

The Book of Romans
9:1-13
2/27/2018 Wednesday PM

Introduction

- The end of chapter 8 marks the conclusion of the first major section of Romans.
- Paul has discussed the doctrines of justification, sanctification, and glorification.
- Before he moves on to address the practical concerns of local church life, he feels compelled to speak about God's plan for the Gentiles and the Jews.
- Paul was a Jew and even though he was the apostle to the Gentiles, that did not mean he had any less burden for his own people to see them come to Christ as he did.
- What we will see in the verses tonight, is Paul was deeply concerned about his fellow Jews and is seeking to yet again make a case for pleading with them to come to reason.

Romans 9:1-5

¹I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-- ²I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, ⁴the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

- **V.1** – Paul begins this section by making a strong assertion of truthfulness to what he is about to say.
- **Vv. 2** – He has “great sorrow and unceasing anguish” in his heart.
- Despite Paul being a success as a missionary to the Gentiles, a church planter, and teacher, he still feels sorrow.
- This is because most of the Jews, his own people, were rejecting the gospel despite the fact that they should have been the first to recognize it as the fulfillment of their Scriptures.
- Them missing out on salvation was something that hurt Paul very deeply.
- **Vv. 3-4a** - In fact, his agony was so intense that in **v. 3** he says that, “For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, ⁴the people Israel.”
- Paul is expressing his willingness to let his people take his place in knowing God.
- The passion and desire to see his people saved should be a model for us as we long to see our loved ones saved.
- **Vv.4b-5** – Paul begins this section with a list of eight benefits of being a Jew:
 1. They are sons of God by adoption.
 2. They had the divine glory, or visible presence of God, dwelling among them.
 3. They were given covenants. God made covenants with his people. God's promises never go unfulfilled.
 4. They received the law.
 5. They worshipped in the Temple.
 6. They were given promises.
 7. They had the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's 12 sons.
 8. They have Christ.
- Paul's point in all of this is that everything that God has given the Jews prepared the way for Christ.
- Christ is not a separate benefit, but the reason behind all the other benefits.

Romans 9:6-13

⁶It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ⁸In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. ⁹For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son." ¹⁰Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. ¹¹Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand: ¹²not by works but by him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

- **V.6** – Being that even after all God has done for the Jews, they have rejected Christ, Paul rightly states, “It is not as though God’s word had failed.”
- It would appear to some that God failed in reaching the Jews; however, this couldn’t be further from the truth.
- Humans have failed to respond to God, he has not failed.
- Paul makes it clear that “not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.”
- This means that not every Jew is a part of the spiritual Israel. (**2:28-29; 11:5-6; Galatians 3:7-9**)
- Israel’s history demonstrates that God was fulfilling his promises, apart from human failures and misunderstandings.
- Paul illustrates this in the coming verses from three Old Testament events.
- **Vv. 7-9** – The first OT event Paul uses is the lineage passing from Abraham to Isaac, rather than Ishmael. (Gen 16-21)
- Here in **v.7** Paul differentiates from being a blood descendant of Abraham and being a “child of the promise.”
- Paul is illustrating God’s sovereign choice with Abraham and his children.
- Abraham actually had children by three different women (Isaac, by Sarah – **Genesis 21:1-7**; Ishmael, by Hagar – **Genesis 16**; and six sons by Keturah – **Genesis 25:1-4**).
- However God made it clear that the line of promise would be through Isaac only: “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” (**Genesis 21:12**)
- God made a sovereign choice regarding who among Abraham’s physical descendants would carry the line of promise, the line that would result in the Messiah.
- It bears remembering that God chose Isaac before he was even born, it was purely God’s sovereign choice.
- **V.10** – Paul’s second illustration of God’s sovereign choice focuses on Isaac and Rebekah’s sons, Jacob and Esau.
- God chose to continue the line of blessing through the younger son, Jacob, rather than Esau. (**Genesis 25:23**)
- This was not customary in Hebrew culture, where the firstborn son was highly honored.
- **V. 11** - God had a sovereign purpose for Isaac and Rebekah’s sons, and the choice was made prior to their birth.
- Jacob was not chosen because he was “better” than Esau; he was chosen “not by works but by him who calls.”
- God’s sovereignty, not people’s works or character, is the basis for election.
- The word *election* actually takes on a technical sense within Romans.
- The fact of God’s choice was important to Paul, but the words he uses (*eklektos*, *ekloge*) are natural expressions for “choice.” They are found in **Romans 8:33; 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28; 16:13**.
- One must take the entire Bible as a source to form a proper understanding of the doctrine of election. However, if we assume Paul’s readers did not have access to his other letters, what would they have learned from this letter about the ways that God chooses?
 - Once God chooses, no charges against that person will hold. (**8:33**)
 - God’s choices are not based on the character or actions of the one chosen, but on his own merciful purposes. (**9:11; 11:15**)
 - God’s chosen ones will be faithful, while others, with the same evidence, will turn away. (**11:7**)
 - God’s love for his original chosen ones (Israel) is based on his promises to the patriarchs. (**11:28**)
 - God’s choosing is personal and specific, not general. (**16:13**)
- Election is like receiving an invitation for a party that we know will be awesome, but we know the invitation comes unearned. The choice to invite is purely the host’s, however we must RSVP.
- **V. 12** – God is the one who “calls” and he is the one who told Rebekah, while the twins were still in her womb, that Esau would serve Jacob. Esau himself did not serve Jacob, but his descendants did. (**1 Sam 14:47; 2 Sam 8:14**)
- **V.13** – These words sound really harsh, however they refer to the nations of Israel and Edom and not the brothers themselves. (**Malachi 1:2-3**)
- God chose Jacob to continue the family line of the faithful. This choice seemed like hatred toward Esau, but in reality, Esau was never excluded from knowing and loving God.
- Throughout this passage Paul has made it clear that God’s word has not failed. The Jews have simply misread and misunderstood what God has said and done. Everything God does for us, is for a purpose, we must remember that.
- He is clearly laying out to the Jews that God has been and still is in control, and sometimes things haven’t worked out like they would think they would, but God is God and what he says goes.

Next Week’s Study

Romans 9:14-23