

(14) How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written,

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News!” (Isaiah 52:7)

(16) But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Isaiah says,

“Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” (Isaiah 53:1)

(17) So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ.

(18) But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for,

“Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”

(Psalm 19:4)

(19) 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.” (Deuteronomy 32:21)

(20) 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.” (Isaiah 65:1)

(21) But of Israel He says,

“All day long I have held out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

(Isaiah 65:2)

Think on These Things

- 1) Vs. 14-15 are rhetorical questions. Rather than answering just one question, the sequence is important. Questions are the answers to questions: How can people be saved if they don't believe? How can they believe if they haven't heard? How can they hear unless someone tells them? Who will send someone to tell them? So, your questions now are, “What is it that people need to hear? In whom do they need to believe?” (vs. 9-10)

What do people need to hear about? The story of Jesus, which we call the Gospel (the Good News). People need to come to saving faith and belief in Jesus as their Savior (Deliverer).

- 2) Quoting Isaiah 52:7, how are folks who share God's “good news” described? What do you think the reference to feet is about?

They are described as “beautiful.” The reference to feet may pertain to the concept of someone being sent --- who comes to where we are to bring us a message we desperately need to hear. We are filled with gratitude towards God, not only for His saving work, but also for the folks He brings into our lives that help us nurture our faith.

- 3) V. 16 is quoted from Isaiah 53:1. Read Isaiah 53:1-12, and write down what this passage of the Bible is all about? Does it surprise you that it begins with, “Who has believed our message?” Why would the Jews NOT believe this ‘message’?

Isaiah 53 is what we call refer to as the Suffering Messiah passage. It clearly describes someone who suffers a great deal of physical and emotional pain in an “unappreciated” manner, yet

endured it as “God’s Will” for the purpose of dealing with the transgressions and sins of others. The Sufferer was innocent; He suffered for the actions of others. By His wounds we are healed. He was pierced for our transgressions. The LORD laid on Him the iniquity of us all --- and by His wounds WE are healed.

Isaiah paints a passage of a Deliverer who suffers on behalf of others to make people right with God. The Jews, however, were determined to prove their own righteousness for God’s acceptance. The Messiah had “no beauty” or form that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by men, and esteemed as of no value. Those present on the day of His crucifixion believed Him to be “smitten by God,” i.e., deserving of this punishment (vs. 2-4).

- 4) How does one come to believe the Gospel message? Understanding this, what is your role in sharing your faith with others?

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (v. 17). My ‘role’ in this process is to honestly tell the story of Jesus (the Gospel) to others so that they can make their own decision. I cannot create a ‘new birth’ in the life of another (John 3:3-8), but I can confess Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

- 5) Do the Jews understand what God is doing (vs. 18-19)?

Paul says, yes, they do understand. They have these prophecies that God intends to make them jealous and work around their stubbornness to get His message out to the whole world!

- 6) What is God’s purpose in causing ‘jealousy’ in the Jews by saving Gentiles from around the world? Do you think it is working to bring them back to Him? (See Romans 11:25). The key is to understand that this strategy was not a surprise; God announced He was going to do this in the Old Testament! (Deuteronomy 32:21 and Isaiah 65:1)

God wants His people, the Jews, to be loyal to Him. In many, many passages in the Old Testament He refers to them as an “adulteress people” who followed after other peoples’ false gods. The “times of the gentiles” is but a season; God covenant with Abraham is a forever commitment to His Chosen People --- and they won’t want to be left out!

- 7) Can you sense the disappointment in God’s voice from v. 21? God sees Himself as the Father of Israel, but His child persists in rejecting Him and His ways. Parents get broken hearts the very same way! Do you think we Christians can be just as difficult as the Jews for God to work with? Any ideas for a solution?

Clearly, yes, Christians can be just as inconsistent in faith matters as Jews --- and it’s likely just as disappointing to God. Believers need to guard their hearts to remain faithful to the end (Proverbs 4:23).

People and situations I want to pray for this week: