

# Jesus – The Aim of God’s Story

Thomas Robinson, *God’s Amazing Paths 3*, October 2, 2016

## Romans 10:1-13

<sup>1</sup> Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is for salvation.

<sup>2</sup> For I bear them witness that they have a **zeal for God**, but it’s not founded on **knowledge**.

<sup>3</sup> For, because they didn’t understand of God’s righteous way of fulfilling his promises, and because they’re seeking to establish their own understanding of it, they didn’t yield themselves to **God’s path of righteousness**. [cf Deut 29:4; 32:28-29]

<sup>4</sup> For **the goal of the law is the Messiah** to create a righteous relationship with God for **all people who put their trust in him**.

<sup>5</sup> For Moses writes about the righteous standing that flows from the law, that

*“the person who does them [commandments] shall live by them.”* [Lev 18:5; Deut 30:6]

<sup>6</sup> But the righteousness standing that’s based on trusting God’s faithfulness says,

*“Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’”* [Deut 30:12]

(that is, to bring **Messiah** down)

<sup>7</sup> *“or ‘Who will descend into the depths?’”* [Deut 30:13]

(that is, to bring **Messiah** up from the dead). <sup>8</sup> But what does it say?

*“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”* [Deut 30:14]

(that is, **the word** of faith that we proclaim); <sup>9</sup> because, if you confess “in your mouth” that **Jesus is Lord** and believe “in your heart” that **God raised him from the dead**, you will be saved.

<sup>10</sup> For with the heart a person puts their trust in Jesus and is set right with God, and with the mouth a person confesses Jesus’ Lordship and is delivered. <sup>11</sup> For Scripture says,

*“Everyone who puts their trust in him will not be put to shame.”* [Isa 28:16; Rm 9:33]

<sup>12</sup> For there is **no distinction between Jew and Greek**; for the same one is **Lord of all people**, bestowing his riches on **all who call on him**. <sup>13</sup> For

*“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”* [Joel 2:32]

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## Deuteronomy 30:1-2, 11-14

<sup>1</sup> “And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where THE LORD your God has driven you, <sup>2</sup> and return to THE LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice ....

<sup>11</sup> “For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. <sup>12</sup> It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ <sup>13</sup> Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ <sup>14</sup> But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

## Romans 9:5

<sup>5</sup> Theirs are the ancestors, and from them, with regard to flesh, came the Messiah, who is God over all people, blessed forever. Amen.

## Romans 1:15-17

<sup>15</sup> I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. <sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it God’s faithful righteousness is revealed flowing out of (God’s) faithfulness into (our) faith, as it is written, *“The one who is righteous from faith shall live.”* [Hab. 2:4]

## Romans 3:21-25

<sup>21</sup> But now apart from the law God's faithful righteousness has been manifested, although the Law (Torah) and the Prophets bear witness to it – <sup>22</sup> God's righteousness seen through Jesus Messiah's faithfulness for all who have faith. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and have lost the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are declared right by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Messiah Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a mercy-seat through the faithfulness shown in his blood.

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## Israel, the Torah, and the Messiah

In Rm 9-11 Paul explores a powerful dynamic of Scripture. God creates us humans to whom he gives life and freedom. He desires our good, but the greatest good is bound to that freedom: moral choice, love, trust, faithfulness, creativity, relationship. We rebel. God promises to open a path to a renewed relationship of love, forgiveness, right standing. He chooses Abraham as the conduit for all the world to deal with human sin and death.

Then the path has twists and turns as God makes choices, creates a covenant people, gives Torah, promises a Messiah, deals with deep division and rebelliousness, begins radical transformation through exile, empires, oppression ... all the way to a Messiah crucified!

Moses in Deuteronomy tells of the disasters and sketches the shape of renewal. God's healing word will be brought near, within people. Many counted on rigorous obedience and purity to internalize the word of Law, define God's people. Paul knew it had not worked.

God had chosen a wholly surprising path. God took on the role of Messiah in Jesus, coming near to humans in the deepest possible way. Jesus – Word in flesh, crucified, resurrected – comes as Lord over empires, LORD of scripture, Lord over all people, Jew and Gentile. The aim of the Torah was that Messiah who fulfilled God's promises for the whole world.

## God's Righteousness and Human Righteousness

Here Paul sets basic ideas within the flow of God's story. "Righteousness" (*dikaio syne*) has two sides. God's righteousness is his faithful fulfilling of his promises of blessing, forgiveness, deliverance and renewal for all humanity in spite of human brokenness and rebellion brought into focus in Israel's persistent rebellion recorded in scripture.

Human righteousness is people being brought into a right relationship or righteous standing with God through what God has done in Jesus, building a relationship, forgiving sin, etc. It's not something sinful humans can ever achieve on their own. It is grace, new creation.

## From God's Faithfulness in Jesus to our Faith

So also "Faith" (*pistis*) has two sides. First is God's faithfulness (Rm 3:5) made visible especially in Jesus' faithfulness (Rm 3:22-25) in crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus is Israel's Messiah, the new human, God's own presence in his creation – faithfulness on a new scale.

Human faith, trust, belief, confession is our response to God's faithfulness in Jesus. It is seeing and trusting in Jesus the LORD of scripture, fulfilling his promises. Seeing him as Lord over all the world, who overturns all human power structures, as the Lord who is the One God of all peoples. Most basic, he is the Lord over death as God raises him, uniting Father Son and Spirit and creating new Life of resurrection. Faith reveals a new world.

## One God, One Lord of all People

The fact that the Law is a step toward the Messiah as its goal means that the Messiah as Lord of all redefines the people of God not by "works of law" to mark out an ethnic people, but by a relationship open to all. Every human is invited to trust God, become God's child. Distinctions are overcome in a welcoming invitation, trusting God's long faithfulness to us all.