

Romans 10:19-21 Commentary

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Click chart to enlarge
Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
[Romans Overview Chart](#) - Charles Swindoll

Source: Dr David Cooper
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ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	Gods Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God

Doctrine	Duty
Life by Faith	Service by Faith
Modified from Irving L. Jensen's chart above	

Rome in the Time of Paul (c. A.D. 60)

Summary of Romans 9-11		
Romans 9	Romans 10	Romans 11
Past Election	Present Rejection	Future Reception
God's Sovereignty Israel's Election by God	Man's responsibility Israel's Rejection of God	God's Ways Higher God Not Rejecting Israel

Romans 10:19 But I [say \(3SPAI\)](#) [surely Israel](#) did not [know \(3SAAI\)](#), did they? [First Moses says \(3SPAI\)](#), "I WILL [MAKE YOU JEALOUS \(1SFAI\)](#) BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A [NATION](#), BY A [NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING](#) WILL I [ANGER \(1SFAI\)](#)

Greek: [alla lego. \(3SPAI\)](#) [me Israel ouk egno? \(3SAAI\)](#) [protos Mouses legei. \(3SPAI\)](#) [Ego parazeloso \(1SFAI\)](#) [humas ep' ouk ethnei. ep' ethnei asuneto parorgio \(1SFAI\)](#) [humas](#)

Amplified: Again I ask, Did Israel not understand? [Did the Jews have no warning that the Gospel was to go forth to the Gentiles, to all the earth?] First, there is Moses who says, I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry.

ESV: But 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."

ICB: Again I ask: Didn't the people of Israel understand? Yes, they did understand. First, Moses says: "I will use those who are not a nation to make you jealous. I will use a nation that does not understand to make you angry." Deuteronomy 32: 21

NIV: Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding."

NKJV: But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation."

NLT: But did the people of Israel really understand? Yes, they did, for even in the time of Moses, God had said, "I will rouse your jealousy by blessing other nations. I will make you angry by blessing the foolish Gentiles."

Phillips: Then I say to myself: "Did Israel not know?" And my answer must be that they did. For Moses says: 'I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation. I will anger you by a foolish nation'.

Wuest: But I say, Israel did not fail to know, did it? First Moses says, I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are no people, and by a foolish people I will provoke you to anger. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: But I say, Did not Israel know? first Moses saith, 'I will provoke you to jealousy by that which is not a nation; by an unintelligent nation I will anger you,'

BUT I SAY, SURELY ISRAEL DID NOT KNOW, DID THEY: [alla lego \(3SPAI\)](#), [me Israel ouk egno \(3SAAI\)](#):

- Ro 10:18; 3:26; 1Co 1:12; 7:29; 10:19; 11:22; 15:50
- [Romans 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Listen to Dr J Vernon McGee: [Romans 10:16-21 Mp3](#)

The **Amplified Version** helps understand what Paul is asking...

Again I ask, Did Israel not understand? **[Did the Jews have no warning that the Gospel was to go forth to the Gentiles, to all the earth?]** First, there is Moses who says, I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry. (**Bolding** added for emphasis)

But (alla) - A strong adversative (word of contrast).

Surely Israel did not know - Paul's question calls for a negative answer. **Robertson** translates, "Did Israel fail to know?" Paul raises this question of whether having heard it perhaps they still did understand that most of the nation would reject the word of Christ.

And the answer is "**no**." Their own Scriptures foretold exactly what would happen.

Israel in its blindness, claimed to have monopoly on salvation in spite of the fact that two of their prophets **Moses** (Ro 10:19 quoting Dt 32:21) and **Isaiah** (see Ro 10:20 quoting Is 65:1) had clearly predicted that the Gentiles would be included in salvation. In short, the Jews had clear warnings that the Gospel was to go forth to the Gentiles, to all the earth.

AT THE FIRST MOSES SAYS "I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU": protos Mouses legei (3SPAI) ego parazeloso (1SFAI) humas ep ouk ethnei, ep ethnei asuneto parorgio (1SFAI) humas:

- Ro 11:11; Deut 32:21; Hosea 2:23; 1Pe 2:10
- Ro 1:21,22; Ps 115:5, 6, 7, 8; Isaiah 44:18, 19, 20; Jeremiah 10:8,14; 1Co 12:2; Titus 3:3
- [Romans 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MAKING THE JEWS JEALOUS

At the first Moses says - The first of two illustrations that the Scriptures had foretold of the salvation of the Gentiles. God's gracious call of the Gentiles and the rejection of the gospel by most of Israel should not have been a surprise to the nation of Israel because the OT clearly foretold this would transpire.

I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation- In other words Gentiles will be saved and Jews will become jealous of their salvation. This is amazing grace and justice combined to bring about God's intended purpose of redemption of the world. When Israel rejected the Messiah, God sent the Gospel to the Gentiles so that they might be saved which is what Moses had predicted (Dt 32:21). Paul had alluded to the truth of Gentile salvation in Romans 9 (see Ro 9:22, 23, 24, 25, 26).

One reason why God sent the Gospel to the Gentiles was that they might provoke the Jews to jealousy (Ro 10:19 11:11). It was an act of grace both to the Jews and to the Gentiles. The Prophet Isaiah predicted too that God would save the Gentiles (Isa 65:1). The very calling of the Gentiles, predicted and interpreted as it is in the passages quoted, should itself have been a message to the Jews, which they could not misunderstand; it should have opened their eyes as a lightning flash to the position in which they stood—that of men who had forfeited their place among the people of God—and provoked them, out of jealousy, to vie with these outsiders in welcoming the righteousness of faith."

Steven Cole - MANY KNOW GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION, BUT THEY STILL REJECT THE GOSPEL(Ro 10:19). Paul raises and responds to another hypothetical objection by citing Deuteronomy 32:21 (Ro 10:19), followed by Isaiah 65:1-2 (Ro 10:20-21). He is providing witnesses from the Law and the prophets to build his case that the Jews were responsible for their sin and unbelief. Romans 10:19: "But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says, 'I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, by a nation without understanding will i anger you.'"

In the context, Moses predicted Israel's apostasy through idolatry. The full verse reads (Deut. 32:21), "They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." Paul is applying this to the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles, which he will expand on in Ro 11:11-14. Just as Israel provoked God to jealousy and anger by their idolatry, so God will provoke Israel to repentance and faith when they jealously see those whom they would despise as being a "no-nation" or "a foolish nation" coming to

know God. This means that in His grace, God is not through with Israel, in spite of her unbelief and sin (Romans 11 develops this theme).

What is it that Israel did not know? In Ro 10:19-20 it is that the gospel would go to the despised Gentiles. In Ro 10:21, it is that most of the Jews would reject the gospel in spite of God's kindness and patience. Going back to verses 11 & 13, it is the gospel itself. All of these verses are quotes from the Old Testament, which shows that Israel should have known all of these things through reading their own Scripture. Paul wasn't making them up.

But why did Israel not see these things? Why were they blind to the plain teaching of the Scriptures? Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Romans: Saving Faith [Zondervan], pp. 372-374) observes that the quotes Paul picked hit the Jews with three of their national sins that blocked them from the gospel. First, they were proud nationally: "We alone are God's chosen people!" So God provokes them by those who are not a nation. Second, they were proud of their knowledge of the Scriptures (John 5:39): "We alone have God's law!" So God provokes them to anger by those who are a nation without understanding. Third, the Jews were relying on their works to gain righteousness (Ro 9:31-32; 10:3). So God confounds them by saving those who didn't even seek Him (Ro 10:20).

We can apply this by asking ourselves, "What national or cultural tendencies may be blocking us or those we share the gospel with from repentance and faith?" We Americans are self-reliant people, but to be saved we must cease believing in ourselves and cast ourselves upon God's mercy. We're a materialistic people, but to be saved, we must give up our pursuit of the American dream, and seek first God's kingdom and righteousness. We're a hard-working people who demand equitable pay for proper work. But to be justified by faith, we must stop working and believe in Him who justifies the ungodly (Ro 4:5). ([Why Some are Lost and Some are Saved Romans 10:16-21](#))

Related resources...

- Summary on the Attributes of God
- Spurgeon on the Attributes of God
- Israel of God - Is God "Finished" with Israel in His prophetic plan?
- [Off Site - Table Comparing/contrasting Israel & Church](#)
- [Off Site - Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program? - John Walvoord](#)
- [The Jewish People, Jesus Christ and World History - S Lewis Johnson](#)

Are you confused about God's plan for Israel? Then I highly recommend Tony Garland's 12 Hour Course on **Romans 9-11** in which he addresses in depth the question of **What Will Happen to Israel?** ([click](#)) or see the individual lectures below)

- [Romans 9:1-5 Paul's Sorrow Concerning Israel](#)
- [Romans 9:6-13 Children of the Promise](#)
- [Romans 9:14-24 The Potter and the Clay](#)
- [Romans 9:25-33 A Remnant Will be Saved](#)
- [Romans 10:1-13 The Righteousness of God](#)
- [Romans 10:14-21 Has Israel Not Heard?](#)
- [Romans 11:1-6 God Has Not Cast Away The Jews](#)
- [Romans 11:7-15 Life from the Dead](#)
- [Romans 11:16-24 Two Olive Trees](#)
- [Romans 11:25-36 The Salvation of Israel](#)

Note that when you click the preceding links, each link will in turn give you several choices including an **Mp3 message** and brief transcript notes. The Mp3's are long (avg 70+ min) but are in depth and thoroughly Scriptural with many quotations from the Old Testament, which is often much less well understood than the NT by many in the church today. Garland takes a literal approach to Scripture, and his love for the Jews and passion to see them saved comes through very clearly in these 12 hours of teaching! Take your home Bible Study group through this series if you dare. Take notes on the tapes as the transcripts are a very abbreviated version of the audio messages. This course is highly recommended for all who love Israel! I think you will agree that Tony Garland, despite coming to faith after age 30 as an engineer, clearly has been given a special anointing by God to promulgate the truth concerning Israel and God's glorious future plan for the Jews. Garland has also produced more than 20 hours of superb audio teaching in his verse by verse commentary on the [Revelation](#) (in depth transcripts also available) which will unravel (in a way you did not think was possible considering the plethora of divergent interpretations) God's final message of the triumph and return of the our Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords! Maranatha!

Romans 10:20 And [Isaiah](#) is [very bold](#) (3SPAI) and [says](#) (3SPAI) "I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK (PAPMPD) ME, I BECAME (1SAMI) MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK (PAPMPD) FOR ME."

[Esaías de apotolmaí](#) (3SPAI) [kai legei](#) (3SPAI) [heurethen](#) (1SAPI) [\[en\] tois eme me zetousin](#) (PAPMPD) [emphanes egenomen](#) (1SAMI) [tois eme me eperotosin](#) (PAPMPD)

Amplified: Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, I have been found by those who did not seek Me; I have shown (revealed) Myself to those who did not [consciously] ask for Me.

ESV: 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."

ICB: Then Isaiah is bold enough to say: "I was found by those who were not asking me for help. I made myself known to people who were not looking for me."

NIV: And Isaiah boldly says, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me."

NKJV: But Isaiah is very bold and says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me."

NLT: And later Isaiah spoke boldly for God: "I was found by people who were not looking for me. I showed myself to those who were not asking for me."

Phillips: And Isaiah, more daring still, puts these words into the mouth of God: 'I was found by those who did not seek me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for me'.

Wuest: Moreover, Isaiah breaks out boldly and says, I was found by those who are not seeking me. I was made manifest to those who are not inquiring about me. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: and Isaiah is very bold, and saith, 'I was found by those not seeking Me; I became manifest to those not inquiring after Me;'

AND ISAIAH IS VERY BOLD AND SAYS I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO SOUGHT ME NOT I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME: [Esaías de apotolmaí](#) (3SPAI) [kai legei](#) (3SPAI) [heurethen](#) (1SAPI) [\(en\) tois eme me zetousin](#) (PAPMPD), [emphanes egenomen](#) (1SAMI) [tois eme me eperotosin](#) (PAPMPD):

- **Very bold** - Isaiah 58:1; Ephesians 6:19,20
- **I was found** Ro 9:30; Isaiah 65:1,2
- **I became manifest** Isaiah 49:6; 52:15; 55:4,5; Matthew 20:16; 22:9,10; Luke 14:23; 1John 4:19
- [Romans 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PAUL QUOTES FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH

And Isaiah is very bold - Why? Surely because he was enabled by the Spirit. Compare Peter filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:29+ where confidently = boldly). Believers who are bold to share the Gospel are usually those who are filled with (controlled by) the Spirit of Christ (Eph 5:18+) and the Word of Christ (Col 3:16+, cf Acts 4:31+).

Bold ([662](#)) ([apotolmao](#) from [apó](#) = an intensifier + [tolmao](#) = to dare) means to dare very much, to be very bold and so to speak out boldly or boldly declare.

Solomon records for example tha "The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the **righteous are bold as a lion** (Proverbs 28:1)

Paul quotes Isaiah 65:1, 2, which occurs in the context of God's judgment on Israel (Isa 64:8, 9, 10, 11, 12), of Gentiles being accepted into God's household (Isa 56:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) and of God restoring the remnant of Israel to Himself (Isa 65:8, 9).

In **Isaiah** God declared in a passage that should make every Gentile reader shout "Hallelujah"...

I permitted Myself to be sought by those (the Gentiles) who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those (the Gentiles) who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' To a nation which did not call on My name. "I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people (Israel, cp Isa 59:1,2), who walk in

the way which is not good, following their own thoughts (Isaiah 65:1,2)

Found (2147) (**heurisko**; English = "eureka" from an exclamation attributed to Archimedes on discovering a method for determining the purity of gold) means to learn location of something, either by intentional searching or by unexpected discovery to learn the whereabouts of something

Sought (2212) (**zeteo**) means to try to learn the location of something often by movement from place to place in process of searching. To attempt to learn something by careful investigation or searching. To seek information by thinking, meditating, reasoning.

Paul's point is that as a general rule most of the Gentiles did not seek after God (cp Ro 3:11+), for they were blinded by their idolatrous, immoral gods (who themselves were immoral). However, many of the Gentiles did respond when they heard the gospel (cp the church at Thessalonica - see 1Th 1:9, 10+, the church at Ephesus was composed primarily of Gentiles, cp Eph 2:11, 12+, Ep 2:13, 14+)

Manifest (1717) (**emphanes** from **epí** = over, upon + **phaíno** = to shine) (See in depth study on verb form **epiphaino**) means literally to make to shine upon, and metaphorically means to make apparent, manifest or known

Ask (1905) (**eperotao** from **epí** = intensifies meaning + **erotao** = to ask, inquire of, beg of) means to interrogate, question or inquire.

Isaiah also told Israel that God would be found by those who did not seek Him; this prediction of the gospel going out to the Gentiles and its fulfillment again makes Israel more accountable. The very fact that the church in Paul's time was primarily Jewish should have been like a flashing beacon or a lighthouse to alert the Jews that they had missed His kingdom because they had pursued their own righteousness rather than the Righteous Branch, their Messiah (Jer 23:5)!

In summary, these OT prophecies help us to understand that we should not be so amazed that Israel, for the most part, has rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ, for such a national tragedy was foretold.

As an aside, as we study the New Testament, we discover that "to the Jew first" is a ruling principle of operation. Jesus began His ministry with the Jews. He forbade His disciples to preach to the Gentiles or the Samaritans when He sent them on their first tour of ministry (Mt 10:1-6+). After His resurrection, He commanded them to wait in Jerusalem and to start their ministry there (Lk 24:46-49+ Acts 1:8+). In Acts 1-7, the apostolic ministry is directed primarily to Jews (and to Gentiles who were Jewish proselytes). But when the nation stoned Stephen and persecution broke loose, God sent the Gospel to the Samaritans (Acts 8:1-8+), and then to the Gentiles, Peter being sent to the Gentile Cornelius about 8 years after the birth of the church on Pentecost (Acts 10:1-48+).

The Jewish believers were shocked when Peter went to the Gentiles (Acts 11:1, 2, 3) but he explained that it was God who sent him (Acts 11:5-12+) and that it was clear to him that Jews and Gentiles were both saved the same way—by faith in Christ (Acts 11:15-18+). But the opposition of the Jews (especially those who held strictly to the laws including circumcision, Acts 15:1-5+) was so great that the churches had to call the famous Jerusalem council to resolve the debate (Acts 15:6-14+). The Jerusalem council concluded that the Jews and Gentiles were all saved by faith in Christ (Acts 15:11-20+), and that a Gentile did not have to become a Jewish proselyte before he could become a Christian (Acts 15:8-11+).

Romans 10:21 But as for Israel He says, "ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE."

Greek: [pros de ton Israel legei](#). (3SPA1) [holen ten hemeran](#) exepetasa (1SAAI) [tas cheiras mou pros laon apeithounta](#) (PAPMSA) [kai antilegonta](#). (PAPMSA)

Amplified: But of Israel he says, All day long I have stretched out My hands to a people unyielding and disobedient and self-willed [to a faultfinding, contrary, and contradicting people].

ESV: But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

ICB: But about Israel God says, "All day long I stood ready to accept people who disobey and are stubborn." Isaiah 65:2

NIV: But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."

NKJV: But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people."

NLT: But regarding Israel, God said, "All day long I opened my arms to them, but they kept disobeying me and arguing with me."

Phillips: And then, speaking of Israel: 'All day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people'.

Wuest: But to Israel He says, The whole day I stretched out my hands to a non-persuasive and cantankerous people. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: and unto Israel He saith, 'All the day I did stretch out My hands unto a people unbelieving and gainsaying.'

BUT AS FOR ISRAEL HE SAYS ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS: pros de ton Israel legei (3SPAI) holen ten hemeran exepetasa (1SAAI) tas cheiras mou:

- Matthew 20:1-15; 21:33-43; Mt 22:3-9; Mt 23:34-37; Luke 24:47; Acts 13:46-47

Related Passages:

Matthew 22:3-9 "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. 4 "Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.'" 5 "But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, 6 and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. 7 "But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire. 8 "Then he *said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.'

Acts 13:46-47+ Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, **we are turning to the Gentiles**. 47 "For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.'"

GOD'S HAND OUTSTRETCHED

But (de) marks a striking contrast between the Gentiles and the Jews in regard to their respective reception (Gentile) and rejection (Jew) of God's gracious offer. Israel's stubborn refusal to believe led to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD followed by her worldwide, age-long dispersion and suffering among the Gentile nations. But do not be confused by the teaching of some evangelicals who say God is finished with Israel and that now the church has replaced Israel. This genre of teaching does not reflect a literal reading of the Scriptures, especially the eschatological (prophetic) passages dealing with the nation of Israel. See [Tony Garland's detailed studies](#) of what will happen to the nation of Israel. See also [What is replacement theology / supersessionism? | GotQuestions.org](#)

But as for Israel He says, "ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS -Note it is God Who is the Initiator, the One who in lovingkindness extends His hands! God is the One Who pursues sinners in general, and the nation of Israel in this passage. Sinners do not pursue Him for unregenerate sinners are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1+).

Through **Isaiah** God declared (Paul's quote is from verse 2 but the other verses are included to give one a sense the depth of their depravity)

I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in the way which is not good, following their own thoughts, a people who continually provoke Me to My face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks; who sit among graves, and spend the night in secret places; who eat swine's flesh, and the broth of unclean meat is in their pots. Who say, 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am holier than you!' These are smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day. (Isaiah 65:2-5)

Solomon records a similar refrain...

Because I called, and you refused; **I stretched out my hand**, and **no one paid attention** And you neglected

all my counsel, And did not want my reproof I will even laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, (Proverbs 1:24, 25, 26+)

Jeremiah explains how God stretched out His hand, and it was by sending His prophets to speak His words for Him...

And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets again and again, but **you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear**, (Jeremiah 25:4)

(God speaking) Also **I have sent to you all My servants the prophets, sending them again and again**, saying: 'Turn now every man from his evil way, and amend your deeds, and do not go after other gods to worship them, then you shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your forefathers; but you have not inclined your ear or listened to Me. (Jeremiah 35:15)

Jesus echoes the sad refrain

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, **who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!** How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. (Matthew 23:37)

James Smith - THE ARM OF THE LORD IS TOWARD, OR UNDER YOU—WHICH?

"He saith, all day long I have stretched forth My hands" (Rom. 10:21). "Underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27).

"The eternal God is thy refuge." The word translated "refuge" is a very strong one, and is not often met with in the Bible. It means infinitely more than a temporary place of safety, a mere shelter. It is, as the R.V. points out, a dwelling place, a habitation, a home. You are caught in a sudden storm whilst in a public park, and with all speed you make for the shelter provided by the authorities—it is a refuge, and very acceptable—but it is not home. You are attempting to cross one of the main thoroughfares in a busy city, and finding yourself in danger fly to the refuge in the centre of the road. That little oasis in the midst of surging traffic is very welcome—but it is not home. Now, God in Christ is all this to the trusting soul—and very much more—for He is a home. After all, what is it that makes home? Is it not the loving arms of father and mother? Do you feel quite at home with God? If you feel uneasy at the thought of God's presence, if there is a lack of homeliness in God for you, let Him throw His arms around and underneath you, and He will chase every fear away.

What a contrast is this expression to that quoted by Paul in Rom. 10:21: "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Certainly if the everlasting arms are not beneath you, they must be stretched forth in earnest pleading. The luxury of resting in the everlasting arms is known only by those who have responded to His loving invitation. But note, "all day long." What an example of patience and intense earnestness! God is depicted as stretching forth His hand for an entire day. How trying is the holding forth of the hands only for a little while. Here He waits long and patiently. How much longer will you keep Him in that uncomfortable attitude?

The arm of God is a symbol of power, therefore there is a thought of might in this figure. But there is also a thought of affection and love in the metaphor. Isaiah in his prophecy has much to say about the arm of the Lord, but Moses is concerned about the arms—not might only, but also love. The Bride in Solomon's Song could say: "His left arm is under my head, His right hand doth embrace me." Thank God! Though the Almighty's right hand is stretched out to defend us from all perils and dangers, His left hand binds us to His great heart of love.

But there is another important thought. He holds out His arms not only to rescue us from danger, but to satisfy His great heart of love. Men and women hunger for the love of little children, and never seem so happy as when they are folding the little ones to their bosoms. It is thus the hunger of their hearts is met. And is this not so with our God? Oh, if not for your own sake, yet for God's sake come to Him. And He will rest in His love.

TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE: pros laon apeithounta (PAPMSA) kai antilegonta (PAPMSA):

- Deuteronomy 9:13; 31:27; Jeremiah 44:4, 5, 6; 1Th 2:16; 1Peter 2:8

Related Passages:

Acts 7:51+ (STEPHEN TO THE JEWS WHO WOULD SOON STONE HIM) You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.

Hebrews 4:1; 2 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. :2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they (GOSPEL IN THE OT - Gal 3:8+) also; but the word they heard did not (ouk = absolutely did not) profit ([opheleo](#)) them, because it was not united by ([sugkerannumi](#) - mixed with or joined with) faith in those who heard (FAITH [A GIFT OF GOD - cf Ro 11:6, Acts 18:27+, Phil 1:29+] BEING THE MEANS OF SALVATION JUST AS IN Eph 2:8-9+). ("because those who heard did not combine it with faith." - Heb 4:2NIV)

ISRAEL WAS A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE

Moses records that "Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people. Remember, do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness; **from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD** (Dt 9:6, 7+)....The LORD spoke further to me, saying, 'I have seen this people, and indeed, it is a stubborn people... You have been rebellious against the LORD **from the day I knew you**. (Deuteronomy 9:13, 24+)

Moses later predicted Israel's persistently hard hearted attitude declaring "For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness; behold, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the Lord; how much more, then, after my death? (Deuteronomy 31:27+)

Samuel records a similar saga of Israel's disobedient and obstinate heart (on the occasion of Israel asking Samuel to appoint a king over them to judge them like all the Gentile nations)...

And the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. Like **all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day**—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. (1Samuel 8:7,8)

Nehemiah adds that even in the face of God's abundant provision

But **they became disobedient and rebelled against Thee**, and **cast Thy law behind their backs** and killed Thy prophets who had admonished them so that they might return to Thee, and they committed great blasphemies." (Nehemiah 9:26)

Luke records Stephen's accusation against the Jews (for which they repaid him with stoning! Acts 7:58-60+)

You men who are **stiff-necked** ([sklerotrachelos](#) - from [skleros](#) = hard [gives us our medical term atherosclerosis, hardening of the arteries, less deadly in some ways than spiritual hardening!] + [trachelos](#) = neck) and uncircumcised in heart and ears are **always resisting** (striving against - present tense = their continual attitude) the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become (Acts 7:51,52+)

Comment: This is the climax of Stephen's speech, the personal application that cut his hearers to the heart. Throughout the centuries, Israel had refused to submit to God and obey the truths He had revealed to them. Their ears did not hear the truth, their hearts did not receive the truth, and their necks did not bow to the truth. As a result, they killed their own Messiah!

Disobedient - They heard the the Gospel but continually (present tense) refused to be persuaded!

Obstinate - They continually (present tense) opposed the Gospel, this Greek word signifying they literally, willfully (active voice) spoke against the Gospel!

Disobedient (544) (**apeitheo** from **a** = without + **peitho** = persuade) means literally not to allow one's self to be persuaded. It describes one who refuses to be persuaded and so to willfully and perversely disbelieve. It conveys an attitude of unbelief and involves deliberate disobedience or conscious resistance to authority. Men do not avoid Christ because of insufficient facts but because of proud and unrepentant hearts. Paul says that Israel was continually (the **present tense** indicates this was their habitual practice) remained unpersuaded and disbelieving.

Obstinate (483) (**antilego** from **anti** = instead of + **lego** = speak) means to speak against and so to oppose another, to decline to obey him (in this case the will of God, which is good and acceptable and perfect). It means to declare one's self against another (God) or to refuse to have anything to do with Him. Again the **present tense** indicates that this was Israel's habitual practice year

after year, in the face of God's lovingkindnesses and persistent seeking.

Note that both **disobedient** and **obstinate** are in the active voice indicating this was a willful choice to reject God's Word of truth

All uses of the English word "**obstinate**" in the NAS - Ex 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut 2:30; Isa 48:4; Ezek 2:4; 3:7; Rom 10:21

In sum, Israel was a persistently unyielding, disobedient, self-willed, fault-finding, contrary, contradicting people. **Woe!** Remember that this describes the majority of the nation Israel in the Old Testament... for some reason many evangelicals have the misconception that most of Israel was saved because they were the "Chosen" people (Dt 7:7+) or they were "saved" out of Egyptian bondage (Dt 7:8+) and this equates with genuine heart circumcision (Ro 2:28, 29+), but careful reading of Exodus 32 (Ex 32:1-8+ and Ex 32:9 = "*And the LORD said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and behold, they are an **obstinate** [stiffnecked] people*". And there are many other similar passages, like virtually the entire book of Judges [Jdg 21:25+] which accounts for almost 25% of Israel's OT history! see notes on Judges) reveals otherwise (except for a relatively small believing **remnant**). Deliverance from physical bondage did not equate with deliverance from the penalty and power of sin. And so verse like this one by Paul and a study of Hebrews 3 (e.g., see Heb 3:18, 19+) and Hebrews 4 (e.g., see Heb 4:1, 2+) clearly indicate that Israel was largely lost and only a **remnant** was saved (Ro 11:4-note, Ro 11:5-note)

Denney - "The arms outstretched all the day long are the symbol of that incessant pleading love which Israel through all its history has consistency despised. It is not want of knowledge, then, nor want of intelligence, but wilful and stubborn disobedience that explains the exclusion of Israel (meanwhile) from the Kingdom of Christ and all its blessings."

Spurgeon - I see in one place, God presiding over all in providence; and yet I see, and I cannot help seeing, that man acts as he pleases, and that God has left his actions to his own will, in a great measure. Now, if I were to declare that man was so free to act, that there was no control of God over his actions, I should be driven very near to atheism; and if, on the other hand, I declare that God so overrules all things, as that man is not free enough to be responsible, I am driven at once into Antinomianism or fatalism. That God predestines, and that man is responsible, are two things that few can see. They are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory; but they are not. It is just the fault of our weak judgment. Two truths cannot be contradictory to each other. If, then, I find taught in one place that everything is fore-ordained, that is true; and if I find in another place that man is responsible for all his actions, that is true; and it is my folly that leads me to imagine that two truths can ever contradict each other. These two truths, I do not believe, can ever be welded into one upon any human anvil, but one they shall be in eternity: they are two lines that are so nearly parallel, that the mind that shall pursue them farthest, will never discover that they converge; but they do converge, and they will meet somewhere in eternity, close to the throne of God, whence all truth springs. (From sermon [Sovereign Grace and Man's Responsibility](#))

Steven Cole - **THOSE WHO REJECT THE GOSPEL REJECT GOD'S PATIENT LOVE AND ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR DISOBEDIENT, HARD HEARTS (Ro 10:21).** Romans 10:21: "But as for Israel He says, 'All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.'" This verse deserves an entire sermon, but I can only comment briefly. It pictures God as the rejected lover. He continually reaches out towards sinners whom He loves, but they reject Him with disobedient, hardened hearts. Unbelief is seldom, if ever, an intellectual problem. Rather, unbelief almost always stems from a disobedient, hardened heart that loves sin more than it loves God. Thus, those who reject the gospel cannot blame God for not choosing them. They are fully responsible for their own damnation. But I must briefly touch on the other side:

2. Because of God's sovereign grace, others believe the gospel and are saved.

A. THOSE WHO BELIEVE WERE NOT SEEKING GOD OR ASKING FOR HIM, BUT HE GRACIOUSLY REVEALED HIMSELF TO THEM (Ro 10:20). Romans 10:20: "And Isaiah is very bold and says, 'I was found by those who did not seek Me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me.'" Most commentators think that in its context, Isaiah 65:1 refers to God's allowing Himself to be found by Jews who were not seeking Him, but by way of analogy, Paul here applies it to the Gentiles. This ties back into Romans 9:30, "That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith."

By Isaiah's boldness, Paul is referring to the astonishing nature of God's grace. He pursues and saves those who were not seeking after Him, but were content in their pagan ways! This shows that salvation is not due to a good streak in sinners, but totally to God's sovereign grace. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ today, it is not because it was originally your idea to seek Him and find Him. Rather, He intervened in your life to reveal Himself to you. His Spirit convicted you of sin and showed your need for the Savior. He moved in your heart to respond in faith to the gospel. ([Why Some are Lost and Some are Saved Romans 10:16-21](#))

[STILL THRONED IN HEAV'N](#)

by William Bright

Still throned in Heav'n, to men in unbelief

Christ spreads His hands all day;
They scan His claims, give judgment cold and brief,
And fearless turn away.
Once more, O peerless mystery of grace!
Thy sweet appeal renew;
Light up dark minds; win souls to Thine embrace;
High forts of doubt subdue.
Speak, till the sons of peace, with hearts unseared,
Led by that voice of Thine,
Find Him each day more glorious, more endeared,
Christ human, Christ divine.