

"God's Relationship with Israel"

Romans 9-11

Part 12

Introduction: In our study of Romans we are currently looking at the sovereignty of God in His choice of Jacob over Esau. In Romans 9 Paul has taken the time to show us that the line of promise in the Nation of Israel would run through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The line of promise does not go through Ishmael nor does it run through Esau. The line of promise runs through the descendants of Jacob because God chose it to be this way.

Notice Romans 9:10-13

Now Paul understood that this Truth would cause many to object and question if God was fair in electing Jacob. Therefore, as he moves on, he addresses the objections.

Notice Romans 9:14

Paul instantly puts a halt to any thought that God is unrighteous. Jacob and Esau were unrighteous, but God is NOT unrighteous. Paul moves on to show his readers that God is free to show mercy to whomever He desires, and He is free to harden the heart of anyone He desires.

Now before we move on let me just say that the passage which we are looking at is speaking of NATIONAL ELECTION not individual election. We need to also keep in mind that as we study this text it has NOTHING to do with salvation. God is not talking about choosing Jacob or Isaac for salvation He is showing us the line of promise in the Nation of Israel. This thought must be kept clear in our minds. It is very easy to step away from the context and start thinking about salvation here as many have and in so doing, they have distorted the passage and the line of thought.

Notice Romans 9:15

Here Paul points back to Exodus 33 where we find a conversation between God and Moses and Moses asks to see God's glory. But let me explain what happened leading up to this.

In Exodus 32 we find the story of the golden calf and the wrath of God. God announced to Moses that He was going to destroy all the people.

Exodus 32:9-14

⁹ And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:

¹⁰ Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

¹¹ And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?

¹² Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.

¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

¹⁴ And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

There was about 3000 people who died because of this sin so God spared the majority of the Israelites. This then moved Moses to know more about the character of God.

Exodus 33:18-19

¹⁸ And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

¹⁹ And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

Notice Romans 9:16

Here now Paul pulls these thoughts together. He explains that whomever is the recipient of God compassion and mercy it is not because they deserved it or sought for it. This verse tells us it is not of the will of the recipient nor of the efforts of the recipient. But it is all of God.

God does as He pleases to bring about His eternal purpose and we must accept that Truth. God can use whomever He desires to accomplish His purpose. This is seen in the next verse.

Notice Romans 9:17-18

Pharaoh was a sinner and the leader of Egypt. God chose to harden this man's heart so that God would be glorified in this man's rebellion. Many have problems with the fact that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, but God was righteous in doing so. It was the judgment for the man's sin. As I have said before if God would have taken his life he would have went to hell and nobody would question that. He would eventually die and go into hell but before he died, he was used by God to show forth God's glory. Pharaoh drown in the Red Sea and he went to hell, but it was not because God hardened his heart, but he went to hell because he was a sinner.

This now brings us to where we are tonight in our study.

Notice Romans 9:19

Here Paul anticipates another objection. The objection is, if God hardens a man's heart like He did with Pharaoh then how can God hold them accountable for what they do? This would come from someone who would declare they do what they do because God made them that way or because God is using them to carry out His purpose. Therefore, they would claim it is not their fault. Paul does not directly answer this objection but instead he counters it with an illustration.

Notice Romans 9:20-21

Paul is basically saying to the objector, "You don't understand! You are in no place to object!" He then gives the illustration of the potter and the clay. The potter has every right to do what he wants with the lump of clay and the vessels he makes.

Let me share with you the words of Alva McClain on verse 21 that will help:

"Paul is not talking about the creation of man. God created man good, holy, and righteous, but the clay that the apostle is talking about here is sinful clay. Out of that clay every man stands alike. Every man is a sinner, every man deserves judgment. God has a right to pick out one man from that mass and have mercy upon him."

Let me show you what Jeremiah wrote:

Jeremiah 18:1-6

The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

² *Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.*

³ *Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.*

⁴ *And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.*

⁵ *Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,*

⁶ *O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.*

God made both Jacob and Esau and they were both sinful lumps of clay. He then elected to use Jacob to carry on the line of promise. He did not choose Jacob for salvation and cast-off Esau. Both were free moral agents and had to make their own decisions about salvation. But neither had the choice concerning the line of promise. That was God's choice.

Paul is now going to raise a question to stir the reader's mind. The question covers three verses:

Notice Romans 9:22

Here we see that Paul makes his point by asking why God cannot allow the vessels fitted for destruction to continue to exist so that He can demonstrate His wrath and His power while exercising His longsuffering? In other words, "What would stop God from permitting evil people to live so that He could use them to accomplish His purpose?"

Now let me comment on the statement "fitted to destruction". This is illustrated in the case of Pharaoh. Listen to the words of Hodge on this statement:

"God did not make him wicked and stubborn; but as a punishment for his sin, He so dealt with him that the EVIL OF HIS NATURE revealed itself in a form, and under circumstances, which made him a fit object of the punitive justice of God."

Think of it this way: How can a man be made evil? Nothing needs to be done! He already is evil and if left to himself he will in time fully reveal the sinfulness of his heart and how deserving he is of the judgment of God. How can a man be made good and fit for heaven? This is impossible apart from the grace of God and the God of grace. Man does not need God in order to be wicked. Man does need God in order to be good. Man could never be good apart from God. God does not fit people for destruction people do it to themselves. Man is born a sinner and so he is fitted for destruction.

Notice Romans 9:22 again.

This verse so describes Pharaoh. God permitted this man to live and to afflict the people of Israel because God desired that through Pharaoh others would come to know Him.

Exodus 14:4

*⁴ And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and **I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD.***
And they did so.

Notice Romans 9:23

This is the flip side of the previous verse. Some He hardens such as Pharaoh and others He shows mercy and on these He shows the riches of His glory. I believe this is a reference to the body of Jesus Christ. We who make up the body are vessels of mercy. Let me show you why I say this.

Ephesians 2:1-7

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

⁶ And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Now, and in the ages to come and for all eternity we shall be the trophies of God's grace and His glory. Because of our sinful past we will forever glorify God because He has taken cold empty clay pots and from us, He has brought forth righteousness.

Notice Romans 9:23 again.

I want to comment on the last part of the verse that says, *which he had afore prepared unto glory.*

The church as a body was prepared before, even in eternity past to be the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:3-12

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

⁴ *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

⁵ *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

⁶ *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

⁷ *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace:*

⁸ *Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*

⁹ *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

¹⁰ *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

¹¹ *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

¹² **That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.**

Notice Romans 9:24

Here we see that Paul is speaking of the church which is made up of both Jew and Gentile believers. Let me share with you the words of Zeller on this verse:

"Keep in mind the historical background. The book of Romans was penned by Paul about 56 A.D. which was about 25 years after the death and resurrection of Christ. The majority of Jews were not responding to the gospel (Rom.11:28). A very small minority of Jews had put their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, including Paul. When the church first began, the membership was entirely Jewish (Acts 2). In Acts chapter 10 the first Gentiles were saved and entered the church. As time went on more and more non-Jews (Gentiles) came to Christ, and before long the majority of Christians were Gentiles. Saved Jews soon became a minority group in the churches. Today a believing Jew is a rarity. In the days when Paul wrote to the Romans this posed quite a problem: If the Jews are God's chosen people (Romans 9:1-5), then why are so few being saved? "Has God cast away His people?" In Romans 9:24 Paul is helping them to understand that in this present age God's chosen people are those whom He has called "not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles."

Now there are other questions that come up, "How can the Gentiles be God's people? What right do they have to be God's people? Why should they be included in this group known as the church? The Jews have always been the elect of God not the Gentiles. How then can this be? Paul will now take his readers and his objectors back to Hosea to teach them.

Notice Romans 9:25-26

These two verses deal with the Gentiles mentioned in verse 24. Paul quotes from two different passages in Hosea.

Hosea 2:23

²³ *And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.*

He also quotes from chapter 1.

Hosea 1:9-10

⁹ *Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.*

¹⁰ *Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.*

These verses are speaking of Israel, the 10 northern tribes who had forsaken God. God then disowns them and calls them "Loammi" which means, "not my people". But in the future God will call them back and they shall then be called the sons of the Living God. Now while these verses refer to the people of Israel, Paul is applying them to the Gentiles. Just as God said the people of Israel were not His people so it was also true of the Gentiles. But God in His mercy and grace has brought the Gentiles who accepted Jesus Christ and who are in the body of Christ into a personal relationship with Him.

1 Peter 2:9-10

⁹ *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;*

¹⁰ *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

Notice Romans 9:27-29

These verses are addressing the Jews mentioned in Romans 9:24. Here Paul is going to deal with another objection. The objection would be, "Why can't all the Jews be saved? Why can't all the Jews be God's people?"

Paul explains here that only a remnant will be saved.

Notice Romans 9:27-28 again.

Verse 28 speaks of God's judgment. He will trim away all the unbelieving Jews and when He is finished it will only be a small remnant that will be saved. Paul is quoting from Isaiah.

Isaiah 10:22-23

²² For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

²³ For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

Notice Romans 9:29

This verse answers another objection. The objection would be, "It is not fair. Why does God not save all the Jews?"

Then here in verse 29 Paul reminds the objector they should be thankful that any Jews are saved. Had it not been for the mercy and the grace of the Lord of hosts Israel would have all been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah in which there were none that survived.

In the Tribulation God will again work with the Nation of Israel and in that time the remnant will be saved.

Jeremiah 30:7

⁷ Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

Zechariah 13:8

⁸ And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

Conclusion:

Notice Romans 9:30-33

Here we see why very few Jews will be saved. They attempt to keep the Law as a means of salvation. But the Law cannot save anyone. It was never given as a means of salvation. Salvation is only by GRACE through FAITH.

What are you trusting in order to be accepted by God?

John 14:6

⁶ *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

You can trip over the stone, you can be smashed by the stone in judgment, or you can place your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ and plant your feet upon the Rock.