

Romans 10:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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?

Analysis

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?—Paul's chain logic (sorites) moves backward from calling (v. 13) to establish evangelistic necessity. Four rhetorical questions with one answer: gospel proclamation is essential. *Pōs oun epikalesōntai eis hon ouk episteusan?* (πῶς οὖν ἐπικαλέσονται εἰς ὃν οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν; "How then shall they call on [Him] in whom they have not believed?")—calling requires prior faith.

Pōs de pisteusōsin hou ouk ēkousan? (πῶς δὲ πιστεύσωσιν οὗ οὐκ ἤκουσαν; "How shall they believe [in Him] of whom they have not heard?")—faith requires hearing the gospel message. *Pōs de akousōsin chōris kēryssontos?* (πῶς δὲ ἀκούσωσιν χωρὶς κηρύσσοντος; "How shall they hear without one preaching?")—hearing requires a preacher (*kēryssō*, κηρύσσω, "proclaim, herald"). This demolishes universalism: salvation requires hearing the gospel. It also demolishes Christian passivity: the lost will not be saved without messengers. The logical chain is unbreakable: no preachers = no hearing = no faith = no calling = no salvation.

Historical Context

The early church took the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) as literal mandate. Paul's missionary journeys planted churches throughout the Roman Empire within one generation (Rom 15:19-23). Early Christians understood that Christ's return

awaited gospel proclamation to all nations (Matt 24:14). This urgency fueled persecution-defying evangelism. Modern "anonymous Christian" theories and pluralistic inclusivism contradict Paul's clear logic: special revelation (the gospel) must be heard for saving faith.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Does your theology and practice reflect Paul's logic that lost people cannot be saved without hearing the gospel?
2. How does this verse challenge both hyper-Calvinism ("God will save the elect without means") and universalism ("sincere seekers will be saved apart from Christ")?
3. What is your personal responsibility in the sending-preaching-hearing-believing-calling chain?

Interlinear Text

πῶς οὖν ἐπικαλέσονται εἰς οὗ οὐκ πιστεύσουσιν
How then shall they call on him in of whom not believed
G4459 G3767 G1941 G1519 G3739 G3756 G4100

πῶς δὲ πιστεύσουσιν οὗ οὐκ ἀκούσουσιν πῶς δὲ
How and believed of whom not heard How and
G4459 G1161 G4100 G3739 G3756 G191 G4459 G1161

ἀκούσουσιν χωρὶς κηρύσσοντος
heard without a preacher
G191 G5565 G2784

Additional Cross-References

Titus 1:3 (Parallel theme): But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

2 Timothy 4:17 (Parallel theme): Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Hebrews 11:6 (Faith): But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Ephesians 4:21 (Parallel theme): If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

John 20:31 (Faith): But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

James 5:15 (Faith): And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Acts 8:31 (Parallel theme): And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

