

The Word of Faith which we Preach

*“But what does it say? “The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.” That is, **the Word of faith which we preach**, that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes ^{(and continues to believe)¹} resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses ^{(and continues to confess)²} resulting in salvation” (Romans 10:8-10).*

The word of faith that Paul preached is a little different than the word of faith that many are preaching in the 21st century. Today, many preachers suggest that in Romans 10:9, Paul provided a recipe for conversion. They preach that a person must follow this recipe in order to “be saved.” However, in Koine Greek, there is no indefinite second person. So, Paul was speaking specifically to believers (those to whom he wrote) who had been converted months or years before. He was saying, “If you (*Christians*) confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (*from the wrath of God when Jesus returns*). He certainly was not instructing believers what they must do to be converted since that had already taken place in their past. This interpretation is in harmony with the present tense verb construction in the following verse (verse 10). “*For with the heart one believes ^{(and continues to believe)¹} resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses ^{(and continues to confess)²} resulting in salvation.*” This interpretation is also consistent with the way that Paul mainly spoke of salvation in the book of Romans., namely, being saved from the future wrath of God that is coming. (See Romans 5:9-10 and 13:11.)

Note concerning the grammar: If Paul wanted to provide a generic recipe for conversion in Romans 10:9 and 10, he could have said “If anyone confesses with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believes in his heart that God raised Him from the dead, he will be saved (converted). (The word “anyone” is indefinite but the word “you” is definite in Koine Greek. Paul’s use of the word “you” specifies that he was speaking to the Christians who were reading his letter.)

Note relating to Romans 1:16: The interpretation of Romans 10:9 – 10 expressed here is also in harmony with the present tense form of the verb “believe” in Romans 1:16. Due to the present tense form of the verb “believe,” Romans 1:16 is more accurately translated, “The gospel is the power of God unto salvation for everyone that is believing.” (It is not coincidental that the Young’s Literal Translation, dating back to about 1860, translates it this way.) This more concise translation implies that Paul was referring to our ultimate future salvation when Jesus returns rather than conversion. In his letter to the Romans, when discussing salvation, Paul usually was referring to our ultimate future salvation rather than conversion. (See Romans 13:11, Romans 5:9-10.) From all of this we learn that the gospel’s promise of glorification propels those who are believing unto the salvation that will be revealed when Jesus returns. They will confess and continue to confess Jesus even under threat of death because they really do believe in their heart that God raised Him from the dead. The gospel’s promise of glorification does not propel unbelievers unto conversion. (Unbelievers want nothing to do with the gospel.)

¹ The extra words *and continues to believe* do not appear in the Greek text but they are implied by the present tense form of the verb “believes.” (By default, Greek present tense verbs imply continuing action unless there is grammatical or contextual evidence to suggest otherwise.)

² The extra words *and continues to confess* do not appear in the Greek text but they are implied by the present tense form of the verb “confess.” (By default, Greek present tense verbs imply continuing action unless there is grammatical or contextual evidence to suggest otherwise.)