

## ~ Lesson 69 ACTS~

**An Overview of the Book of Romans (part 3: chapters 9-11)****Israel and God's Plan of Redemption**

We are continuing our overview of the book of Romans, as we have been studying the life of Paul and the book of Acts. And we have camped out in Acts 20:2-3 on Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey because it is at this point when he is in Corinth for three months that he writes this masterpiece called the epistle to the Romans. So far we have spent three weeks in the overview of this book: 1<sup>st</sup> week- Historical context; 2<sup>nd</sup> week- Chapters 1-7 detailing our Justification and Sanctification; 3<sup>rd</sup> week- Chapter 8 the Trinity working together to bring the believer into Glory. And today we look at the next section that focuses primarily on Israel spanning chapters 9-11. These three chapters address God's plan of Redemption as He worked with Israel before the cross to bring Salvation to the whole world. We will be spending the majority of this lesson in chapter 9 because it is one of the most misunderstood chapters in the New Testament. But if you understand chapter 9, chapters 10-11 fall into place perfectly.

For the first 8 chapters, Paul takes us through the doctrine of the three stages of our Salvation; from Justification, to Sanctification and finally into Glorification. And that's where we left off last week in chapter 8 at the crescendo of this masterpiece as Paul shows how the all of God, the Trinity, is working together to bring us into Glory. And we discovered the four promises to the believer in chapter 8... The Promise of Freedom; The Promise of the Witness of the Holy Spirit; the Promise of Glory; and the Promise of the Surety of God's love. And now after showing these great promises, Paul takes us from this high note in chapter 8, to his desperate cry for Israel in chapters 9-11, yearning that they might partake in these precious promises. But what is so sad, and why Paul is so heartbroken over the Jews is that the promises they were entrusted to keep, they have now rejected the source of the Promise, Jesus Christ, and have been cut off from the promises of God because of unbelief.

The reason why chapter 9 is one of the most misunderstood chapters in the New Testament is because many people relate what Paul is saying to elect salvation, but instead Paul is talking about the service of Israel to usher in the Messiah to the world. So chapter 9 is not about elect salvation, but rather an election for service to bring salvation to the world. This is the light in which we must read and understand chapter 9, and not only nine, but the next three chapters, chapters 9-11. The biggest obstacle to Truth is thinking you already know it, so I would encourage you to look at these chapters in this new light, through different lenses than we may have been taught before. Chapter 9 is about the salvation of God. It's about how God chose to bring salvation to the world and He sovereignly chose to do this with Israel. Understanding chapter 9 will change your life and it will give you a deeper understanding and appreciation for God's plan of Redemption.

**Romans 9:1-3: The Heart of God**

Anytime we can understand God's plans better, it gives us a better understanding of God Himself and we begin to see God's heart in the first 3 verses of chapter 9, **Romans 9:1-3**. This is Paul speaking, inspired by the Holy Spirit to reveal God's heart for His people. This is the self-sacrificed love for his enemies just as Jesus did for us. How many times have we seen the unbelieving Jews attack the Apostle Paul and yet he tells them he wishes he could die in place of them and become accursed on their behalf. Paul's heart is yearning for the redemption of Israel, but is sorrowful because they rejected their Messiah. Jesus said the same thing, **Matt 23:37-39; Luke 19:41-42**. But because of unbelief, blindness has come upon them and they have been broken off, Romans 11:19, 25.

**Romans 9:4-5: Israel- The elect nation for God's service**

Paul is sorrowful because the Jews were the chosen people of God to usher in the Messiah to the world and they were entrusted with this service of God, **Romans 9:4-5; 3:1-2**. Israel is the vessel to bring: the adoption; the glory; the covenants; the giving of the Law; the service of God; and the promises.

**Romans 9:6-13: God is faithful to His Promise**

Then Paul refers to the question he stated in chapter 3, did God's Word fail because Israel rejected His Word? **Romans 3:3; 9:6-7**. To answer this, Paul gives us a history lesson from the Scriptures proving that God is faithful even despite Israel's disobedience. That God was faithful to His promise even when Israel wasn't. Paul brings us back to the promise of Abraham and tells us that God sovereignly chose one son of Abraham to bring the Promise of the Seed to the world, namely Isaac, **Romans 9:6-9**. Paul is making two points with these statements: 1) that not every son of Abraham was elected for the service of ushering in the Messiah, only in Isaac will all nations of the earth be blessed. God has the sovereign right to choose how salvation is to come to the world. This doesn't mean that the other sons of Abraham couldn't support the promise. (Abraham had 8 sons total, Ishmael with Hagar, Genesis 16:1-15; six others with his wife Keturah, Gen 25:1-2), but Paul is making it clear that God sovereignly chose that the Messiah would come through Isaac, the one born by promise.

The second point: 2) Just because you are of the seed of Abraham, or even of Israel, this doesn't mean you're automatically a child of God and inherit salvation. Salvation comes through faith alone... to whosoever believes. He will focus back on this at the end of the chapter and in chapters 10-11.

Then he continues describing God's sovereign choice to choose Jacob instead of Esau for this service, **Romans 9:10-13**. Jacob and his twelve sons, the twelve tribes of Israel, were chosen to usher in Salvation for the world. They were entrusted with the oracles of God. This is not speaking of election for salvation, but the election of service to usher in the Messiah. Paul gives us the reason why God chose Jacob over Esau in verse 13... because Esau despised his birthright which is directly related to the Seed of the Messiah and the promise of Abraham, Gen 25:34. God, in His infinite foreknowledge knew this and God sovereignly chose Jacob and his children to usher in the Messiah.

**Romans 9:14-18: God's Sovereign Mercy**

Paul asks another question that he anticipates might come up. Is God unrighteous for choosing this plan? **Romans 9:14**. Certainly not! God can choose whomever He desires for His service. In fact, the weaker the vessel, the greater the glory to God. God has the sovereign right to whom He will show mercy to, **Romans 9:15**. God said this to Moses right after the children of Israel made a golden calf and started worshipping it and then Moses begged God to relent of His wrath, Exodus 33:19. Paul continues his explanation why God has the right to show mercy to even a rebellious nation, **Romans 9:16**. This word "it" isn't referring to Salvation, but God's promise of the Messiah. Salvation is determined by our will... whosoever believes will be saved. So this isn't referring to Salvation, but God's election for service to bring salvation to the world.

Then Paul gives another example showing how God works with dishonorable vessels to fulfill His promises, **Romans 9:17-18**. Does God harden people's hearts against their will? No, in the case of Pharaoh, Pharaoh hardened his heart toward God first, and then God solidified his heart in this state by giving him over to his rebellion, Pharaoh- Ex 7:22-23; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34; God- Ex 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:20; 14:4, 8, 17. And He did this according to His foreknowledge so that His plan of redemption would come to pass.

This is why we see God pour out His wrath in a different manner in the Old Testament than in the New. On this side of the cross, God deals with mankind through His Son, Heb 1:1-2. But before the cross, God had to fulfill His promise to Abraham by sending His Son at the perfect and exact time. Paul says in Galatians... at the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, Gal 4:4-5. Therefore, in His sovereignty, according to foreknowledge, Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:2, 20; Rom 8:29, He sovereignly influenced situations... not apart from free will, but according to foreknowledge He formed His plan of redemption. This is the next point Paul makes with the Potter and the clay.

### **Romans 9:19-24: The Potter and the Clay**

Paul equates God with a Potter, not a puppet master, but a potter choosing and forming His vessels... some for honor and some for dishonor, **Romans 9:19-21**. But does God just randomly choose who is a dishonorable vessel and who is honorable? Certainly not! Paul is using this analogy from **Jeremiah 18:1-4**. Here we find in this text that the potter begins forming the clay, but he finds it marred in the potter's hands and it becomes unusable. So at this point the potter has a decision to make. Does he just throw the clay away or does he choose to make the clay into a dishonorable vessel? In the case of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Judas, the unbelieving Jews who crucified Jesus, God chose to form all these into dishonorable vessels to perform His plan of redemption. But notice that each dishonorable vessel was made because of their free will choice to rebel against God. Paul tells us in 2 Timothy that we have the choice of what type of vessel we want to be for the Master, **2 Tim 2:20-21**. Paul asks the question in Romans, Can the thing formed blame God for making them this way? The point Paul is making is that God has the sovereign right to use the marred clay for His glory, to fulfill His plan of redemption, **Romans 9:22-24**. God used vessels of wrath to show His power and to perform His plan to bring mercy to the whole world. There is no greater display of power and mercy than that of the cross, **Romans 3:25-26**. Verse 22 says these vessels of wrath were prepared, *καταρτίζω*, formed, established, mended, completed for destruction. This goes back to the potter forming the clay and establishing the dishonorable vessel for His use. Verse 23 says that God prepared, *προετοιμάζω*, made ready the vessels of mercy beforehand for glory. How did He do this? He placed His glory in Jesus Christ. We could say He predestined His glory in Jesus and all those who believe in Him attain and apprehend this glory. This is what chapter 8 is all about.

### **Romans 9:25-29: The witness of the Prophets Hosea and Isaiah**

Now that Salvation has come to the world through Jesus Christ and ushered in by the Jews, Paul shifts from the purpose of election for service and begins speaking directly to being saved. And he quotes Hosea prophesying of the Gentiles coming to Salvation and becoming sons of God through faith, **Romans 9:25-26**. This was the plan of redemption... salvation to the whole world, to whosoever believes. Then he quotes Isaiah speaking of the remnant of the Jews who might believe and be saved from Righteous Judgement, **Romans 9:27-29**.

### **Romans 9:30-33: Salvation out from faith**

In these final verses, Paul makes it perfectly clear how to attain to the Righteousness of God, **Romans 9:30-33**. It is not by works, not by the Law, not by being a descendant of Abraham, not by being predestined, but only out from faith in Jesus Christ can we be declared Righteous by God.

### **Romans 10:1-18: Salvation to whosoever believes**

Paul continues chapter 10 in the same way he began chapter 9... his heart's desire toward the salvation of Israel, **Romans 10:1-4**. Four times Paul repeats that this salvation is to whosoever believes, **Romans 10:4, 11, 12, 13**. But then Paul relates this message of the Gospel back to the Word of God that the Jews

were entrusted to keep, **Romans 10:14-18**. The Gospel message came from the Old Testament Scriptures and it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Paul's Gospel is the same Gospel message, but now it is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and His work on the cross.

### **Romans 10:19-21: Israel's Disobedience**

Israel was entrusted with this word of the Gospel, but they rejected "The Word," and they were disobedient to the Promise, **Romans 10:19-21**. Notice the mercy of God toward His people. His hand is still outstretched to a disobedient Israel and there is one day when Israel as a nation will acknowledge Jesus as Messiah.

### **Romans 11:1-27: Israel's return, Jews and Gentiles grafted into Jesus**

Paul begins chapter 11 with a question... Has God cast away His people? Certainly not! There is a remnant. But not for service, this time for salvation, **Romans 11:5-16**. God's redemption includes Israel. Jesus is going to reign from the throne of David in Jerusalem.

Paul goes on to discuss God's mercy on the Jews and their being grafted in again to the Olive Tree, who is Jesus. But it's not just Jews being grafted in, Gentiles are also rooted in Jesus. This is a beautiful example of the Church, Jew and Gentile alike rooted in Christ.

There is a specific time in history future in which Israel as a nation will acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, **Romans 11:25-27**. This date is set. This will end the 7-year Tribulation when Israel finally cries out, "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord," Matt 23:39. The remnant will return to God, look upon Him whom they pierced, and acknowledge their offence, Zech 12:10. The Day of the Lord is also known as "The time of Jacob's trouble." It marks a new dispensation when God will deal with mankind differently than now. And just as God intervened in a sovereign way to bring Jesus into the world the first time, in His mercy, He also will intervene sovereignly during the Tribulation with the purpose to turn Israel back to Him, **Romans 11:30-36**.

The plan of redemption is an amazing story of love. That God loved us so much He would put up with our stubbornness and disobedience and in His mercy grant us the opportunity to be one with Him for all eternity.