

Deuteronomy 30:12-14 and Romans 10:9

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In the late 1970's, thanks in large part to Brother Jimmy Swaggart's efforts, Paul's words in Romans 10:9 became some of the most abused and misrepresented words found in the holy Bible. In Romans 10:9, Paul meant absolutely nothing that Brother Swaggart and millions of those who copied him thought Paul meant. When studying the Bible, we too will make the same kind of error if we fail, as Brother Swaggart did, to consider the important element of **context**, or "setting" of the verses we read. Context answers for us such basic, essential questions as "Who is speaking?" and "Who is being spoken to?"

In the context of Romans 10:4-11, it is obvious that Paul is not speaking to unconverted sinners, as millions upon millions of Christians have taught and still are. Paul is not discussing the way of conversion of sinners; he is discussing the way of salvation for saints. In Romans 10:4-11, Paul quotes two statements by Moses. It is critical that the reader of Romans know that Paul is quoting Moses *both times*. First, from Leviticus 18:5:

"Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them. I am the LORD."

The words belong to God, obviously, but Moses passed them on to Israel. Therefore, Paul could rightly maintain that Moses said them. But because of an animosity toward the Law of Moses that Christian teachers have promoted for many years now, whenever it is mentioned that "Moses said . . .", a multitude in this culture feel an automatic negative reaction for whatever may come next. If, however, we know and love the truth, we do not feel that way, and we will be able to understand what Paul actually meant in Romans 10.

Paul's second quote of Moses is from Deuteronomy 30:12-14. And Paul uses Moses' words as a form by which he himself exhorts the Church to continue in the faith. These words from Paul are by no means intended to disparage Moses, an impression that is too often left by some.

Moses and Paul in Deuteronomy 30 and Romans 10

Moses said to Israel (Dt. 30:11-12): The commandments of God were not hidden from them, and they had no need to pray for God's commandments to be brought down from heaven.

Paul said to the Church (Rom. 10:6): The Church had no need to wish that God's Messiah would be sent down from heaven.

Moses said to Israel (Dt. 30:13): Israel had no need to wish that God's commandments would be brought to them from across the deep blue sea so that they could know and obey them.

Paul said to the Church (Rom. 10:7): The Church had no need to wish that someone would descend into hell to bring the Messiah back to life.

Moses said to Israel (Dt. 30:14): They are very well acquainted with the Word of God, so that they now can obey His will (and be saved from damnation).

Paul said to the Church (Rom. 10:8): They are very well acquainted with the gospel that Paul preached, the gospel that will save them if they obey it (cp. 1Cor. 15:1-2).

Moses was telling Israel not to look anywhere else; they had all that they needed in order to please God and be saved. Paul was exhorting the Church in Rome that they had all they needed in order to please God and be saved in the end.

Moses was speaking to Israelites who had been observing the law of Moses for forty years in the wilderness. Paul was speaking to an established Church of saints whose faith had been heard of around the world (Rom. 1:7-8).

Nothing Moses said applied to any heathen nation. Nothing Paul said applied to unconverted sinners.