

The Bible (Unmuted) Transcript
Episode 40
Romans, Part 17 (Rom 10)
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Episode Summary:

In this episode, Matt gives a tour through Romans 10, where Paul showcases some of his creative exegetical moves. In this chapter, Paul says Jesus is the telos (culmination) of the Torah (Rom 10:4). In this vein, Paul continues along the same road as his previous statements about the Law and its relationship to the manifestation of the righteousness of God through Jesus the Messiah (e.g. Rom 2-3). In Romans 10, readers see specifically how, for Paul, everything (including his hermeneutics!) revolves Jesus the Messiah.

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Pre-order Matt's newest book: *The End of the World As You Know It* (Amazon)

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Transcript:

0:00 Hey everyone, welcome back to another episode of The Bible (Unmuted). I'm excited for this week's episode, which takes us back to our Romans series. It's been a while since we've waded through those Roman waters, and so it's great to pick the conversation back up again today.

The past few weeks we've had some fun interviews, and I hope you've enjoyed those as much as I have. I've really enjoyed those conversations. It's always a blast to talk with other scholars and thinkers who take us for a journey through their area of expertise, introducing us to fresh insights, and challenging us to fine-tune our thinking in the process. Lots of fun. If you haven't had a chance to go back and listen to those, definitely, definitely do that. They are a lot of fun.

Before we dive into today's episode, I want to talk a little bit about my new book that is coming out in February. It's called *The End of the World as You Know It: What the Bible Really Says about the End Times (And Why It's Good News)*. Even though it's not out yet, you can pre-order a copy via Amazon or wherever you shop for your books. I'll put a link in the show notes of this episode so that you can find it with a click of a button.

To give you a taste of what the book is about, here's the blurb from the back of the book:

Christians rightly turn to the Bible to make sense of our times. But so often we get the wrong answers because we ask the wrong questions.

In *The End of the World as You Know It*, Matthew L. Halsted challenges common end-times assumptions and points us back to Scripture. Each chapter reevaluates a popular question in light of the Bible's own concerns: *Will Christians be raptured? What is the mark of the beast? When we let Scripture direct our questions, we get better—and more hopeful—answers.*

The Bible was written for us, but not *to* us. We must bridge the gap between Scripture's ancient context and our own. Reading end-times texts in their ancient context helps us understand our present and future. And when we do, we find that God's word brings peace, not fear and confusion.

So that's the back of the blurb. It captures what I'm trying to do with this book. So be sure to pre-order your copy today, and it will be mailed out to you as soon as it is released. And if you would, please after you read the book, leave a note and rate it on Amazon. That helps all the algorithms, etc., and it gets the word out to other folks as well. I'd be very grateful if you would do that.

2:50 Okay, so, let's talk about Romans. The last time we were in Romans, we were trudging our way through chapter 9. Today, we find ourselves in chapter 10, which has a lot of goodies for us to explore. Lots of questions, too. I want to say from the outset that this chapter is dense. It's been fun, actually, because as I've prepared for this discussion, I've gone back and looked over some of the literature, some things scholars have said in their monographs, commentaries and so forth. And I've even picked up my own book, and revisited some of these issues that I haven't been dabbling in for a while. (I should say, the older I get, the more I realize how much I forget! So, going back through my own book has been a lot of fun in this respect). At any rate because of this density, I'm going to be selective in a lot of what I talk about today. I won't be able to get to every nook and cranny of this beautiful text. My goal, as I've said before, is for us to get a big picture view of Romans. I don't want to get lost in too many weeds.

So with that said, let's dive into Romans chapter 10.

4:15 Let's start off by reading versus one through four:

Romans 10 (NRSV)

10:1 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. 2 I can testify that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. 3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Here we see Paul's heart in the matter. He sincerely wants Israel to be saved. Here he is obviously talking about *ethnic* Israel. Paul's theology is such that he thinks that Gentiles who believe in Christ are grafted into the story of Israel and are, in this way, counted among the elect — i.e., among the circumcised. To be *in Christ* is to be *in Israel*. Remember from last time, Paul thinks election is christologically centered.

He begins by saying in this passage here, "**they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened.**" A better translation, I think, is "they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (which, I think, is how the ESV translates it). The point Paul is making here is that many within ethnic

Israel have not based their zeal on the knowledge that Jesus is the Messiah... As the Messiah, Jesus is, therefore, *the* central focus of Yahweh's saving plan for Israel. Because they do not believe in Christ as the Messiah, they are left to pledge their devotion and loyalty to works of Torah. Paul's working assumption, though, is that the Torah is fulfilled completely in Jesus the Messiah. He says in verse 4, "**For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.**" The word here for end, *Christ is the end of the law*, the word here is *telos* – "Christ is the *telos* of the law." In other words, Christ is the *culmination* of the Torah for everyone — whether Jew or Gentile—it is for all who believe. I think that word *telos* there is best translated as *culmination* not just in like he *ends* it, but he *culminates* it. I think that's the better translation here.

This assumption, (that Christ is the culmination of the Torah), is so important for Paul. It grounds his entire understanding of Jew and Gentile relationships. Since Christ fulfills Torah, and since anyone can be *in Christ*, and since whatever is true of Christ is true for those who are *in Christ*, it follows that anyone in Christ fulfills the Torah. If a Gentile is in Christ therefore, then a Gentile fulfills Torah. And of course, the opposite is true. If someone is not in Christ, then that person does not completely fulfill Torah. They have not *culminated* Torah in themselves through Christ, because they're not in Christ. Again... for Paul, everything is christological. Everything is centered around the Messiah, Jesus. Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. And nobody can boast. As we will see in Romans 11, boasting is absolutely and unequivocally forbidden. And I'm going to repeat that because it's very important. Boasting is absolutely and unequivocally forbidden. The Jew is not allowed to boast over the Gentile, and the Gentile is certainly not allowed to boast over the Jew. Why? We are all accepted by God by grace.

8:18 In the next section that I'm about to read, we will see more clearly how Paul christologizes the Torah. I'm going to read vv. 5-8, and you'll need to listen really closely or else follow along in your Bible. The reason is because Paul intertwines various Old Testament passages into his own text (in Romans) in such a way that it is quite easy to miss. To make it easier, what I will do is read these verses and, along the way, stop to make a comment about the Old Testament passage that Paul is quoting. So I'll begin in verse 5. Paul says this,

5 Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that "the person who does these things will live by them." [Here Paul is quoting from Leviticus 18:5. That verse is all about the need to follow Torah – to obey it, etc. Let me re-read Paul's line here to keep it fresh on our minds] **5 Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that "the person who does these things will live by them."** [okay, verse 6] **6 But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).** [these are a mix of quotations taken from Deuteronomy 9 and 30, which Paul essentially recontextualizes into his christology] **8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);** [this is a quotation from Deuteronomy 30:14, which again, Paul christologizes]

Okay, so let's dissect this interesting passage further. So, for starters, we have to keep everything in context. Paul has just said that Christ is the culmination of the Torah (10:4). The next thing he does is quote from Leviticus 18:5, which says that the Torah must be done or worked out in one's life – because to do so is life itself. Okay, so far so good.

Next Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 9 and 30. He takes the short line from Deuteronomy 9 that says, “Do not say in your heart” and mixes it with passages from Deuteronomy 30. That line from Deuteronomy 9, in its original context, was about warning Israel to *not say in their heart* that God is giving them the promised land because of any righteousness of their own. No, God is giving them the land because the nations who are currently living there are terribly wicked and because of the covenant promises he made with Abraham. That’s why God is giving them the land. In other words, God’s gifts are based on grace.

11:16 Okay, so next Paul takes that small line from Deuteronomy 9 (“do not say in your heart”) and mixes it with passages from Deuteronomy 30. *That* passage talks about how there is no need to go up into the heavens or across the sea to get the divine commandments — that is, the word of YHWH. There’s no need to do that because “the word is very near” to them (Deuteronomy 30:14). The point of Deuteronomy 30 is quite simple: *Following God’s laws aren’t hard*. That’s exactly what Deuteronomy 30:11 says, “Surely this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is too far away” (NRSV).

But notice that Paul is taking these passages — namely, Leviticus 18 and Deuteronomy 9 and 30 — and he’s christologizing them. For Paul, the Leviticus 18:5 passage becomes a text that points to Christ. When Leviticus says “***the person who does these things [of Torah] will live by them***” Paul takes that to be in reference to how the Torah is completed in Christ. I don’t think Paul is contrasting Leviticus 18:5 with his Christology; I think he interprets Leviticus in light of his Christology. This of course is debated among scholars, but that’s my position. Remember, he quotes Leviticus immediately after he says that Christ is the culmination of the Torah. So, I take these verses as going together (this was an argument that was made by Ross Wagner in his book, *Herald of the Good News*. Which I highly recommend that you go pick up and read. It’s a pretty heavy volume, but it’s well worth the time, effort and the money to just wade through that for quite a bit of time). Anyway, back to Paul. Paul has no problem conceptualizing how Christians can do the Torah by being in Christ — that’s exactly what he said in Romans 2:12-29. If you remember Paul thinks that Christians can do the Torah by virtue of being in Christ. So, in my opinion, I think he’s saying the same thing here. He’s agreeing that, yes, the Torah must be followed. Yes, the point of Torah is to give life. But it’s only given christologically. Torah is only followed christologically. It’s only fulfilled by faith in Christ. Because Christ is the *telos*, the culmination of the Torah itself.

The same can be seen in the Deuteronomy passages Paul quotes. He christologizes those texts, too. Let’s read it again:

6 But the righteousness that comes from faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

Remember, these passages that talk about going up into heaven and descending into the sea were originally in reference to obtaining and receiving Torah. Moses reminds the people that they don’t have to do that because the word is *near* them. Paul takes those texts that originally spoke about the Torah and recontextualizes them around the Messiah, Jesus. Specifically, he uses the language of ascending and descending, which alludes to Christ’s own resurrection. Originally, in the Hebrew Bible and in the Septuagint, it talks not of descending into the abyss, but going *across the abyss* to get the commandment. Paul simply adds the language of descending to make a pointed reference to Christ’s resurrection). For Paul, it’s christological. The *Torah, that is, the word of the commandments of Torah* are all Christologically recontextualized. That’s exactly what Paul

says in Romans 10:8: **8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim)**

Notice very carefully that “**the word [of the Torah]**” of Deuteronomy for Paul becomes “**the word of faith that we proclaim.**” What Paul means here is obvious—Jesus is the message, the word, which was spoken about so long ago in Israel’s history, the Torah. Jesus really is the culmination of the Torah. And that’s how Paul can do what he does here with these texts, because his assumption from the outset, from the get go, from the start, is that Christ; that Jesus is the Messiah. It’s christology.

This brings us straight to Romans 10:9 ...

16:00 **9 because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. 11 The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. 13 For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”**

Here Paul quotes from a couple of Old Testament texts: Isaiah 28:16 and Joel 3:5 (Or if you’re reading a long in the Septuagint, it would be 2:32 LXX, Because there’s different versification things going on there). Anyway, lots to say here, but one thing I want to point out has to do with the last quotation that says “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” In the Septuagint, the word “Lord” is *kyrios* (κύριος). This is the title that is often applied to Jesus in the New Testament. In the Hebrew Bible, the word used is that of the divine name, *Yahweh* (יהוה).

Notice the convergence of ideas here. For Paul, Jesus is fleshing out (quite literally *fleshing out*) the life and ministry of Israel’s God Yahweh—so much so, in fact, that Paul can take Yahweh texts and apply them to Jesus.

We need to understand who Jesus actually is. This reminds me of Hebrews 1:1-3, where the author of Hebrews says this:

*1 Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. 3 He is the reflection of God’s glory and **the exact imprint** of God’s very being...*

The words “exact imprint”, that phrase, is a translation of the Greek *charaktér*, χαρακτήρ. In antiquity, this word *charaktér* was used to describe the imprint (or stamp) of a symbol of measurement upon coinage (see for example, Aristotle’s *Politics*, bk 1:9). I think the point here in Hebrews is that if you’ve seen Jesus, the Divine Son, then you behold the glorious God. And for Paul in Romans, the same idea applies. Jesus is no *mere* man.

18:30 This brings us to verses 14 and 15.

14 But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they

to hear without someone to proclaim him? 15 And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Paul focuses his attention here on proclamation of the Gospel. It has to be told to people; it has to be announced so that people can believe. And of course, before it can be announced, it must be by someone who was sent to announce it. And Paul links the Gospel message and its proclaimers back to Isaiah, specifically, Isaiah 52:7.

There are some textual issues here that we could dive into, but I think for simplicity's sake it might be good to go back to the verse and make one brief, though important, note. So let me read Isaiah 52:7 from the NRSV:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'" (Is 52:7 (NRSV))

The point I want to make is that this Good News is precisely the good news of *Israel's* God, YHWH. Paul does not want anyone to think that the Gospel is something detached from Israel's story. No, the gospel is inherent to Israel's story. And so, it is definitely worth going back and reading the larger context of Isaiah 52 to get the full scope of that content so that you can come back to Romans 10 and see what Paul's doing here.

20:11 Become a Patreon member! <https://www.patreon.com/TheBibleUnmuted>

Hey friends. I hope this episode is a blessing and encouragement to you. I hope that every episode of the Bible Unmuted gives you something fresh to consider and something deep to Ponder. My goal is to offer food for thought to give listeners the tools they need to be faithful interpreters of scripture. I cherish your continued prayers for this ministry and thanks so much to everyone who lifts me up in prayer each week.

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21:28 Okay, Let's read through vv. 16-21. Now this is a text, a passage where Paul is going to quote several Old Testament texts. And so I'll do the same thing again. I'll read what Paul says, and then I'll make a comment briefly about where he's getting that quotation.

16 But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” [quotation from Isaiah 53:1] **17 So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. 18 But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”** [quotation from Ps 18:5] **19 Again I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, “I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry.”** [quotation from Deuteronomy 32:21]

And I’m actually going to stop here and just make a few comments about some of this. That quotation, Deuteronomy 32:21. That’s the one where Moses says that **“I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry.”** The Deuteronomy quotation is interesting, and I want to say something about it before we move on. The larger picture presented here by Paul is that God is going to make Israel jealous by including Gentiles into the covenant family. Since many in Israel are unbelievers, they will be driven to jealousy, says Paul, by the inclusion of the Gentiles into the covenant. And, as a result, the unbelieving Jews will come into the covenant as well. They will be moved to jealousy, and they will want to come in as well. We see this in Romans 11 specifically, and we’ll say more about that when we get there. But for now, it’s good to just point out that this is Paul’s larger conception of the situation. I really want to drive this home because it’s important for what I’m going to say next. Paul believes that Gentiles are coming into the covenant family. And that that coming into the covenant family of the Gentiles is going to move Israel to jealousy so that they’ll want to come in too. And this Deuteronomy, 32 passage of how God’s going to make Israel jealous of the nation and so forth, that’s part of that calculus. That’s part of the part of the basis for Paul, that Paul uses to justify his vision of how things are working out. Okay. So here’s now that we have what Paul’s saying, let’s go to the original context of Deuteronomy 32.

What’s interesting, though, is that when you go back and read Deuteronomy 32, you see that the meaning there is different than the meaning Paul finds in the passage. For example, in Deuteronomy 32 (which is sometimes called “The Song of Moses”), the nations do drive Israel to jealousy, but not by becoming believers in Yahweh. In fact, God promises to punish the nations for what they do to Israel. So this is an interesting difference, right? Paul says that the nations of the Gentiles are going to drive Israel to jealousy by them coming into the covenant. But in Deuteronomy 32 that’s not what you see.

They do drive Israel to jealousy, but in a different way. I think Ross Wagner says this in his book *Heralds of the Good News* that the way they drive Israel to jealousy in Deuteronomy 32 is that Israel is going to be flustered that God has abandoned them for all sense and purposes because of the rebellion and is moving to the Gentiles, to move the Gentiles to punish Israel through war and so forth. And that God would even use the Gentiles to do that instead of using Israel for covenant purposes. That’s the point of jealousy there. Go back and read Deuteronomy 32 to get that context.

And by the way, just as a footnote, Ross Wagner’s book, *Heralds of the Good News* is super helpful here. It’s a pretty dense book, but it’s well worth the time and effort that you would put through it to read it. And it’s kind of pricey too actually. But, if you want a more digestible kind of version of that, you can pick up my book and see what’s going on there, because I cite and interact with Ross quite a bit in my book. But again, Definitely go pick up *Heralds of the Good News* by Ross Wagner. It’s definitely worth it.

26:23 In my own book, I look at the situation hermeneutically— I asked the question, *how* can Paul quote Deuteronomy 32 in the way that he does. I mean, we can say that his hermeneutics is

christological, which gives him some leeway in interpretation. But *how* does that work logically speaking? What is it about Christology that would make that work? Well, I hate to punt to my book again, but you really do have to read my book because I go into the details and all that. For those who don't know, I adopt I adopt the philosophical hermeneutics of a German 20th century philosopher who wrote about that. His name is Hans-Georg Gadamer, and he proposes some philosophical theories that I adopt for biblical studies and how to make sense of how Paul can coherently use his Christology in the way that he does. So if you want to get into the philosophical weeds, check out my book. But for our purposes here, in these episodes in Romans I think it's sufficient to say that Paul's christology is calling the shots. What is important to Paul about Deuteronomy 32 is not *how* the nations drive the Jews to jealousy, but *that* they drive them to jealousy. Again, according to Deuteronomy 32, they don't drive Israel to jealousy by becoming believers in YHWH. But Paul imagines a situation where they do that. Paul's christological lens is sort of blurring out all the irrelevant stuff of Deuteronomy 32 so that all the truly relevant stuff of Deuteronomy 32 can come in and answer his particular questions that he is asking for his particular situation as an apostle to the Gentiles. I don't mean that parts of Deuteronomy 32 are irrelevant. What I mean is that they're not applicable to his specific situation. And because there are some things that aren't applicable to his situation, he's not going to use them for that purpose. And that's where his christological lens comes in. He's only interested in not so much *how* the Gentiles are driving Israel to jealousy, but simply that they are. He doesn't need Deuteronomy 32 to say Gentiles can come into the covenant. Paul has already established that truth on other grounds. So, the fact that Deuteronomy 32 doesn't mention Gentile inclusion or that their inclusion is the precise cause for jealousy, is irrelevant for his purposes. So go read my book. I get into the weeds and all the citations and scholarly things and stuff having to do with Romans 10 and all that content there. So check out my book and you'll get into the weeds there. But for our purposes today, let's just leave it here and come back to it in just a minute.

I want us to jump to the curious situation in Romans 10:20-21, where Paul does something funky with Isaiah 65. By looking at this text, we might be in a better situation to see how Paul can do what he does with the Deuteronomy 32. So let me read Romans 10:20-21. It says,

20 Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."

[quotation of Isaiah 65:1]

21 But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people." [quotation of Isaiah 65:2]

30:23 When you look at the original context of Isaiah 65:1-2, you see that Isaiah is referring to Israel in both verses. But Paul quotes it as if Isaiah 65:1 refers to the Gentiles and v. 2 refers to Israel. Listen again:

20 Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me." [quotation of Isaiah 65:1]

21 But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people." [quotation of Isaiah 65:2 and he explicitly says here that this is of Israel. that he says *all day long, and I've held out my hands to a disobedient contrary people*. So you see what Paul's doing? He's taking Isaiah 65:1-2 -both verses originally referred to Israel in its context. But here he split them in two. Verse 1 is now about the Gentiles and verse 2 is about Israel.]

So, what's going on here? How do we make sense of Paul's exegesis here? Here are some things to keep in mind.

First, we have to remember that christology is definitely in play here. And I think we can see a clue here from the quoted text. When Paul quotes Isaiah to say "**I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.**" The word "shown" comes from the root word *phainō*, φαίνω. A cognate of this word is in Rom 3:21, where Paul says that "the righteousness of God has been *manifested*... through the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah. So, what Paul is saying here? This idea that I have shown myself, I have manifested myself, (*phainō*), I've manifested myself to those who didn't ask for me. Again, this is given that link with Romans 3, how this is a manifestation of Jesus, the righteousness of God has been manifested, shown through Jesus. I think what Paul's saying here is that the Gentiles have found God by means of the manifestation/appearing (*phainō*) of Jesus. So, if this link to Romans 3 is legitimate (and arguably, I think it is), then we might say that Paul is reading Isaiah christologically. I think that can be substantiated.

Second, we see something similar when Paul quotes Isaiah to say that God has "**been found by those who did not seek me.**" Here this might be connected back to Romans 9:30-10:4, where Paul talks about Gentiles have attained righteousness even though they have not pursued it. The whole point in that section, if you remember, was the axis around which election tilted was christology, is Christ. So whatever you do with Christ determines whether you are part of the elect. So perhaps that point needs to be seen here in the quotation from Isaiah about God being found by the Gentiles. It's that point, that christological point, of those not seeking him and those who do seek him. Meaning specifically, the Christ who has been manifested to those who were not asking for him. This is clearly a reference to the Gentiles. And all I'm saying here is that the assumption that Paul seems to be bringing to the Isaiah quotation, then, is his christology.

Third, the reason Paul's christology can do this sort of exegesis (you know, take texts that originally talked about Israel and substitute Gentiles in their place) is because he is assuming that, at the end of the day, there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles *with respect to sin*. Because the Messiah has come and solved the sin problem, the access that Jews and Gentiles have to the covenant is the same—namely, through the faithfulness of Jesus, which has been manifested (shown) to everyone. If Jesus had not solved the sin problem, then the distinctions between the two people groups would have remained. But now that Jesus has come as the faithful Israelite and has thus fulfilled Torah, anyone who is in Christ can fulfill Torah too, thus making it where Gentiles can be grafted into Israel's story.

35:00 The other thing to keep in mind is the argument that Paul made in Romans 4 and 9. There, you recall, Paul showed how Israel's election was based on grace, not works of Torah. Abraham was justified prior to works such as circumcision. Isaac, likewise, was not the product of human effort but was, miraculously, the product of grace. Jacob's election, too, was a sign of sheer grace; *he was the second born son!* So, if a second-born son can be the recipient of the covenant blessings, then surely all second-born sons and daughters like the gentiles could participate in the blessings, too. And this concept of grace-based election has been situated around Christ. Election is christological. So if we were to ask Paul, why are you reading Gentiles into Old Testament texts such as Isaiah 65, I suspect he would say, "Why not? We are all, after all, on equal footing. If God elects Gentiles by Christ, then these Gentiles can legitimately be counted among the Jewish people and included within the Jewish story."

This is arguably how the otherwise funky exegesis can be seen as legitimate. Paul simply assumes that his christology is true and applies it. He believes that Jesus has been made known

to the world, that he has fulfilled Torah, that he has solved the sin problem for all humanity. And as such, because Jesus has done all that, Paul can go back and look at old texts in fresh ways.

So Paul can look at Deuteronomy 32 and see how, in the ancient times, Israel was driven to jealousy by Gentiles, albeit in a different way than today—but in a way that is no less significant than in ancient times. Paul's christology allows for the irrelevant features of the Deuteronomy text to be blurred out so that what is relevant can emerge for his purposes of application, his purposes of applying them the truth of the Messiah and to his apostolic mission.

Let me read a section from my book. I'll be reading from page 198, if you want to keep track of this and jot it down for later. But it's got this passage, these two paragraphs come from the sections where I deal with all these texts. So yeah, let me read:

“The key to that” [in other words, the key to Paul’s exegesis of Deuteronomy 32 and Isaiah and all that], “the key we recall was his christological prejudgment. I think Paul’s christological, and hence neutralizing, prejudgment is also operative in his reading of Deuteronomy 32:21. The fact that its original context spoke not about Gentile inclusion but rather Gentile persecution of Israel as the means by which Israel would become jealous, is for Paul incidental to what he considers to be the main point of that passage. The main point is simply that Gentiles spurn Israel to jealousy. That Paul already envisions the inclusion of the Gentiles has been established on other grounds. For example, by means of his christology operating through the Isaiah 65:1 quotation. Thus Paul is free to see the Gentiles as being able to spurn Israel to jealousy in another way, namely by being included in the covenant. Paul’s christology as a prejudgment once again blurs what is irrelevant in the text and allows that which is relevant to emerge into full view.

None of this is to suggest that Paul is violently forcing his christology onto the scriptural text. If we approach the issue through Gadamerian eyes, this becomes clear. As I have mentioned throughout this study, Paul’s Christology routinely enters into a dialogical relationship with the text of scripture, both of which have their own say, and thus make their own contribution to the discovery of meaning. [Then I go and I say], The meaning which emerges from this dialogical relationship is nonetheless something new, something fresh and novel. The contingency of Paul’s a reading situation demands that this be so, and his christological prejudgments make this possible.”

39:30 Okay, so that was a lot of material for this episode. Again, if you were only able to listen to this without at the same time following along in the text itself, I'd recommend finding some time to grab your Bible and going through Romans 10 line by line so you can see what's going on. You definitely need a highlighter and colored pens because you could highlight, for example, the Old Testament text that Paul quotes in Romans 10 and then you can underline in red ink, his interpretations. And maybe off into the margin, you can grab a blue pen and make some notes about some of the changes he makes, and what not. You know, I seldom read a book without a pen in my hand. I don't know. I just have to mark it out. That's just the way I learn and maybe that's not helpful, but if it is, I think in Romans 10 there, it would definitely be helpful to do that.

And again, there's a lot more we can say about the textual stuff in these passages and all the debates among scholars. But in keeping with my goal to give us a 30,000-foot view of the situation,

I want to keep it simple in that respect. Because it's not simple in the sense not profound. I think, I think, at 30,000-foot view of the situation is deeply profound. And sometimes you can get lost in the weeds so much that you lose the profound nature of Paul's message I just want to say if you are interested in diving deeper into the fine details of this passage, check out my book, *Paul and the Meaning of Scripture*. It's a technical account of the Paul's hermeneutic posture toward the important Old Testament texts that he quotes. If you do want a deep dive into the textual issues, I highly recommend checking out Christopher Stanley's book, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*. It's a must read on all the technical, textual questions. Also, if you're interested especially in Paul's interpretations of Deuteronomy 32 and Isaiah 65, which we explored a moment ago, definitely check out Ross Wagner's *Heralds of the Good News*. It's a great book as well.

Again, I'm trying to keep us at the magic altitude of 30,000 feet. Like I've said before, it's easy to get lost in the weeds and miss the point of Paul's message. I want to keep the whole picture in view if possible. And that picture that Paul is painting is quite simple: Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, who fulfills the Torah, and who invites *all* people—Jew and Gentile—to be part of the elect community of God. For Paul, divine election and purposes of God are centered completely around Jesus the Messiah.

Well, friends, that's all for now. Have a great week!

42:30 That's the end of today's episode. And thanks again for listening to The Bible Unmuted. If you like this podcast, consider rating it on your podcast platform, subscribing to it, and sharing with your friends. You can also support the podcast by becoming a patreon member. Go to: <https://www.patreon.com/TheBibleUnmuted> - or simply find the link in the description of this episode. Thanks for listening. Until next time, friends.