

ROMANS 10:14-21

After laying out the simplicity of the gospel in Romans 10:5-13, Paul now states what should be obvious - that is, if people don't know about Jesus, are told about Him, how can they call upon the Lord? He follows this with the acknowledgment that the Jewish people were disobedient to the message but the Gentiles received it.

The thoughts about the Jewish and Gentile reception of the gospel is general, not absolute. There are Jewish people who accept the gospel and Gentile people who reject it. He is speaking corporately. And to make sure that no one misunderstands his teaching about the Jews, the next chapter starts with, "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid."

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

The main point of this section is that people need to be told about Jesus. Four times "they" is used in verse 14, and is speaking, contextually, of the Jewish people.

"This passage is often used as the basis for the church's missionary program, and rightly so, but its first application is to the nation of Israel. The only way unbelieving Jews can be saved is by calling on the Lord. But before they can call on Him, they must believe. For the Jew, this meant believing that Jesus Christ of Nazareth truly is the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel. It also meant believing in His death and resurrection (Romans 10:9, 10). But in order to believe, they must hear the Word, for it is the Word that creates faith in the heart of the hearer (Romans 10:17). This meant that a herald of the Word must be sent, and it is the Lord who does the sending. At this point, Paul could well have been remembering his own call to preach the Word to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1-3)." Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor Books

Paul, here, works "backward" with his challenge based on the three uses of "How."

1. How can a Jewish person (by extension everyone) call on some one they don't believe in?

Verse 17 of this chapter lays the foundation for what is needed to believe - the word of God - which when understood enables a person to call on the Lord for salvation.

Most Jewish people have a conception of Jesus based on Catholicism, anti-Semitic "Christians," or other non-biblical portrayals.

Jewish people need to hear about the Jewish Jesus revealed in the Scripture. Jesus was born to a Jewish mother; his lineage is from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; He is the Messiah of Israel from the tribe of Judah; and was promised and sent by the God of Israel.

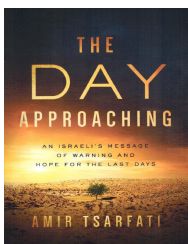
2. How shall they believe on someone they have not heard about?

It is impossible to believe on someone (Messiah) you have not heard about. Also, if one has a erroneous understanding of someone (Messiah) this makes it impossible to believe on Him (Messiah), as well.

What about the multitudes who have heard about the unbiblical Catholic gospel, the unbiblical Jehovah Witness Jesus, the unbiblical Mormon Jesus, the unbiblical Islamic Jesus, and the myriad other false Jesus?

The Word of God is paramount in our witness.

I have recently received an advertisement for a book, The Day Approaching: An Israeli's Message of Warning and Hope for the Last Days, by Amir Tsarfati. A I reviewed the first chapter, *Any Day Now*, I became concerned about some things.



1. Coptic "Christians" are treated as believers. Page 11, "These brothers and sisters of the Coptic church showed themselves to be sons and daughters of their Father in heaven and ambassadors of the love of their Savior."

"Theologically, Coptic Christianity is very similar to Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. They profess to be genuine followers of Jesus Christ and a part of His worldwide Church. But, as with Catholicism, they tend to emphasize meritorious works in salvation along with liturgical ritual rather than salvation through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ." <https://www.gotquestions.org/Coptic-Christianity.html>

2. "I receive hundreds of emails and messages every day from every corner of the globe - Malaysia, the Philippines, Japan, North America, Australia, South America, Israel, Europe. What so many of these people are writing is, 'Amir, I'm having visions,' or 'Amir, I keep having these dreams.'" The prophet Joel wrote: 'It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days (Joel 2:28-29).'"

An Evaluation of Muslim Dreams & Visions of Isa (Jesus)

By Pastor Dennis McBride

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<http://bethanyhavasu.org/journal/?p=131>

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My Conclusion: This study concludes that the biblical support offered for the Muslim dreams phenomenon, when evaluated within the context of Scripture, does not, in fact, support the phenomenon. Therefore, I conclude that these dreams and visions lack biblical authority and must therefore be viewed as extra-biblical experiences generated from sources other than the Holy Spirit.

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Should we question an experience that helps lead someone to faith in Christ?

Why make an issue of how Muslims come to faith in Christ, as long as they come to faith? And doesn't the fact that they come to faith legitimize the means by which they come? Those are fair questions, and the most concise answers are: 1) God commands us to be discerning in all things 2) the end doesn't justify the means if the means fail the test of Scripture, and 3) this isn't merely an experience; it's a significant spiritual movement based on subjective mystical encounters that must have objective biblical support before they can be classified as truly Christian. Testing what claims to be from God is every Christian's responsibility (1 Thess. 5:20-21; 1 John 4:1-3), and exercising caution about claims of Jesus speaking personally to Muslims is as important as exercising caution about any reports of divine communication beyond the text of Scripture itself.

In Acts 17:11 God commends the Bereans for putting the gospel itself to the test. But testing Muslim dreams is more difficult by far than testing the gospel because the gospel is a singular, cohesive, objective entity readily affirmed by direct biblical support; whereas these personal dreams are numerous, varied, subjective, and virtually impossible to test fully due to their extra-biblical content.

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10. Is Isa's message consistent with Scripture?

What Isa Doesn't Say: I'm most struck by what Isa doesn't say in the accounts I've read. Although the encounters are said to prepare the dreamers for the gospel, there is little or no mention of sin, repentance, confession, righteousness, or forgiveness; and no presentation of God's holiness or justice. Simply put, the need for salvation isn't clarified (or in some cases even mentioned), yet that was at the heart of Christ's communication with unbelievers when He was on earth. But Isa's "gospel" is minimalistic and void of any clear and concise call to repentance. Gospel clarity and precision would be especially important for those Muslims who don't have a biblical background to draw from and who would therefore need to understand what God requires of them.

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12. Does Joel 2:28 support the Muslim dreams phenomenon?

Dr. Irvin Busenitz continues:

Only two points of contact are found [between Joel's prophecy and Pentecost]: God's Spirit was poured out, and those who called upon the name of the Lord were saved. But it is these two elements of Joel's prophecy – the Spirit poured out and salvation for those who call on the Lord – that provide the connecting link to Pentecost. They lead logically to the central focus of Peter's sermon. Consequently, it appears best to view Joel's prophecy as fulfilled in a preliminary fashion at the time of Pentecost, with a complete fulfillment reserved for the time surrounding the Second Advent.[15]

There were no dreams or visions at Pentecost, nor did Joel indicate that Jesus would appear in dreams and visions when His Prophecy was fulfilled. He speaks only of the *fact* of dreams and visions, not of their content. Therefore, it's incumbent upon those who defend Muslim dreams on the basis of Joel 2:28 to demonstrate more convincingly how Joel's prophecy supports this phenomenon.

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Conclusion: If Muslims were having dreams about Jesus, which resulted in opening their hearts to the gospel, I'd say, "Praise the Lord", because I believe the Holy Spirit can use natural dreams to convict people of their need for salvation and direct them to the gospel if He so chooses. However, the reports I'm hearing and reading claim that Jesus Himself, in the person of Isa, is appearing to Muslims in dreams. I must reject the accuracy of those claims for all the reasons outlined above, and conclude that such dreams and visions lack biblical authority and must therefore be viewed as extra-biblical experiences generated from sources other than the Holy Spirit. I must also continue to pray that the gospel of Jesus Christ, not dreams and visions of Isa, will permeate Muslim communities

3. How shall people hear without a preacher: κηρυσσω kay-roos'-so, to herald (as a public crier), especially divine truth (the gospel):--preacher(-er), proclaim, publish.

Preacher is better understood as someone who shares or proclaims. God did not choose angels to share the gospel, but the redeemed.

1 Corinthians 1:

- 17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.
- 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.
- 19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.
- 20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?
- 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.
- 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:
- 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
- 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;
- 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:
- 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

Referring to Isaiah 53:1, Paul states that not all Jewish people have accepted the Lord. Put in a positive it means there are Jewish people who have accepted the Lord.

The report is contained in Isaiah 53:2-12 and is perhaps the clearest prophecy of Messiah and His death, burial and resurrection for sin that is found in the Bible, certainly the Old Testament.

The issue is not "obeying," in other words, not believing in the Lord.

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Here we have the absolute foundation of faith - the word of God.

D L Moody once said "I prayed for faith and thought that some day faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." I had up to this time closed my Bible and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since.

Psalms 138:2 "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."

Four "buts" are now used to refute the concern that God has not revealed His Messiah and the gospel to the Jewish people.

The first two "buts" are from Paul and the last two "buts" reference Isaiah.

18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Vs. 18 Paul asks a rhetorical question and answers it. The issue, in this case, is not that the Jewish people (an Gentiles) have not heard. Their sound (a musical voice) speaks of the word of God and is revealed first in general revelation (creation - Romans 1:19-20) and then in special revelation (the Bible - 2 Timothy 3:16)

19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

Vs. 19 Paul again asks a rhetorical question and answers by referencing Moses.

Deuteronomy 32:21 "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation."

God revealed His purpose through Moses (as well as the prophets later). Israel should have known.

As Romans 1:20b says "...so that they are without excuse."

20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

Paul quotes Isaiah 65:1-2

- 1 "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.
- 2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;"

God revealed His plan to the Jewish people, starting with Moses and continuing through the prophets. They rejected His plan but the Gentiles, who did not have God's plan revealed through them, embraced it when they heard it.

Does this mean that God has now rejected the Jews and embraced the Gentiles as the focus of His plan?

Romans 11 answers this question and explains why the nation of Israel rejected the Messiah, whom God had revealed from the very beginning of the word of God.