

Wednesday Night Men's Bible Study
Romans 9:1-33

It is very difficult to remove or change existing belief structures for newer ones. To say, "I would never buy a Chevy again" in response to the personal experience of one of the millions of Chevrolet cars ever made", is saying that is my personal life decision. But one day a great deal of Chevrolet makes you wonder and reconsider your statement. And after you buy one and it becomes the best car you ever had, you must admit, you were wrong. Nobody likes to be wrong, but is worse when it is you, telling you, you were wrong. But probably worse yet, what if you disagree with God's choices?

Rightly dividing the Word of Truth

It is very important that when you read the Bible to not be shaded by your previous belief structures. As we read Romans, do not do so to prove your existing view. But rather as you read Romans examine carefully what Paul is saying and you may well find a new view. As you read Romans you are not doing so to ratify a currently held belief, because a belief does not have to be proved.

RECAP

Where we have come in Paul's Letter to the Romans

Chapter one:

- Paul's greeting of the Church in Rome
- God's wrath against sinful humanity
- Introduction to the groups:
 - Faithful 1-17
 - Greeks 18-32

Chapter two:

- Introduction to the other groups
 - Native Romans 1-16
 - Alexandrian Jews 17-29

Chapter three:

- Last group
 - 3:1-8 Jews from slavery
- God's faithfulness
- No one is righteous
- Description of Righteousness

Chapter 4:

- What shall we say?
- Works in comparison to Faith
- Example of Abraham

Chapter 5:

- Peace and hope

- Belief in Righteousness
- Righteousness applied

Chapter 6:

- Principals of Sanctification
- Slaves to Righteousness

Chapter 7:

- Practice of Sanctification
- Three parts of the Antrhopos (Body, Soul and Spirit.)
- Law and Sin
- Oh wretched man that I am.

Chapter 8:

- Power of sanctification
- Present suffering and future glory.
- More than conquerors

The Great Page Turn in Chapter 9

Most see a great change in the narrative of Paul here. It is as if there was a purposeful and dramatic break from the theology of unity to an even more pressing issue. The five groups were now becoming two. The Jews and the Gentiles.

The first eight chapters of Romans, with some deviations, were about the lack of unity among the well-meaning groups. Paul emphasized that the church is the church, and all had a rightful place in the church. The Greek intellectuals were shown they had a place in the church. The Roman relativists, the woke of their generation, had a place in the church. The faithful had a place in the church. But now the emphasis turns to the place of the Jews in the church. Paul's own family of God. He had taken a few well-aimed shots at the factious Jews, but now the interrogation light of the Gospel was placed in their faces.

Remember here there were two Jewish groups in the church:

- The Alexandrian Jews were the merchant class in Rome. They had chosen to be there. They were one level above the servant class. They lived in dependence to a promise and a hope, "It will get better". We have a covenant and the Law.
- The slave class of Jews was the lowest of the low in Roman society. They were the latest group to be shoehorned into the church. This group wanted to find an outlet for their faith to find the Messiah that would set them free. In the time of Paul, these low Jews were even skeptical of the change in their status even if the Messiah did show up.

The Jews of Rome had most of the advantages in the church: He gives six things in Romans 9:4 that the people of Israel had: adoption, glory, covenants, law, service, promises, fathers, and ancestry that produced the Messiah. The change in emphasis from total unity for all in the church was Paul's line of writing in the first eight chapters. The Jews agreed with most of what Paul intended, but they were still causing a rift in the Church. It was not that the Jews did not have a place in the church, they saw themselves as special and with God-ordained privilege.

Even back in the first century, the Jews wanted to set themselves apart, to be the special ones. They wanted to have a hierarchy in the church, with them as the ones who were in charge. They had endured much; doesn't that count for anything?

Now Paul turns the page and stops for a break in the logic. He thinks about his own family. It would be easy to side with the Jewish hierarchy. His thoughts are filled with both empathy and sympathy. What about all those thousands of thousands back home? What about all the Jews under the thumb of Rome? What about all the Jews dispersed across the known world?

From the Jewish Christian viewpoint reading these words from Paul and ask: Paul, you have made great and grand promises to the Gentiles, what about us? You have provided great ideas and truths about the inclusion of the Gentiles; they have acceptance into the Kingdom of God. You have told us they too can have justification. You have talked about the great blessings that come from above. But these blessings seem far and above us the Jews. Our history and all our suffering must mean something. All the blessings you have written about, were not these blessings reserved for the Jews? It is great that God made a provision for the Gentiles, we even can accept them into our lives. But all the blessings promised to our forefathers, don't they belong to us?

Outline and commentary of Romans 9

This chapter can be divided into four parts: 1) Sorrow for Israel, 2) Not all are true Israel, 3) God will bless by His will, and 4) righteousness is by faith. In this lesson we will only have time to look at the first two, sorrow and true Israel.

1. **Paul expresses his deep sorrow and love for his fellow Jews who have rejected the gospel of Christ (Romans 9:1-5).**
2. **Paul explains that not all who are descended from Israel are true Israel, but only those who are chosen by God according to his grace and purpose (Romans 9:6-17).**
3. Paul defends God's right to show mercy to whom he wills and to harden whom he wills, and anticipates some objections that might arise from this doctrine (Romans 9:18-29).
4. Paul concludes that the reason why many Jews did not attain righteousness is that they pursued it by works of the law instead of by faith in Christ, while many Gentiles attained it by faith (Romans 9:30-33).

It is important here to define the word causation. If the act of beating my head against the wall until blood starts to flow, that action is the cause of my headache and not the wall. Cause always has action. There is no movement of the stars in the sky unless there is a cause.

Section 1 of Romans 9 - Great sorrow

Romans 9:1-5

Paul now stops and reflects upon the history of the Jews. Of their past, present and future.

It is as if Paul was tiring of all the theology, He had hammered all the groups to bring unity by logic. Nothing else could be said about the Grace of God being more important than works and the law.

Now he is reminded of the consequences of the lack of faith as exhibited by his ethnic family from Eternity. And Paul is moved to tears.

It is a terrible sorrow. Sorrow for his own people. His own ethnic family, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is reminded of the good and the bad choices God's chosen had made. Paul's very soul cries out for his people.

Paul remembers these special people. Special because they were to set themselves apart for a divine purpose and failed. God had a plan for their lives. They would be given a Law to live by. They were to be an example of righteousness and hope. They were to be more than the sum of their parts. They had the privileges of sonship. They had many outstanding leaders such as Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, Moses, and all the prophets.

When the time came to proclaim the excellent day of the Lord. When it came time to show the world the plan of God in the advent of the Messiah, they failed and failed miserably. They rejected the Messiah because they were so caught up in trying to do something much less important. They saw lifestyle as more important than faith. They were so busy trying to keep the law, that they lost the intent of that law. They had built a great temple and maintained it with meticulous effort but missed God in the temple. They believed relationships were only for a strict code but totally malleable in their attitudes. They gave alms to the poor but missed the thousands who needed spiritual food. They believed in purity, but only on the outside. But worst of all was when the chosen rejected the chooser.

The Jewish group in the Church in Rome was holding up the Torah as proof that the Jews should have been first in line for the blessings of God.

The people of Israel should have rejoiced and accepted Jesus as the Messiah. It was the ultimate part of the Plan of God. The coming of Jesus Christ should have been celebrated as the best thing since creation. The plan of God was for Israel to be the evangelists of the world. The plan of God was for the people of Abraham to lead the world to Jesus. And they did not. They rejected the promised One in favor of the status quo of rules, customs, laws, and religious leadership. They had to protect what they had. The response to their destiny, they followed their leaders blindly groping in the darkness of ceremony and compliance.

And Paul breaks down in tears and lament.

Section 2 of Romans Nine

Romans 9:6-17

Paul explains that not all who are descended from Israel are true Israel, but only those who are chosen by God according to his grace and purpose (Romans 9:6-13).

How about all the remaining Jews? Paul, you have told us in no uncertain terms the Gentiles have acceptance into the Kingdom of God. Gentiles can have justification. That the Gentiles are to have blessings that seem to be far and above what the Jews have received throughout

history. It seems, to us Jews, that Gentiles don't deserve all these advantages before the Family of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. Paul, you have made a great case for the unity of all believers, BUT, what about our special chosen position before God? Where is our special reward for staying somewhat close to your plan?

The Problem Statement.

1. ISRAEL IS GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE FROM ALL HUMANITY
2. ISRAEL IS THE PRIMARY SOURCE SALVATION
3. ISRAEL HAD A DESTINY
4. GOD CHOSE ISRAEL TO BE THE CAUSALITY OF HIS PLAN
5. GOD'S PLAN CAN NOT BE CANCELED
6. NO MISTAKE, NO DEVIATION, NO WILLFUL ACT CAN STOP GOD'S PLAN
7. THEREFORE, ISRAEL NO MATTER WHAT WILL ALWAYS HAVE THE MOST FAVORED STATUS.

So therefore:

1. SO WHY DO THE GENTILES PROSPER MORE THAN THE NATION OF ISRAEL?
2. WHY DOES GOD SEEM TO FAVOR THE HEATHEN GENTILES?
3. WE ARE HIS PEOPLE, NOT THEM

God can do whatever He wants without compromising His righteousness.

Did God's plan fail? Romans 9:6

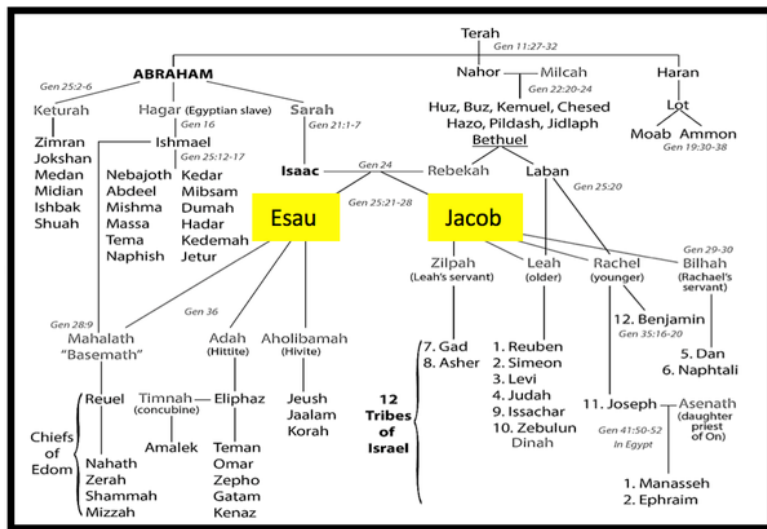
The thought process of the Jews in the Church was an unfairness of God's plan. They saw it as a flawed plan. They did not recognize the cause of the changes they saw around them was not God changing his mind, but the willful actions of the Jews. And now they were complaining about Gentiles in their church.

It would be the next logical step for Paul to simply say the Jews had rejected Christ and this caused God to reject the Nation of Israel. It would take great skill to tell the Jews they were simply wrong. Paul softened his approach out of love.

Who is Who in Romans 9 the Second Section: Romans 9:6-13).

1. **Abraham** – given the promise to father a great nation
 - a. Married twice 1st to **Sarah** and then to **Keturah**
 - b. **Abraham** and **Sarah** became very old and no children
 - i. **Sarah** suggested having a child by a servant **Hagar**
 - ii. **Hagar** and **Abraham** had a firstborn son – **Ishmael**
 1. **Ishmael** became the father of the Edomites
 2. The birthright should be **Ishmael's**
 - iii. Sarah gives birth to **Isaac**

- c. After **Sarah** dies **Abraham** marries **Keturah**
- 2. **Isaac** marries **Rebekah**
 - a. **Rebekah** has two sons **Jacob** and **Esau**
 - i. The birthright of **Isaac** should go to **Esau** the firstborn
 - 1. **Esau** sold his family name for a bowl of lentil soup.
- 3. **Jacob** has two wives **Leah** and **Rachel**
 - a. Each wife has a servant who also gave birth to children
 - b. Each male child would become the leader of one of the tribes of Israel
 - i. **Leah**
 - 1. **Reuben, Hudah, Simeon, Issachar, Levi, Zebulun**
 - 2. Leah's servant Zilpah birth to **Gad** and **Asher**
 - ii. **Rachel**
 - 1. Two sons **Joseph** and **Benjamin**
 - 2. Rachel's servant birthed **Dan** and **Naphtali**
- c. **Jacob** name is changed by God to **ISRAEL**
- d. **Jacob** becomes the patriarch of the nation of Israelites.
- e. **Jacob** is a prominent figure in Judaism, Christianity and Islam



A reminder to the reader of this section: We all have some form of "Dispensationalist" in us. That is to say, it is impossible to understand the history of Israel and see a great page turn in how God is dealing with his chosen people. The spectrum of this change goes from one extreme of God simply giving up on Israel and substituting the Gentiles, to the other extreme of God has not changed at all but just making a bigger tent to include the Gentiles. The point here it is absolutely true that the nation of Israel birthed the Messiah and then crucified Him. Secondly and just as true not all Jews rejected Jesus. The beginning of the church was predominantly Jewish in nature and population. It must be remembered God, in His Plan for all mankind has always used a small segment or remnant of the Jews who followed the Law, its spirit, intent, and recognized the Messiah Jesus.

Examples of God choosing the plan over the person.

- **Abraham** had received the promise to be the father of a great nation.
 - Genesis 17 gives the promise to Abraham at the age of 99. The promise included a condition: If you obey me and always do right. Abraham was to be the father of a nation dedicated to God and His plan.
 - But Abraham in his old age had no children and to solve the problem by himself he fathered Ishmael by Hagar. That was not the plan.
 - Sarah gave birth to Isaac and Isaac was favored by Abraham to the neglect of Ishmael.
 - Isaac had been the plan. Abraham had many more children, but Isaac was the plan. Jewish thought was that all the other children were not included, and not needed. They were not considered a part of the plan and were ignored.
 - Paul's truth was it did not matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile. It is about a spiritual promise to a spiritual people. The Jews and the Gentiles are now equal.
 - Equal in opportunity - the call to all
 - Equal in spirituality - justification is available to all
 - Equal in genealogy – adoption available for all
 - Equal in righteousness – sanctification available for all
 - The Jewish belief was that the fleshly connection to Father Abraham was only through Isaac. This belief, this fleshly connection to Abraham was key to the privilege. But Paul was there to tell them Abraham had other sons and Ishmael was the first.
 - Abraham's "spiritual seed" was sown in Isaac to the cost of rejection of all others. The physical does not dictate the spiritual. The promise for Abraham, God's plan, was not dependent upon fleshly descent. Verse 8 it is not flesh, but the children of the promise to be the fulfillment of Abraham's promise.
- **Isaac** had the right bloodline from Abraham and Sarah. He married Rebekah and she would have twin boys. While in the womb the twins were wrestling. Their temperaments were already formed. The two boys would be at each other from the beginning. Ultimately Esau the first born would trade his birthright to his brother Jacob for a bowl of lentil soup.
 - The grand plan was for God to use the offspring of Abraham to start a great nation. There would be trillions of decisions made by millions of people. Esau was the first born but his temperament was not what was needed to build a spiritual people.
 - We all want to be chosen, to be spiritual, to be called, to be more than all the others. We would like to be more handsome, witty, intelligent, spiritual, eloquent, taller, have less wrinkles, more hair, better health, more inquisitive, more

attractive. We seem to want to be set apart, to be unique in our own way. But the specialness, even if you were a Jew, is more or less set at birth. God has a plan for you. God has a plan for your uniqueness.

- On the road of history the people of Israel followed the temperament of Jacob. Should have God kept the line straight and used Esau instead of Jacob? Should the temperament of the nation of Israel be contention and pride? Should have God chosen the stronger firstborn or the seemingly weaker Jacob?
- Genesis 25:23 God chose Jacob because of the propensity of Jacob toward God.
- Hundreds of years after the two boys were born and all the consequential events in between, Malichi concluded: God loved Jacob and hated Esau.
- Therefore, should we fault the plan of God that he chose Jacob instead of Esau? Should we fault the plan when He chose to do justice and judgment? Do we fault God for choosing someone who had a propensity to do what is right? God does not choose because you are special, God chooses whom He will because He can make you special.
- Moses and Pharaoh both used God for the furtherance of His plan. Both were subjected to circumstances that made them choose. One became the great lawgiver and the victim of failure at the Red Sea. At first glance, it would seem that both were somewhat stubborn in following the plan of God. God chose one to lead Israel, and the other to let them go.
 - Pharaoh had his heart hardened by the circumstances of the rebellious slaves. They wanted to leave to continue on the plan's path. He was insulted by the attitude of the enslaved Jews. They were getting willful. That was not the place of an enslaved people. Pharaoh' heart was filled with his own destiny. Pleasing some other God was not a high priority. God used this rebellion to stiffen Pharaoh's resolve to keep what was seen as a possession of Egypt. Pharaoh was to be included in the plan of God.
 - Moses led God's people on the plan. Moses was trying to follow a path set before him. But nevertheless, Moses was a stubborn man. Moses spent time in exile because he killed someone in anger. He was reluctant to go before the powerful. Moses thought he was the cause of the splitting of the Red Sea. He destroyed the original tablets in a rage. He hit a rock and brought water only aver his impatience of hitting it twice.
 - But God used both Pharaoh and Moses in His plan. One was left with a dead son and a ruined army and the other a leader of a people. Both were in God's plan. It was God's grace that the plan was made. Israel was to be a big portion of God's plan. They were just on the path to the Messiah and the blessing of the world by Him. It was their destiny.
 - You may well call this plan a plan of destiny or even a pre-determined plan of destiny, but it was a plan using a specific few in extraordinary circumstances. It

was a plan for all mankind to being worked together for the good of all those who love God and are called to his purpose. This plan for mankind was assaulted on many sides. Stupid choices, sinfulness, detours, and ultimately rejection were accepted and counted. But the Plan of God continued on.

Yes, the seed of Abraham was chosen to become the environment for reaching the world. And they failed. They failed because they depended upon genealogy instead of faith. They were not chosen because of the merit of bloodline, but God's choice to include these people to be the instrument of God's plan. The choice by God was not an arbitrary choice in the darkness. It was the best choice available.

It is obvious that along the path set before the nation of Israel, there were mistakes and wrong turns. It is also obvious that they have taken many opportunities to sin.

How does God become unfair to include the Gentiles? Does God's plan to include the Gentiles was always a part of the plan? How does their inclusion diminish you?

God's plan was conceived perfectly. It was wonderfully planned. It was timely executed. And then it was grossly rejected. Was God the cause of the rejection? Is there any hope for Israel?

Is the real problem God's plan. God promised to love, nurture, and keep the chosen nation of Israel. God's plan was to use circumstances and events to place a people to provide a place and to produce a holy Messiah.

To the Jews the very concept that God the Father of Perfect Promises could choose Gentiles over Israel was a nagging bad taste in their mouths. The very thought was revolting, repulsive, nasty, offensive, vial and foul.

Now that the Messiah has come, does this cause God to be done with Israel as a nation?

Did they lose their chosen national favor of God? Can my actions and choices cause God to change his mind?

All this leads to the third section of Romans 9.

3. Paul defends God's right to show mercy to whom he wills and to harden whom he wills, and anticipates some objections that might arise from this doctrine (Romans 9:18-29).
4. Paul concludes that the reason why many Jews did not attain righteousness is that they pursued it by works of the law instead of by faith in Christ, while many Gentiles attained it by faith (Romans 9:30-33).

Homework

Read Romans 9:18-33

Write down any questions you may have.

Pray for next weeks lesson.

Pray for Israel.

Answer this question: Is God done with Israel as part of His plan?