

Romans – Chapter 9

Summary of last half of Chapter 8

- *Our present suffering isn't worth comparing to our future glory*
- *All of creation is groaning (like a mother in labour) in hope of the future*
- *We also are groaning, waiting for our adoption*
- *The Holy Spirit helps us to pray*
- **Nothing** can condemn, **nobody** can bring a charge against us, **nobody** can be against us, **nothing** can separate us from the love of God

Chapter 9: Election, Israel and Mercy

Highlight: **All Quotations from the Old Testament**

Paul's love for Israel (1-5)

¹I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit— ²that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Why would Paul want to show here that he still loves the Israelites?

What belongs to the Israelites according to verse 4-5?

The True Israel (6-9)

⁶ But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, ⁷ and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but *“Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”* ⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. ⁹ For this is what the promise said: *“About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.”*

If Romans 1-8 has shown that not all Jews are saved, doesn't that mean that God's promise to Abraham failed? Didn't God promise that all the 'children of Abraham' would be blessed? Yet, the promise wasn't to all of Abraham's children. What happened to Abraham's first son? Why wasn't Ishmael part of God's promises?

God's Purpose of Election (10-13)

¹⁰ And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— ¹² she was told, *“The older will serve the younger.”* ¹³ As it is written, *“Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”*

NOTE: In many places in Scripture, to 'hate' something or someone does not mean to despise or loathe. To hate simply means to 'love less' (Cf. Luke 14:26; Gen 29:30-31)

Rebekah had two sons (Jacob and Esau). But the promise to Abraham was only to Jacob and his offspring. God chose Jacob to receive the promises instead of Esau. It wasn't because of anything they had done, but simply because God chose it to be that way.

Does this mean that God saved Jacob and condemned Esau? Explain.

It Depends Not On Us, But On God (14-18)

¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses,

*“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”*

¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh,

*“For this very purpose I have raised you up,
that I might show my power in you,
and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”*

¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

Mercy/compassion is not earned; it is a gift. God chooses who He will show mercy to. How does He choose who to show mercy to?

See Exodus 20:5-6; Luke 1:50

Talking Back to God (19-21)

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” ²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” ²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

In what ways do we sometimes ‘answer back to God’? Do we (the clay) ever accuse God (the potter) of making mistakes? What is the problem of this?

Only a Remnant Will Be Saved (22-29)

²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— ²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea,

*“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’
and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’”*

²⁶ *“And in the very place where it was said to them,
‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”*

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel:

*“Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only
a remnant of them will be saved, ²⁸ for the Lord will carry out his
sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.”*

²⁹ And as Isaiah predicted,

*“If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring,
we would have been like Sodom
and become like Gomorrah.”*

Isaiah promised that ‘only a remnant of [the Israelites] will be saved’. God doesn’t save or condemn anyone based on their ethnicity. Instead, what does salvation depend on? (See Romans 2:28-29).

Attaining Righteousness by Faith (30-33)

³⁰ What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. ³² Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³ as it is written,

*“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”*

According to verse 32, why did many Israelites fail to attain the righteousness that they were pursuing?

Is it possible for us today to pursue righteousness but fail to attain it? If so, how?

Questions

How would we summarise this chapter?

What can I apply from what I have learnt? How does this chapter change my choices and behaviour?

What is something I can pray for based on this text?