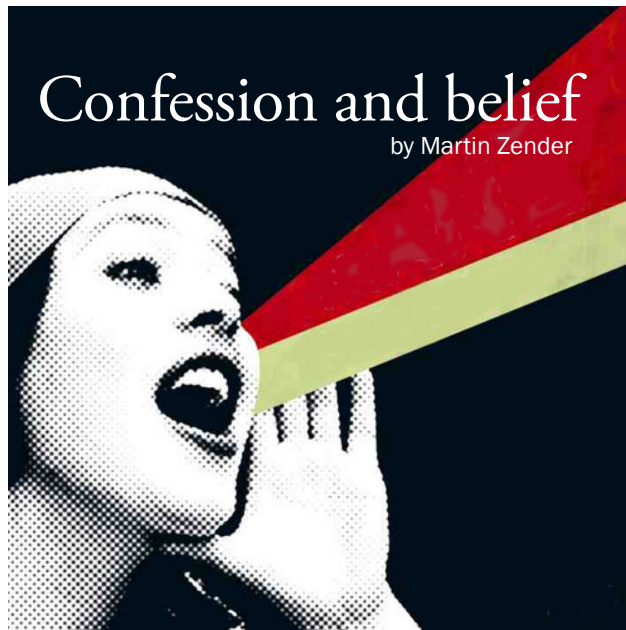


ROMANS Part 92

Chapter 10:9-13



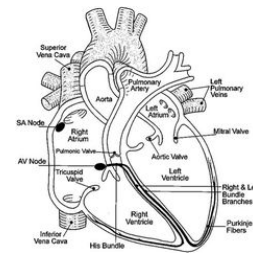
If ever you should be avowing with your mouth the declaration that Jesus is Lord, and should be believing in your heart that God rouses Him from among the dead, you shall be saved. 10 For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, yet with the mouth it is avowed for salvation. 11 For the scripture is saying: Everyone who is believing on Him shall not be disgraced. 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same One is Lord of all, being rich for all who are invoking Him. 13 For everyone, whoever should be invoking the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

HIJACKING PAUL

Paul makes a big mess for us here without realizing it and then, without realizing it again, dares us to sort it out. The apostle was teaching a simple truth, unaware of the

degree to which modern readers would crave complete independence from God and seek Paul's words to justify it. The self-centered zeal of some modern readers inspires them to scour Scripture for any shred of text "proving" the theological/psychological/bogus concept that God retains *no* jurisdiction over them, i.e., "Human Free Will." How could Paul know that such people would read latter parts of his letter at the expense of earlier chapters in a single-minded quest for "proof texts" of their hoped-for independence. Such readers would avoid assimilating Romans along the way, but would "cherry-pick" it, seeking support for pet doctrines where no support exists.

Paul's idea here is to elaborate on the immediacy of faith discussed in the previous few verses, relating it figuratively to two body parts: the heart and the mouth. He had just referenced the heart and the mouth in verse eight: "Near you is the declaration, in your mouth and in your heart—that is, the declaration of faith which we are heralding." Salvation, according to Paul, is as near as our own bodies. This radically differs from a salvation that must be sought after, climbed for, crawled to and strangle-held. But what does one *do* with one's heart and mouth once such a salvation is realized? That's the thrust of these verses. The heart believes and the mouth confesses. It's as simple as that. That's the truth lying on the surface. Whatever emerges from the mouth in the wake of divinely-imparted belief proves to Paul the genuineness of the belief. Paul's concern is that there be real faith, not the counterfeit variety. Paul cannot abide fakers, that's all. He wants



to know that *God* imparted the faith and that it wasn't some human put-on for the sake of temporary personal or social advantage—which happened a lot and still does. It's called "taking the Lord's name in vain"; calling yourself one of His while the heart is far from Him and

the lips talk about other things. In this chapter, Paul hates two things: 1) the concept that salvation is far off, and 2) feigned faith.

Paul's words here are often misused by those supposing the apostle to be making a pitch for the untrammelled, God-forsaken human will. Nothing could be further from the truth. Freewillers nevertheless pretzel this passage into strange and impossible shapes, hoping to make absolute salvation dependent upon belief and confession. The questions are begged: "Which comes first, salvation or belief? Which comes first, salvation or confession?"



STEP BY STEP

Ever the idealist, Paul assumes the reader to have assimilated chapters one through nine before crossing the threshold of chapter ten. Any such reader would *know* that salvation precedes faith. After all, Paul wrote in Romans 3:24 that we have been "justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus." These words seem simple enough to me. Our deliverance from death comes by Christ Jesus, not by personal faith. This is the thrust of "gratuitously." Such a salvation is unearned. So much for the "which comes first" question, then. No one could earn salvation even if it were an offer rather than a gratuitous act; Paul also wrote in Romans 3:10-12— "No one is just...no one is seeking out God...all avoid Him." These are words so simple that a child can understand them; theologians, however scratch their heads until their hair falls out. How could unjust people with zero God-seeking ability *possibly* believe in Him and—stranger still—confess Him? They couldn't. Human lips inherently drip the drool of unbelief.

Then, of course, there is chapter five, verse ten, where

Paul wrote—"Being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son." Christ saved enemies, not believers and confessors. Jesus Christ *never* saved a believer or a confessor in His life, not once. Why would believers and confessors need saved anyway? They would already be believing and confessing. Jesus Christ saved unbelievers and enemies, not believers and confessors. I conclude that the unbelievers and enemies must have gotten around to believing and confessing *after* they were saved, not before. They believed in and confessed, not to a fiction, but to a fact—something that existed.

NOW IT'S REAL—*FOR ME*

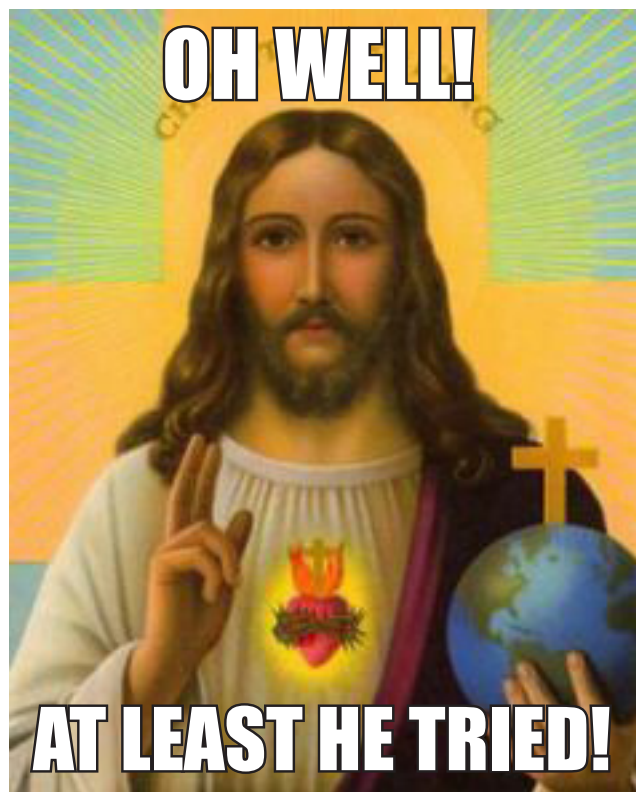
What is the use, then, of belief and confession? These things make an already-wrought salvation practical in the lives of those graced by God to believe and confess. Such believers latch onto facts, not fantasies.

For instance, what is the use of me asking someone to believe that I deposited a small fortune into his or her bank account if I haven't actually done it? Would the person's affirmative confession add money to an empty account? Neither God nor Christ would ever ask unjust God-avoiders to believe a fairy tale, let alone insist that such belief could change fairy tales into realities. In fact, why ask unjust God-avoiders to believe anything unless You were prepared to provide the necessary faith Yourself? This is just what God does: "[He] imparts to each the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3). It's the only way that anyone can believe.

Is salvation real, or isn't it? Or is it not real until human belief makes it so? But how can human faith make an unreality real simply by the act of believing? I may believe with all my heart that the moon is made of cheese, but it doesn't make it so. This is madness. Only just people can do something so noble as seek God, but no one is just, not one. Thus, all avoid Him. These are Paul's words under the inspiration of the holy spirit. Unjust God-avoiders believe and confess nothing concerning God, and even if they could, why pitch them a fable?

The question then arises—

Did Jesus save me, or didn't He? If He didn't, then what am I supposed to believe, even if I *could* believe? Am I supposed to believe that Jesus *didn't* save me? What would be the use of believing a falsehood? If Jesus *did* save me, then I'm already saved and my subsequent belief—however it comes—affirms a truth, not a fable. Because honestly—who affirms a fable? Lies are to be denied, not affirmed. You Christians laud Jesus Christ in all your colorful brochures, heralding His death and



resurrection as though it actually accomplished something—up until the time I must “believe or burn,” at which time salvation turns from a done-deal wrought by a spectacular Savior into a job-op proposed by a Wanna-Be Hero. Jesus didn’t save me after all; it was false advertising. What you mean to tell me is that Jesus merely provided me the opportunity to save myself if I could somehow break through a God-enforced, Adamic stubbornness. Is *that* the exercise? Then present salvation as an exercise, not a grace. You misrepresent it. You’re hypocrites. You idiots really ought to make up your minds about salvation: is it real or a put-on? If it’s real, then present it that way. Stay

true to your spectacular Savior brochures. Tell me what Jesus Christ *did*, and not what He *hopes* to do if only I can cooperate with Him. Tell me that I’m saved, and mean it. Do that, and my belief will become the caboose on the train of salvation that it truly is, rather than the engine. Jesus Christ on the

cross is the engine, is He not? Unless, of course, I’m really not saved. If I’m *not* saved, then quit telling lies such as ‘Jesus saves.’ Jesus doesn’t save squat if

I’m in the same position after the cross as before it. Before the cross I’m doomed, and after the cross—according to you—I’m still doomed. *What the hell did Jesus actually do on the cross then?*



At best, Calvary is a proposition. If it’s merely that, then quit saying, “Jesus saves.” Say instead, “Jesus tried.” If I *am* saved, then tell me I’m saved and I’ll believe it, because why would I deny a fact? It’s not my habit. I’m into truth, not pretense, and certainly not duplicities. Give it to me straight, you deceitful people who say one thing and mean another.

COMMON SENSE

So why *are* these verses so easily construed into a salvation-by-works teaching (where belief and confession are counted as works)? Let’s admit that these verses do, on the surface, suggest human cooperation for salvation: “**If ever you should be avowing with your mouth the declaration that Jesus is Lord, and should be believing in your heart that God rouses Him from among the dead, you shall be saved.**” But wasn’t I saved by Jesus Christ? The confusion lies with the incomplete verb form of the word “saved” here in Romans 10:9 and also in 10:13, a form which does not readily show in the text. People take that word the wrong way. They think it means absolute salvation, whereas what it really means is salvation *for me*. I will show you the indication of the incomplete verb form in the Greek and we will see the difference graphically between these two passages and a passage like Ephesians 2:8, where the verb form of “saved” is complete (a state) rather than incomplete, as in these two passages of Romans.

Resist becoming maddened by this. *Why does it have to be so hard?* you’re asking. It doesn’t. And it isn’t. Anyone who has come up through the early chapters of Romans knows that salvation comes first, then confes-

“The salvation in view here is the salvation belonging to an ongoing realizing of what has already been done.”

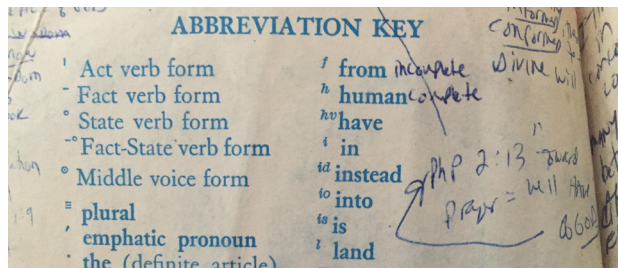
sion and belief. Jesus Christ saved us 2,000 years ago. Salvation is of Christ, not of human will or effort. This is Salvation 101. Anyone astute enough to have come through the Salvation 101 School in the earlier chapters of Romans will see the “saved” of Romans 10:9 and 10:13 and realize that it *cannot* be referring to absolute salvation, that is, the salvation won by Jesus Christ over

sin and death. It has to be some other aspect of salvation. It is, and no one needs a lexicon to know that. One needs only an ounce of common sense.

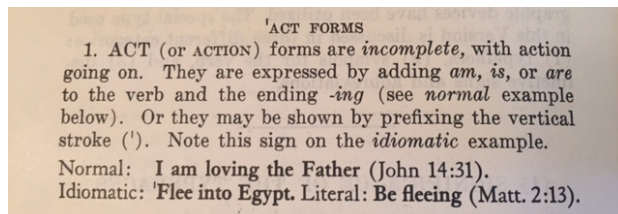
The salvation in view here is the salvation belonging to one's experience. It is an ongoing action of realizing what has been done. You may well be rich when I deposited that small fortune into your back account, but you're not *rich* until I tell you about it and you gain access to it by personal, hands-on experience. You may be saved by Jesus Christ at the cross, but you're not *saved* until someone tells you about it and you gain access to your salvation by personal, hands-on experience. You have been saved by Jesus Christ, but you experience the action of *becoming* saved when you learn of it and believe it. Thus, one can be rich and not rich, and saved and not saved at the same time, depending on which aspect of "rich" and "saved" are under consideration. Is it the facts of these things, or the experience of them that we're considering? Is it the state, or the action of becoming?

GREEK TO ME

In the Concordant Literal New Testament, there are five forms of verbs: 1) act, 2) fact, 3) state, 4) fact-state, and 5) middle voice. These forms are discerned in the Greek by various letters added to the words. The two aspects we are interested in are the state and the act forms, otherwise known as the complete and the incomplete verb forms. These forms are noted in the CLNT by different markings. Here is the verb key as it appears in the front pages of my CLNT—

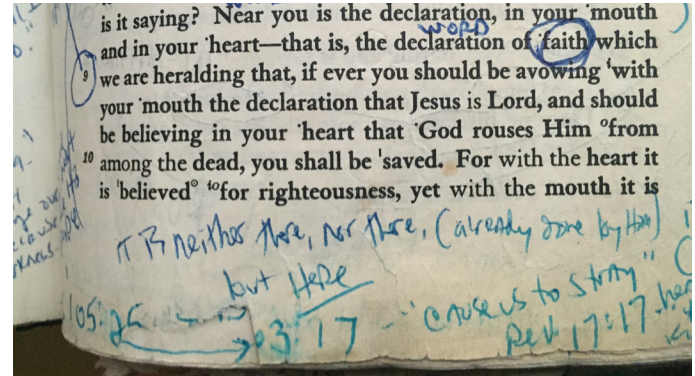


Here are the definitions of the forms, also from the front pages of my CLNT—



Thus, the act form of the verb (the "incomplete") is indicated by a vertical stroke in front of it, and the state form by a small circle.

Here is Romans 10:9 as it appears in the CLNT. Note the vertical stroke next to the word "saved"—



(As an aside, I like what I wrote in the bottom margin: "It is neither there, nor there, but here." In other words, salvation is not gained by going to heaven to get Christ and bring Him down, or going to the submerged chaos to bring Him up. Salvation is here and now.)

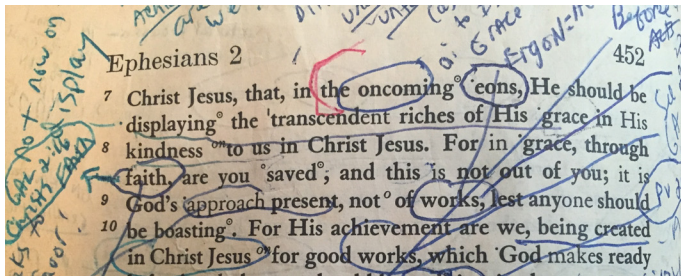
The next thing I need to show you is how verb forms read literally. For this, I will go to the Concordant Greek Text—which is just what it says it is—accompanied by an ultra-literal sub-linear line of English. It is easier to show it rather than explain it, so here it is—

9	PHMA	THC	TICTEΘC	O	KHPYCCOMEN	OTI	GAN	* that, if ever you should be avowing
	declaration	OF-THE	BELIEF	WHICH	WE-ARE-PROCLAIMING	that	IF-EVER	*with your
			faith					"mouth the declaration that
	OMOΛOΓHC	EN	TΩ	CTOMATI	COY	KYPION	HCOCYN	KAI
	YOU-SHOULD-BE-avowing	IN	THE	MOUTH	OF-YOU	Master	JESUS	AND
						Lord		
	TICTEYCHC	EN	TH	KAPAI	COY	OTI	O	ΘEOC
	YOU-SHOULD-BE-BELIEVING	IN	THE	HEART	OF-YOU	that	THE	God
								Him
								ROUSES
10	EK	NEKPON	CΘEHC	KAPAI	ΓAP	TICTEYETAI	EIC	** for
	OUT	OF-DEAD-ones	YOU-SHALL-BE-BEING- <u>SAVED</u>	to-HEART	for	it-IS-beING-BELIEVED	INTO	righteousness, yet with the
								mouth it is 'lawed' **for
								salvation.
11	ΔΙΚΑΙOCYHN	CTOMATI	ΔE	OMOΛOΓEITAI	EIC	CΩTPHPIAN	ΛEΓEI	ΓAP
	JUSTICE	to-MOUTH	YET	it-IS-beING- <u>avowed</u>	INTO	SAVing	IS-saying	for
	righteousness					salvation		THE
								H
								** For the scripture is
								saying: Everyone 'who is
								believing on Him shall not
								be disgraced.

The act verb form is an ongoing action. Thus, a literal translation would make a simple "saved" into "you-shall-be-being-saved." It's still salvation (the definition of "saved" hasn't changed) but it's the process of coming into a realization of salvation. It's being saved *in experience*. Paul expressed this well in the text of 1 Timothy 2:4, writing of a God "Who wills that all humanity be saved *and come into a realization of the truth.*" The salvation of this context is "coming into a realization of the truth." One enters into the salvation of the context *by experiencing* the salvation. It is the equivalent of "you-shall-be-being-saved."

Now I want you to contrast the incomplete form of the

verb “save” here in Romans (the “saved” of verse 13 is of an identical construction) with the complete form. God is smart. Whenever salvation is spoken of in the relative sense as something that is practically realized by human beings, God inspired the writer to use the incomplete verb form. When salvation is spoken of in the absolute sense as something that God has accomplished, the state form is used. Watch how this works in one of the most well-known passages in Scripture on salvation, Ephesians 2:8. Here is the passage from my CLNT—



Note that the “saved” of this passage does not have the vertical stroke in front of it, but the small circle. This indicates the “state” verb form. A layman’s way of saying “state” is “done deal.” Here’s how the passage literally reads in the Concordant Greek Text—

8	ΑΥΤΟΥ	ΕΝ	ΧΡΙΣΤΟΤΗΤΙ	ΕΦ	ΗΜΑΣ	ΕΝ	ΧΡΙΣΤΩ	ΙΗΣΟΥ	ΤΗ	ΓΑΡ	ΧΑΡΙΤΙ	
	OF-Him	IN	kindness	ON	US	IN	ANointed	JESUS	to-THE	for	grace	8 For in 'grace, through faith, are you 'saved', and this is not out of you; it is God's approach present,
	ΕΣΤΕ	ΕΣΩΦΜΕΝΟΙ	ΔΙΑ	ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ	ΚΑΙ	ΤΟΥΤΟ	ΟΥΚ	ΕΣΤΙ	ΥΜΩΝ	ΘΕΟΥ		
	YE-ARE	ones-HAVING-been-SAVED	THRU	BELIEF	AND	this	NOT	OUT	OF-YOU; OF-God			
			through	faith					of-ye			
9	ΤΟ	ΔΕΡΟΝ	ΟΥΚ	ΕΣΤΙ	ΕΡΓΩΝ	ΙΝΑ	ΜΗ	ΤΙΣ	ΚΑΥΧΗΧΤΑΙ	ΑΥΤΟΥ	ΓΑΡ	
	THE	oblation	NOT	OUT	OF-ACTS	THAT	NO	ANY	SHOULD-BE-BOASTING	OF-Him	for	9 not out of works, lest anyone should be boasting.
			of-works		anyone							10 For His achievement are we, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking in them.
	ΕΜΕΝ	ΠΟΙΗΜΑ	ΚΤΙΘΕΝΤΕΣ	ΕΝ	ΧΡΙΣΤΩ	ΙΗΣΟΥ	ΕΠΙ	ΕΡΓΟΙΣ	ΑΓΑΘΟΙΣ			
	WE-ARE	achievement	BEING-CREATED	IN	ANointed	JESUS	ON	ACTS	GOOD			
					Christ			works				

I love how literal this is: “Ye are ones having been saved.” Perfect. This is the absolute truth. *We have been saved.* The relative truth is that we are *being* saved more and more each day as God graces us with larger and larger droughts of wisdom and realization. Realization of what? Of the truth.

BACK TO THE SIMPLE TRUTH

Paul says that, in order to be saved, one must be avowing with one’s mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord. But what if one does not have a mouth? What if a person is born without vocal cords? What if one cannot speak? What if one says “Jesus Christ is Lord” in a different language other than Greek? Or what if one forgets the verb and confesses, “Jesus Christ Lord”? What if one stutters and says, “J-j-j-j-jesus

Ch-ch-christ is L-l-l-lord”? I used to think about these things. Yet these are all vain considerations. Now that we have grasped the truth that this passage of Scripture is not a formula for being absolutely saved from sin and death, we can slow down and get to the meat of what Paul would have us learn. It really is simple. Indeed, one believes in Jesus Christ with one’s heart, that is, with the inner person, the seat of conviction: “...believing in your heart that God rouses [Christ] from among the dead.” This is saving faith, and the result is righteousness: “...for with the heart it is believed for righteousness.” So why does Paul say that avowing with the mouth is salvation? Isn’t righteousness salvation?

Avowing the truth is an outward manifestation of an inward reality. It is the inward that saves. If the inward is true, then it cannot help but bubble forth in some way. Paul uses “mouth” here, I believe, as a figure of speech for any kind of outward profession and confession of truth (not error, but truth). If you don’t have a mouth, an affirmative grunt through the nose would serve, or the writing of a letter, or sign language, or a knowing smile, or even a gesture of the hand toward the Scriptures. Anything that *shows*. Paul had become so jaded by fraudulent believers that he needed to hear or see another’s heart to affirm salvation.



True, a profession of faith can be faked as well, but not as easily as no confession at all. I'm with Paul. A completely silent "faith" is probably artificial. Rest easy. No one is talking about mounting a podium here, or falling upon an altar, or commanding a microphone at a busy downtown intersection. I will not even go



near the word "witnessing." What we are considering here is a simple *bubbling over*, to one degree or another, concerning the happiness of one's new and improved inner condition. It not only serves to convince others of the presence of salvation, but one's self as well.

AS FOR ME

The first thing I wanted to do when I learned of the completeness of Christ's sacrifice for my sake was to share it with loved ones. Why would I have risked judgment and perhaps even ridicule were I not convicted of the truth in my heart? As I have suggested, I think that this bubbling over not only convinced others of my new bend, but myself as well. It helped me to know that what had come to me from God, inside my heart, was real. This is Paul's main consideration: genuine rather than feigned faith. Let's give the apostle his due.

Christ died for our sins. Nothing could have been more genuine than that. On that day, salvation entered into our account, though we had not yet been born. Surely the unborn cannot believe or confess. Certainly babies cannot avow anything intelligible with their mouths. And yet still, our salvation was already finished for us. Then there came the particular hour on the particular day in our lives when we heard the message and believed it. Something changed; we were not the same people. Did Jesus change? No—we did. The salvation of 2,000 years ago became the salvation for us, today. The fact became an act; the state became a *personal* celebration and a new reality. Our hearts



rejoiced and we bubbled over, avowing Him.

Click. And I do believe it's that simple. —MZ