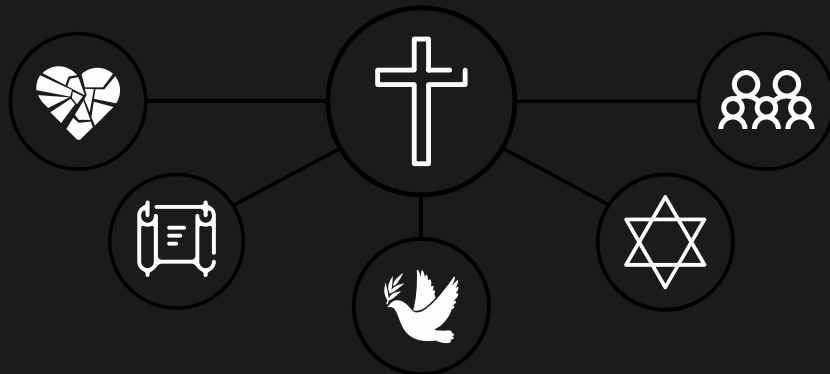




ROMANS AND THE FUTURE GOSPEL



Title: The Righteousness based on Faith

Text: Romans 10:1-13

Date: April 30, 2023

Main Idea: Righteousness has been by faith from the beginning and everyone, Jew and Gentile, who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Personal Study Guide

READ ROMANS 9:30 – 10:13

Highlight – What stands out?

10:1-13 continues to address the problem of Jewish unbelief and flows directly from 9:30-33. In 9:32, Paul gives the concise answer to why the Jewish people have not received the righteousness that is by faith – because they did not pursue it by faith, but pursued it by works. They stumbled over the ‘stumbling stone’, namely Jesus Christ.

This section continues themes brought up previously, and references the Old Testament a lot. Paul is continuing to build his case that salvation is by faith alone. He is continuing to build his case that there is not distinction between Jews and Greeks. God has one plan for all time to redeem one people by his Son.

1. What ideas about salvation are continued into Romans 10:1-13?
2. 10:1-13 contains many cross-references to other scriptures. These cross-references are critical to understanding Paul’s message. See the “Bible Cross References” graphic at the end of this lesson for a visualization of all 63,778 cross-references found in the Bible! What other scripture references or stories from scripture stand out to you in these verses?
3. Read Romans 10:1 in the context of 9:1-3. What is Paul’s heart for the Jewish people? Why does Paul have such a deep desire for the Jewish people to be saved? Why does he have a unique perspective of the Jews?

4. What does Paul mean in 10:2 when he says “they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge”? Consider Paul’s experience and zeal before his conversion. Could the Israelite’s actions be labelled fanaticism? See Proverbs 19:2. (Stott)

5. 10:3 states the Jews were ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God. What did they try to do instead? How did the Jews attempt to build their own righteousness? Consider Paul’s testimony in Philippians 3:8-9.

6. In 10:5-8, Paul cites Moses, using quotes from Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Why would Paul cite Moses when discussing the concepts of righteousness by the law and righteousness by faith?

7. 10:9-10 are the only place in Paul’s letters where he speaks of believing ‘in the heart’, and also the only place where he speaks of confessing ‘with the mouth’. (Kruse) How is the order of belief and confession different between verses 9 and 10?

6. Based on verses 11-13, who has access to Christ? And how does that happen?

Apply – How does this change me?

The New City Catechism says:

Question: Since no one can keep the law, what is its purpose?

Answer: That we may know the holy nature of God, and thus our need for a Savior.

1. Although God's plan was salvation through faith from the beginning, we see that Israel pursued righteousness through works instead of through faith. We know that our salvation is by faith and that our obedience to God should flow from the joy of faith. Why was this difficult in practice for the Israelites? Why is it difficult in practice for us? (Piper)

2. Is my acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord and my conviction that God raised him from the dead like Satan's, leading to destruction, or like Paul's, leading to salvation? What does it mean to believe in your 'heart' that God raised Jesus from the dead? (Piper)

3. Why is Paul's focus on the unbelief of the Israelites at the time of his writing still a relevant question for us to explore today? What does it reveal about God's overarching plan and his character?

Respond – What's my next step?

1. Am I seeking to establish my own righteousness instead of submitting to the righteousness based on faith in Christ Jesus? Do I have "zeal without knowledge"?

2. Have I called on the name of the Lord, putting my trust in him, and combining faith in my heart with confession with my mouth? (Stott)

3. If someone says, "God will forgive me because I keep the Ten Commandments," how would you use this text to respond to them?

4. Who is a person, or people, that you are in relationship with that need to see that their “zeal” won’t save them? Do you have the same heart as Paul for them?

Commentary: Taken from John Stott’s commentary on Romans 10:1-13

Note to Group Leaders: You also have your F.F. Bruce Commentary on Romans you were given on Team Night. You can use that one, in addition to this one, to help you grasp the text. Reach out to Courtney Reissig if you need one or haven’t received yours.

13. Israel’s fault: God’s dismay over her disobedience

10:1–21

Chapters 9–11 of Romans all address the problem of Jewish unbelief. In chapter 9 the emphasis was on God’s purpose according to election; the emphasis of chapter 10, however, is on the human factors, on the need for an understanding of the gospel (5–13), for the proclamation of the gospel (14–15), and for the response of faith (16–21). With chapter 10 Paul turns from the past to the present, from his explanation of the Israelites’ unbelief to his hope that they will yet hear and believe the gospel. This vision for the future he will elaborate further in chapter 11.

1. Israel’s ignorance of the righteousness of God (1–4)

Paul begins this chapter, as he began the last, with a very personal reference to his love and longing for ‘them’. In the Greek sentence they are not specified,

but NIV is certainly right to insert *the Israelites*. There are several similarities between the openings of the two chapters. In both Paul mentions his heart: his heart's sorrow and anguish because the unbelieving people of Israel are lost (9:2f.), and his *heart's desire and prayer to God ... that they may be saved* (1). J. B. Phillips catches the earnestness of the apostle's cry: 'My brothers, from the bottom of my heart I long and pray to God that Israel may be saved!' At the beginning of chapter 9 he expresses the hypothetical wish that he himself might be cursed if thereby they could be spared (9:3); at the beginning of chapter 10 he expresses an ardent, prayerful wish for their salvation. Moreover, as his pain is increased by their combination of privilege and prejudice (9:4f.), so his longing is increased by their combination of zeal and ignorance (2).

Paul has no doubt of their religious sincerity. He *can testify about them* from his own experience *that they are zealous for God*. And he knows what he is talking about, because he himself in his pre-conversion life was 'extremely zealous' in his religion,¹ as seen in his persecution of the church.² Indeed he was 'just as zealous for God' as any of his contemporaries,³ and could even describe his zeal at that time as an 'obsession'.⁴ So he is obliged to say of the Israelites that *their zeal is not based on knowledge* (2). Yet Scripture says that 'it is not good to have zeal without knowledge'.⁵ Sincerity is not enough, for we may be sincerely mistaken. The proper word for zeal without knowledge, commitment without reflection, or enthusiasm without understanding, is fanaticism. And fanaticism is a horrid and dangerous state to be in.

Having asserted their general condition of ignorance, Paul now particularizes in two negatives: *they did not know the righteousness that comes from God* and *they did not submit to God's righteousness*. Instead, they *sought to establish their own* (3). Recent commentators who have accepted Professor E. P. Sanders' thesis of 'covenantal nomism'⁶ offer an interpretation of this verse which is very different from the traditional understanding. Professor Dunn, for example, argues that the Jews were right to see 'righteousness' as obedience to the law and so loyalty to the covenant (the meaning of 'covenantal nomism'), but wrong to construe it in terms of circumcision, sabbath observance, dietary regulations and ritual purity. This understanding of the law was not only 'too superficial' but also 'too nationalistic',⁷ because it disenfranchised the Gentiles whom God wanted to include. 'Their own righteousness', therefore, meant a righteousness which

NIV The New International Version of the Bible (1973, 1978, 1984).

¹ Gal. 1:14.

² Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6.

³ Acts 22:3.

⁴ Acts 26:9ff.

⁵ Pr. 19:2.

⁶ See Preliminary Essay, pp. 25ff.

⁷ Dunn, vol. 38B, p. 593.

was peculiarly and exclusively their own, and was being contrasted not with God's but with other people's.⁸ And their attempt to 'establish' this righteousness of their own was an act not of creation (producing something out of nothing) but of confirmation (preserving what was already in existence, namely their covenant membership and righteousness). What Paul objected to was 'Israel's attempt to maintain a claim of national monopoly to that covenant righteousness'.⁹ What then does it mean that *Christ is the end of the law ...* (4)? What Christ terminated was not the law as the way of attaining a righteous standing before God, but 'the law seen as a way ... of documenting God's special regard for Israel, of marking Israel out from the other nations ...'.¹⁰

What disturbs me about this attempted reconstruction, I confess, is not so much what is being affirmed (for the Jews were ethnically exclusive), but what is being denied. For example, the statement that 'their own righteousness' is not being contrasted with God's is plainly not so in 10:3, and more plainly still in Philippians 3:9. I think the Jews (like all human beings) were more self-righteous than Professors Sanders and Dunn allow. As Calvin justly commented, 'the first step to obtaining the righteousness of God is to renounce our own righteousness'.¹¹

To other commentators the assertion that the Jews *did not know the righteousness that comes from God* means that they had not yet learned the way of salvation, how the righteous God puts the unrighteous right with himself by bestowing upon them a righteous status. This is 'the righteousness of God' which is revealed in the gospel, and is received by faith altogether apart from the law, as Paul has written earlier (1:17; 3:21). The tragic consequence of the Jews' ignorance was that, recognizing their need of righteousness if they were ever to stand in God's righteous presence, they *sought to establish their own*, and *they did not submit to God's righteousness* (3).

This ignorance of the true way, and this tragic adoption of the false way, are by no means limited to Jewish people. They are widespread among religious people of all faiths, including professing Christians. All human beings, who know that God is righteous and they are not (since 'there is no-one righteous, not even one', 3:10), naturally look around for a righteousness which might fit them to stand in God's presence. There are only two possible options before us. The first is to attempt to build or establish our own righteousness, by our good works and religious observances. But this is doomed to failure, since in God's sight even 'all our righteous acts are like filthy rags'.¹² The other way is to submit

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 587, 595. Compare E. P. Sanders (1983): '“their own righteousness” ... means “that righteousness which the Jews alone are privileged to obtain” rather than “self-righteousness which consists in individuals presenting their merits as a claim upon God”', p. 38.

⁹ Dunn, vol. 38B, p. 588.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

¹¹ Calvin, p. 221.

¹² Is. 64:6.

to God's righteousness by receiving it from him as a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ.¹³ In verses 5–6 Paul calls the first *the righteousness that is by the law* and the second *the righteousness that is by faith*.

The fundamental error of those who are seeking to establish their own righteousness is that they have not understood Paul's next affirmation: *Christ is the end (telos) of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes* (4). *Telos* could mean 'end' in the sense of 'goal' or 'completion', indicating that the law pointed to Christ and that he has fulfilled it. Or it could mean 'end' in the sense of 'termination' or 'conclusion', indicating that Christ has abrogated the law. Paul must surely mean the latter. But the abrogation of the law gives no legitimacy either to antinomians, who claim that they can sin as they please because they are 'not under law but under grace' (6:1, 15), or to those who maintain that the very category of 'law' has been abolished by Christ and that the only absolute left is the command to love. When Paul wrote that we have 'died' to the law, and been 'released' from it (7:4, 6), so that we are no longer 'under' it (6:15), he was referring to the law as the way of getting right with God. Hence the second part of verse 4. The reason Christ has terminated the law is *so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes*. In respect of salvation, Christ and the law are incompatible alternatives. If righteousness is by the law it is not by Christ, and if it is by Christ through faith it is not by the law. Christ and the law are both objective realities, both revelations and gifts of God. But now that Christ has accomplished our salvation by his death and resurrection, he has terminated the law in that role. 'Once we grasp the decisive nature of Christ's saving work', writes Dr Leon Morris, 'we see the irrelevance of all legalism.'¹⁴

2. Alternative ways of righteousness (5–13)

Paul has already stated three antitheses—between faith and works (9:32), between God's righteousness to which we should submit and our own righteousness which we mistakenly seek to establish (3), and between Christ and the law (4). Now he draws out the implications of the latter by contrasting *the righteousness that is by the law* (5) with *the righteousness that is by faith* (6). He does so by appealing to Scripture, quoting a text on each side. He thus sets Moses against Moses, that is, Moses in Leviticus against Moses in Deuteronomy.

On the one hand, *Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: 'The man who does these things will live by them'* (5).¹⁵ The natural interpretation of these words is that the way to life (*i.e.* salvation) is by obedience to the law. This is how Paul himself understood the sentence when

¹³ Phil. 3:9.

¹⁴ Morris (1988), p. 380.

¹⁵ Lv. 18:5.

he quoted it in Galatians 3:12. But 'clearly', he added in that context, 'no-one is justified before God by the law', because no-one has succeeded in obeying it. The weakness of the law is our own weakness (8:3). Because we disobey it, instead of bringing us life it brings us under its curse, and that would be our position still if Christ had not redeemed us from the law's curse by becoming a curse for us.¹⁶ It is in this sense that 'Christ is the end of the law'. Righteousness is not to be found that way.

So, on the other hand, *the righteousness that is by faith*, which Paul now personifies, proclaims a different message. It sets before us for salvation not the law but Christ, and assures us that unlike the law, Christ is not unattainable, but readily accessible. The passage Paul quotes (from Dt. 30) begins with a stern prohibition, which the righteousness by faith endorses: '*Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) (6) or "Who will descend into the deep?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead) (7)*. To ask such questions would be as absurd as they are unnecessary. There is no need whatever for us to scale the heights or plumb the depths in search of Christ, for he has already come, died and risen, and so is accessible to us.

What, then, is the positive message of the righteousness of faith? *What does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart', that is*, Paul explains, *the word of faith* (the message requiring a response of faith, i.e. the gospel) which we (apostles) *are proclaiming* (8). Taking his cue from the reference to the people's 'mouth' and 'heart' in Deuteronomy 30:14, just quoted, Paul now summarizes the gospel in these terms: *That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord' (the earliest and simplest of all Christian creeds), and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved* (9). Thus heart and mouth, inward belief and outward confession, belong essentially together. 'Confession without faith would be vain ... But likewise faith without confession would be shown to be spurious.'¹⁷ *For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved* (10). The parallelism is reminiscent of Hebrew poetry in the Old Testament, and the two clauses in verses 9–10 are to be held together rather than separately. Thus, there is no substantive difference here between being 'justified' and being 'saved'. Similarly, the content of the belief and that of the confession need to be merged. Implicit in the good news are the truths that Jesus Christ died, was raised, was exalted, and now reigns as Lord and bestows salvation on those who believe. This is not salvation by slogan but by faith, that is, by an intelligent faith which lays hold of Christ as the crucified and resurrected Lord and Saviour. This is the positive message of 'the righteousness that is by faith'.

But is Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:11–14 legitimate? Or is he guilty of an unprincipled allegorization, and of reading into Scripture what is not there?

¹⁶ Gal. 3:10ff.

¹⁷ Murray, vol. II, p. 56.

We begin by noting that his only actual quotation (as opposed to allusion) is Deuteronomy 30:14, which is reproduced almost exactly in verse 8: *'the word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart'*. There Paul stops, for the Deuteronomy text goes on to say that the reason the word was near them was *'so that you may obey it'*, whereas Paul calls it *'the word of faith'*. How then can Paul take a verse about the law which is to be obeyed and apply it to the gospel which is to be believed? It sounds a fundamental contradiction, especially while he is commending *'righteousness by faith'*. But it is not.

How does Paul use the Deuteronomy passage? He is not claiming either that Moses explicitly foretold the death and resurrection of Jesus, or that he preached the gospel under the guise of the law. No. The similarity he sees and stresses between Moses' teaching and the apostles' gospel lies in their easy accessibility. He knows that Moses began this part of his speech (although he does not quote it) by telling the Israelites that his teaching was neither *'too difficult'* for them nor *'beyond their reach'*. Moses went on, using dramatic imagery, that it was neither up in heaven nor beyond the sea—remote, unrevealed and unknown—so that they would have to find someone to ascend into heaven or cross the sea in order to bring it to them. On the contrary, his teaching was very near them. They knew it already. Far from being above or beyond them, it was actually inside them, in their hearts and in their mouths.

What Moses had said about his teaching, Paul now affirms about the gospel. It is neither remote nor unavailable. There is no need to ask who will ascend to heaven to bring Christ down or descend to Hades to bring Christ up. Storming the ramparts of heaven and potholing in Hades, in search of Christ, are equally unnecessary. For Christ has come and died, and been raised, and is therefore immediately accessible to faith. We do not need to do anything. Everything that is necessary has already been done. Moreover, because Christ himself is near, the gospel of Christ is also near. It is in the heart and mouth of every believer. The whole emphasis is on the close, ready, easy accessibility of Christ and his gospel.

Verses 11–13 build on this. They stress that Christ is not only *easily* accessible, but *equally* accessible to all, to *anyone* (11) and to *everyone* (13), since *there is no difference* (12), no favouritism. All three verses refer to Christ and affirm his availability to faith, although each describes in different terms both the nature of faith and how Christ responds to believers. In verse 11 we *'trust in him'* and will *never be put to shame*. In verse 12 we *call on him*, and he *richly blesses us*. In verse 13 we *call on the name of the Lord* and are *saved*. Let us now consider the three verses separately.

First, verse 11: *As the Scripture says, 'Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.'* This is a second quotation of Isaiah 28:16, the first having been in 9:33. The designation of saving faith as *'trust'* shows that the *'belief'* and the *'confession'* of the two previous verses (9–10) are not to be understood as a mere subscription to credal formulae.

Secondly, verse 12: *For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.* It is a marvellous affirmation that through Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. Of course there is a fundamental distinction between those who seek righteousness by the law and those who seek it by faith. But between those who have been justified by faith and are now in Christ, all distinctions, not only of race, but also of sex and culture, are not so much abolished (since Jews are still Jews, Gentiles Gentiles, men men and women women) as rendered irrelevant.¹⁸ Just as there is no distinction between us because in Adam we are all sinners (3:22f.), so now there is no distinction between us because in Christ, who is *Lord of all*, all who call on him are richly blessed. Far from impoverishing us, we all receive his ‘unsearchable riches’.¹⁹

In the third verse (13) both our calling on him and his blessing of us are elaborated. To *call on him* is, more precisely, to call *on the name of the Lord*, that is, to appeal to him to save us in accordance with who he is and what he has done. *Everyone* who thus calls on him, we are assured, *will be saved* (13). In the first place this is a quotation from Joel 2:32. But Peter cited it on the day of Pentecost, transferring the text from Yahweh to Jesus,²⁰ which is also what Paul does here. Indeed, this appeal to Jesus for salvation became so characteristic of Christian people that Paul could describe the worldwide community as ‘those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ’.²¹

What then, according to this section, is necessary to salvation? First the fact of the historic Jesus Christ, incarnate, crucified, risen, reigning as Lord, and accessible. Secondly, the apostolic gospel, *the word of faith* (8), which makes him known. Thirdly, simple trust on the part of the hearers, calling on the name of the Lord, combining faith in the heart and confession with the mouth. But still something is missing. There is, fourthly, the evangelist who proclaims Christ and urges people to put their trust in him. It is of Christian evangelists that Paul writes in the next paragraph.¹

¹⁸ See Gal. 3:28.

¹⁹ Eph. 3:8.

²⁰ Acts 2:21.

²¹ 1 Cor. 1:2.

¹ John R. W. Stott, [*The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World*](#), *The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 279–285.

Additional Resources:

Course Curriculum: [Michael Kruger outline on Romans 10](#)

Video: [Michael Kruger on Romans 10](#)

Article/Sermon: [Charles Spurgeon on Romans 10:4](#)

Article: [Ligonier Ministries \(Romans 10:5-8, The Message Concerning Faith\)](#)

Article: [Ligonier Ministries \(Romans 10:9-13, Belief and Salvation\)](#)

Podcast: [Knowing Faith, Romans 10:1-13](#)

Sermon: [John Piper. April 1982 – Believe in Your Heart that God Raised Jesus from the Dead - Desiring God.](#)

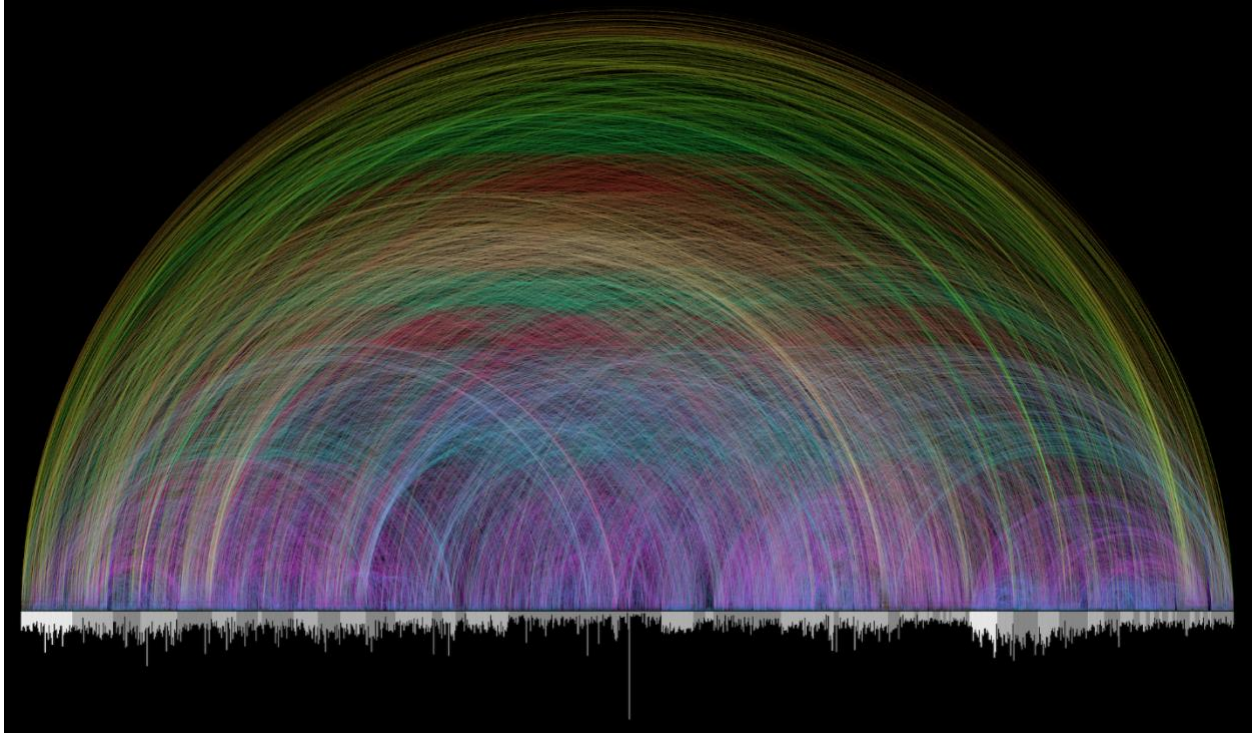
Book: Colin G. Kruse, Paul's Letter to the Romans, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2012), 398–413.

Book: John R. W. Stott, The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 279–285.

Graphic:

Harrison, C.; Römheld, C. Bible Cross References.

<https://www.chrisharrison.net/index.php/visualizations/BibleViz>



This set of visualizations started as a collaboration between Pastor Christoph Römhild and myself in October of 2007. He had put together a dataset of cross references found in the Bible (most often seen in study Bibles at the bottom or edges of the page, linking concepts, locations and people found in different parts of the text). Together, we struggled to find an elegant solution to render the data, 63,779 cross references in total. We set our sights on something more beautiful than functional. At the same time, we wanted a visualization that honored and revealed the complexity of the data at every level – as one leans in, smaller details should become visible. This ultimately led us to the multi-colored arc diagram you see below. Jordan Peterson has used this graphic in his lecture series to talk about how the Bible can be thought of as "the first hyperlinked book".

The bar graph that runs along the bottom represents all of the chapters in the Bible, starting with Genesis 1 on the left. Books alternate in color between light and dark gray, with the first book of the Old and New Testaments in white. The length of each bar denotes the number of verses in that chapter (for instance, the longest bar is the longest chapter in the Bible, Psalm 119). Each of the 63,779 cross references found in the Bible are depicted by a single arc - the color corresponds to the distance between the two chapters, creating a rainbow-like effect.