

God is There and He is Not Silent

Romans 10:16-21

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"
17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world." 19 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." 20 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." 21 But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people."

Some years ago Francis Schaeffer wrote a couple books. Since that time they have combine those two books into one book and renamed it. They gave that book the name He is here and He is not silent.

They could have used this past cedex further text for that book.

This passage briefly tells us the extent to which God has went to in order to reveal himself two a lost and dying race.

But also this passage speaks of the special relationship between God and the nation of Israel. And how that God has through his prophets continually reached out to his own rebellious children.

But of course this passage also has a message for us today. And that is it shows the character of God, revealing himself to Americans today and the obvious results of their rejection of Him.

So with these things in mind let us look at this passage today.

I. The problem under discussion.

A. Isaiah is typical of the lament of the prophet, commissioned by God but rejected by the people.

1. Who has believed our report.
2. Almost every prophet of the Old Testament experience these same things.
3. It wasn't that God had left himself without a witness.
4. The problem rather was that people did not want to listen to what God had to say.
5. And so the problem continues till this day.

B. Have they not heard?

1. The writer here quotes from Psalms 19. In order for us to understand this I think we should read that Psalm.
2. Psalm 19:1-14 (NKJV) 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the

firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race. 6 Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat. 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward. 12 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. 13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

- a. Notice the Psalm starts out the heavens declare the glory of God.
- b. This is a declaration of what we call God's general revelation.
- c. The first six verses deal with this general revelation.
- d. ‘Their voice [that is, the voice of the gospel messengers] has gone out into all the earth, *James Montgomery Boice, Romans: God and History, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1271.*
- e. Paul uses this in the first part of the book of Romans to demonstrate that no one is without excuse in their response to God.
- f. In particular Paul here is referring to the children of Israel. But this verse also applies to everyone.
- g. The rest of the passage deals with God's special revelation.
- h. This is God's revealed word which we call the Bible.
- i. God reveals Himself in creation (Ps. 19:1–6) and in His Word (Ps. 19:7–11). The “Book of Nature” and the “Book of Revelation” go together and proclaim the glory of God. Israel had the benefit of both books, for she saw God at work in nature and she received God’s written Word. *Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition*

Commentary, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 549.

3. So to answer the question have they not heard he tells us that everyone has enough knowledge of God to make him responsible to God as creator.
- C. Have they not known?
1. Paul answers this with several verses from the Old Testament.
 2. Deuteronomy 32:21 (NKJV) 21 They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.
 3. Isaiah 65:1–2 (NKJV) 65 “I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, ‘Here I am, here I am,’ To a nation that was not called by My name. 2 I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way that is not good, According to their own thoughts;
 4. To underscore the point that the way of faith had always been open to the Gentiles, Paul “cites from both the law and the prophets to show that this was in God’s plan” (Morris, Romans, 394).
 5. The answer implied in v. 19 is that if unenlightened people outside of the covenant could understand the gospel, then certainly a religiously gifted and highly favored group like the Jews had no grounds for claiming that it was beyond their understanding. *Robert H. Mounce, Romans, vol. 27, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 212–213.*
 6. It is an argument from the greater to the lesser: if the Gentiles, then certainly the Jews. There remained no basis for any Jewish claim that they could not understand the message. *Robert H. Mounce, Romans, vol. 27, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 213.*
- II. The outstretched hands of God.
- A. Isaiah 65:2 (NKJV) 2 I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way that is not good, According to their own thoughts;
 - B. Luke 19:41 (NKJV) 41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,
 - C. Jesus told the story of the prodigal son. But the story of the prodigal son was not so much about the son as it was about the father. The father lovingly, longingly waited for the return of his wayward son.
 - D. The problem is not with God the problem is with fallen man.

“It works two ways. On the one hand, it tells us that the people disbelieved (or would disbelieve) the message. On the other hand, it tells us that the nature of the message was the very reason for their unbelief. It was not the kind of message they wanted.

“So what’s new? Today, if we preach a message suited to our listeners’ wants or felt needs, we can gain a wide hearing. If we tell them that Jesus will give them treasure on earth rather than treasure in heaven, people will line up at the trough. If we tell them that Jesus will make them feel good rather than make them holy, people will clamor for the fix. If we tell them that Jesus died to cure them of their low self-esteem rather than their sins, they will pay for our glass cathedral. Much of the modern church-growth movement is built on exactly such reasoning. And it works! It works well. It builds mega-churches, and it makes the bearers of the “mega-gospel” rich—because it is what sinful people want to hear.” *James Montgomery Boice, Romans: God and History, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1256.*

Why do people hate Christianity? Why do they find themselves unable to be utterly indifferent to it? It is because of grace. Grace means that God saves the undeserving. Grace saves “nobodies,” those who are “no people” in the judgment of those who are important. Grace saves the ignorant. *James Montgomery Boice, Romans: God and History, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 1275.*