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## Hearing and Harkening

*Romans, Part XLIX*

Romans 10:14-21

Stuart W. Bryan

### I. Ears Thou Hast Dug for Me (Ps 40:6)

The function of our ears is to channel what others are saying into our hearts and minds. Thus God has given us ears that we might \_\_\_\_\_ His voice and \_\_\_\_\_ *unto* it.

Romans 10:14–21

<sup>14</sup>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? <sup>15</sup>And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!*" <sup>16</sup>But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report [what he has heard from us – ESV]?" <sup>17</sup>So then *faith comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

<sup>18</sup>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.*" <sup>19</sup>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.*" <sup>20</sup>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.*" <sup>21</sup>But to Israel he says: "*All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people.*"

### II. Faith Comes by Hearing

#### A. Hearing and Harkening unto the Gospel (14-17 cf. Is 52:7; 53:1)

If we are to *call* upon the Lord in order to be saved (13), then we must *believe* in the Lord (14a). And if we are to *believe* in the Lord, then we must *hear* the voice of Christ Himself (14b). And if we are to *hear* the voice of Christ, then we must hear a *preacher* of the Gospel (14c). And if we are to hear a *preacher*, he must be *sent out* (15a). And this is precisely what God has done (15b).

But though God has sent heralds to announce the good news of His salvation (15b), not all have received it as such (16b). Thus, though *faith comes by hearing* - we must \_\_\_\_\_ the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ preached for the salvation of sinners – the *hearing* itself, the ability to \_\_\_\_\_ unto the message so that it travels from our ears to our hearts, comes *by the word of God* – by God Himself giving *us ears to hear* (17). As Paul asked earlier, "*And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?*"

#### B. Has Israel heard the Gospel? (18 cf. Ps. 19:4; Mt 23:33-36)

Paul insists that Israel has \_\_\_\_\_ the Gospel. In the old covenant, they heard the Gospel in creation and in God's law. And now, in the new, God has revealed Himself in Christ, sending heralds throughout Israel to testify that He is the Christ:

<sup>33</sup>*Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?* <sup>34</sup>*Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,* <sup>35</sup>*that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.* <sup>36</sup>*Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. (Mt 23:33-36)*

C. Has Israel hearkened to the Gospel? (19-21 cf. Dt. 32:21; Is 65:1-2)

So has Israel \_\_\_\_\_ to the Gospel? No, indeed. Though both the law (19) and prophets (20-21) have testified against them, they haven't given heed to these warnings, they haven't *hearkened*. Hence, God is welcoming "no-peoples" into His covenant in order to *provoke Israel to jealousy* (cf. Dt 32:21).

### III. Hearing and Harkening

A. Hearing and hearkening in our faith (Is 50:4-6; Jas 1:19, 22-25)

The nearest we get to divine fellowship is in verbal communication. As those created in God's image, we have the ability to communicate one with another. "*Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear*" (Prov 25:12). God created us with ears in order that we might *hear* His voice and *hearken unto* what He says. So Jesus Himself sings in the third of His Servant Songs:

<sup>4</sup>*The Lord God has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.* <sup>5</sup>*The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away.* <sup>6</sup>*I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.* (Isaiah 50:4-6)

Thus, the more we learn to *hear* God's voice and to *hearken unto* it, the more we come to reflect the character of our Lord Christ (cf. Jn 4:34). We need to listen well:

- 15:31 – *The ear that hears the rebukes of life Will abide among the wise.*
- 20:12 – *The hearing ear and the seeing eye, The LORD has made them both.*
- 22:17 – *Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your heart to my knowledge;*
- 23:12 – *Apply your heart to instruction, And your ears to words of knowledge.*
- 28:9 – *One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.*

B. Hearing and hearkening in our families (Is 30:8-11)

**Husbands**, *are you listening to your wife?* What is it to imitate Christ in relation to our wives? 1. He listens to our cares and troubles. 2. He listens to our petitions and is pleased to fulfill them when possible. 3. He receives our input. Can your wife say with confidence, "*My husband listens to me*"? **Wives**, *are you listening to your husband?* What is it to imitate the Church? 1. We seek God's wisdom through His word. 2. We implement God's wisdom in our lives. 3. We submit to/obey God's word even when we think we know better. Can your husband say with confidence, "*My wife listens to me*"?

These same dynamics affect our relationships as parents and children. Isaiah writes:

<sup>8</sup>*Now go, write it before them on a tablet, And note it on a scroll, That it may be for time to come, Forever and ever:* <sup>9</sup>*That this is a rebellious people, Lying children, Children who will not hear the law of the LORD;* <sup>10</sup>*Who say to the seers, "Do not see," And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.* <sup>11</sup>*Get out of the way, Turn aside from the path, Cause the Holy One of Israel To cease from before us."* (Is 30:8-11)

C. Hearing and hearkening in our church (Heb 13:7, 17)

### IV. Conclusion