the goal of the law." The law was powerless to save us from sin. Only Christ, through his death and resurrection, provides salvation. Now that the law has reached its goal, it is no longer in effect (Gal 3:23-25). Only through faith in Christ can we be found righteous.



*“Christ is the end
of the law so that
there may be
righteousness for
everyone who
believes.”*

Romans 10:4

DAY 6

Who Is Lord?

Romans 10:5-13

OPENING
up to the Word

Who or what holds lordship over today's Western society? (a) wealth, (b) fame, (c) power, (d) lust, (e) Jesus.

DIGGING
into the Word

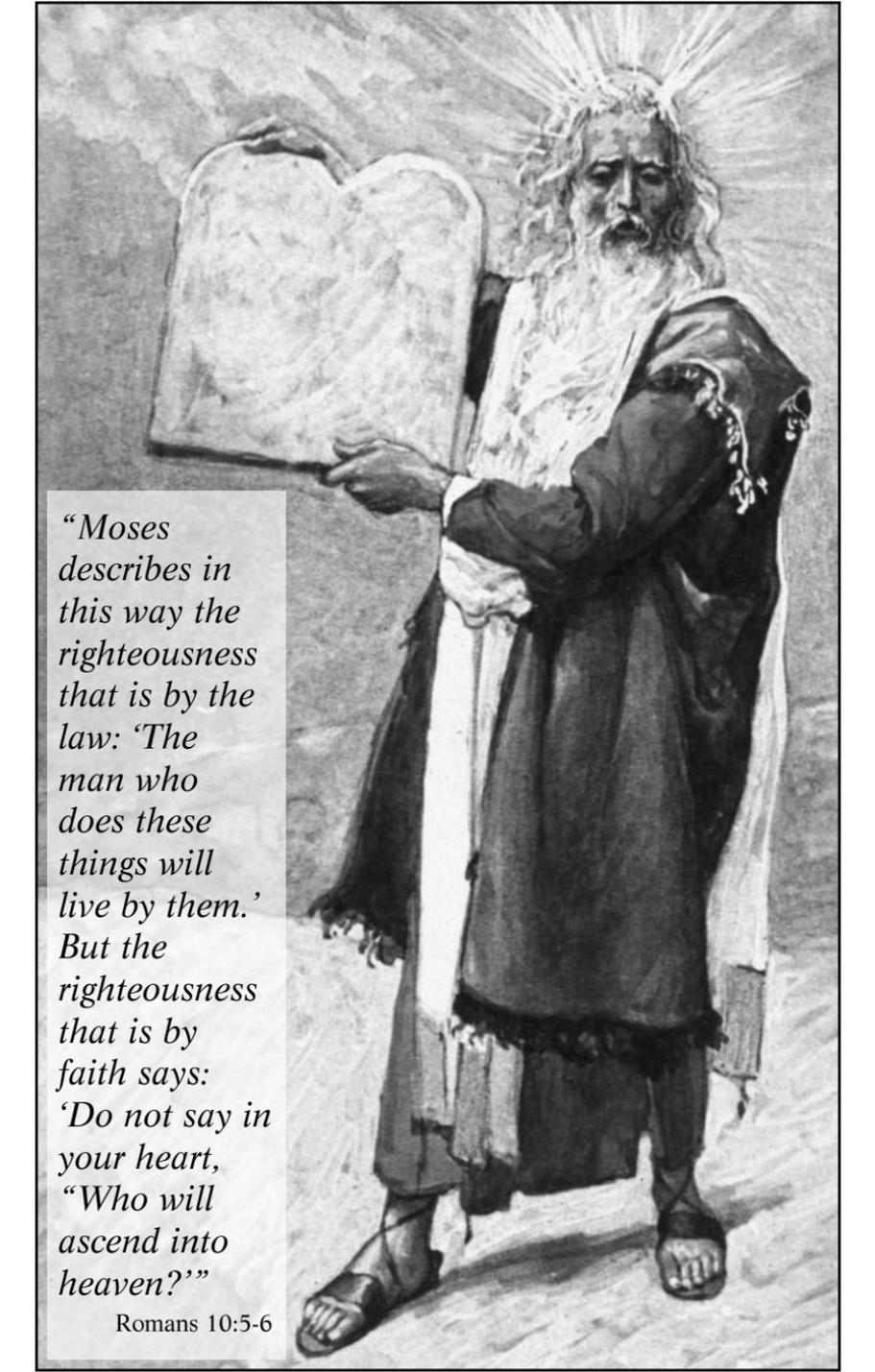
1. How did Moses describe the righteousness that comes by the law (v. 5; see Lev 18:5)?
2. How does the righteousness that comes by Christ become established in our hearts and lives (Ro 10:4, 6-9)?
3. The phrase "Jesus is Lord" may have been the earliest Christian creed. What personal response accompanies this statement of confession (vs. 8-10)?
4. How did the focus on Jesus alone (as opposed to the works of the law) make people of diverse ethnic origins one (vs. 11-13)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What acts of righteousness help your spiritual focus and commitment to Jesus? Have you ever felt that those actions somehow earn you God's favor?
2. How do you confess that "Jesus is Lord"? (a) by sharing the good news with others, (b) in church worship, (c) in prayer, (d) in the way you live, (e) with a bumper sticker, (f) with a strategically placed tattoo.
3. Does faith in Jesus drive out shame from your life? How so?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The Old Testament called for the Israelites to **respond to God's word**. In Romans 10:6-8, Paul refers to Deuteronomy 30:12-14, applying this concept to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is near, he says, so call on the name of the Lord and be saved.*



“Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: ‘The man who does these things will live by them.’ But the righteousness that is by faith says: ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?””

Romans 10:5-6

Good News Messengers

Romans 10:14-21

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever received news from someone who believed it was good news, but you were skeptical? What was the news? How did you respond?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How does faith enter our hearts (vs. 16-17)?
2. Had the relationship between God and the Israelites been deteriorating (vs. 18-21)? Why?
3. How is Israel portrayed by Paul in these verses?
4. One of Paul's arguments in this section is his insistence that all through history God has been reaching out to Israel. What was God's message through David (v. 18; Ps 19:4)? Through Moses (Ro 10:19)? Through Isaiah (vs. 20-21)?

LIVING
out the Word

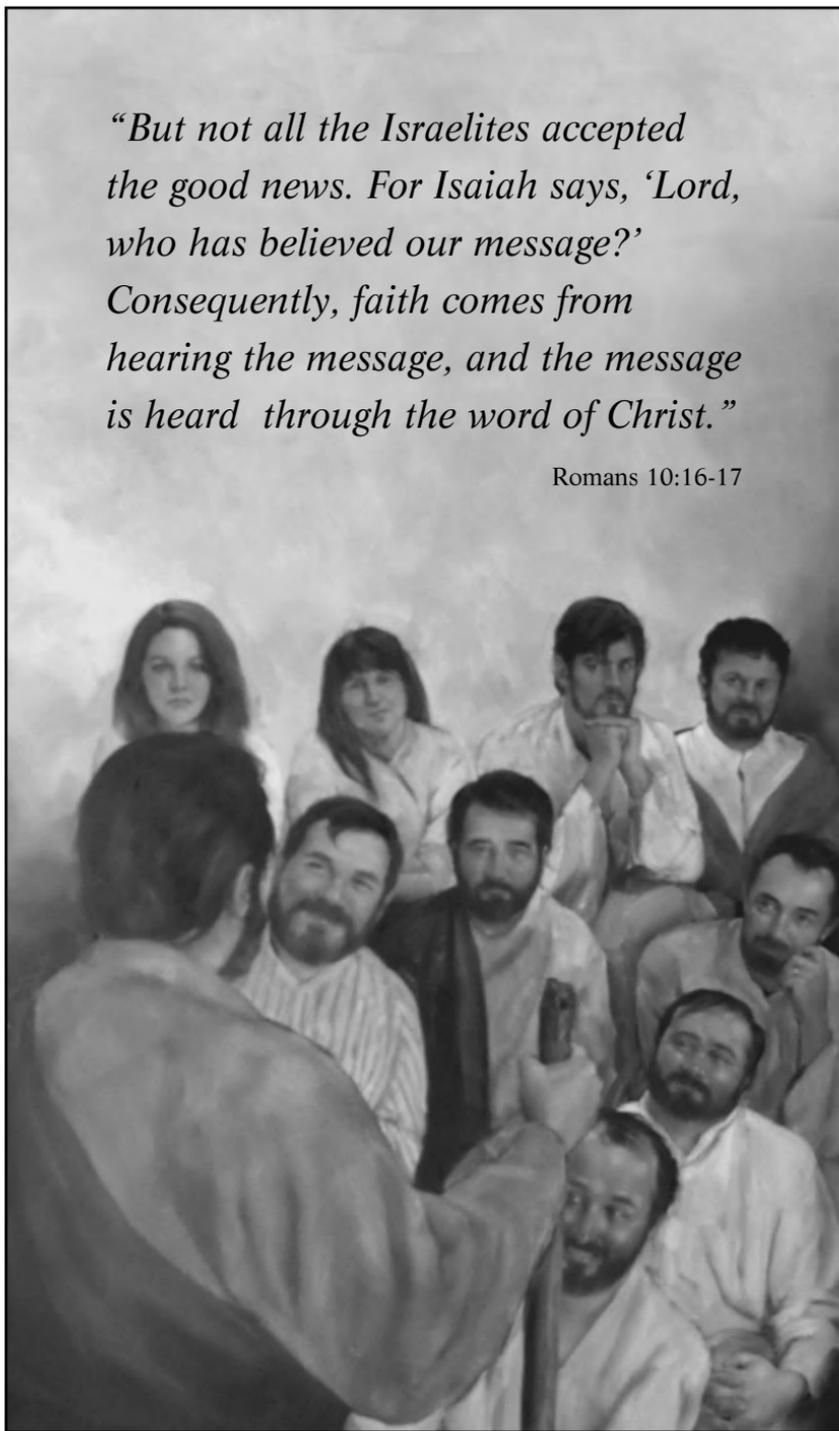
1. How has hearing the word of Christ led you to faith? How is this evident in your life?

WINDOW
on the Word

The book of Isaiah is often referred to as the gospel of the Old Testament. It presents a future message to be preached (Isa 52:7). Among the many quotes in this passage from the book of Isaiah, Paul quotes Isaiah 53:1 in Romans 10:16. The great prophet Isaiah had foreseen the coming of a much greater prophet.

“But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our message?’ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

Romans 10:16-17



Artwork by Dan Andreasen—PTM