

ROMANS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Romans chapter 9 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

So far in our study in Romans we have covered three main divisions of this letter.

In Romans 1:18 through Romans 3:20 we looked at *CONDEMNATION*. And in this section Paul shows us that the whole world is guilty before God. He wrote, “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Romans 3:23.

Then, in Romans 3:21-5:21 Paul speaks of *JUSTIFICATION*. In this section Paul shows us that the righteousness of God has been revealed from heaven apart from the works of the Law. We are saved by grace and not by works. And there is no longer any record of our sin because the debt for our sin was paid in full by Jesus. It is not a work your way into heaven, but Jesus did all the work for us. Paul wrote, “**Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.**” Romans 3:28.

Then, in Romans 6 through Romans chapter 8 we looked at *SANCTIFICATION*. And Paul shows us that we can't accomplish in the flesh this holy living, but it can be accomplished as we walk in the Spirit! Paul put it like this, “**There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**” Romans 8:1-4.

Now, as we move into Romans chapter 9 through chapter 11 we are going to be in the fourth main division of this letter, and this section deals with ***ELECTION!***

Many have a hard time with this section, it is very controversial. Some commentators ignore this section completely, feeling it doesn't belong and they believe it may have been another sermon of Paul's that was just attached to this letter to the Romans. I disagree with that.

Others feel that Paul has taken a detour in his letter and this section has nothing to do with the rest of the letter. They feel what Paul said in Romans 8:37-39 should just continue on into Romans chapter 12. Listen to what Paul said in Romans 8, **“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Then, you just skip over Romans chapters 9 through 11 because they don't fit in, and Paul moves right into Romans 12:1-2 where he says, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

It does seem to fit nicely, but these three chapters are vital not only to the Jewish believers, but I also believe they are vital for us to know and understand. To the Jewish believers in Rome, their question might be, ***“Does this mean that God is done with the Jewish people and all He has given to them is for nothing?”***

And like the people in Rome, there are many Christians and denominations and non-denominational churches that feel God is done with the Jewish people. I guess that is why they have to edit out these chapters because Paul clearly shows us that God is not done with His people.

And listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 23:37-39 as He was looking at the city of Jerusalem, **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”**

Do you see that? **“... ‘you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”** That is saying that they will call upon the Lord one day. And I believe that they will call upon Jesus during the Tribulation Period as a nation.

Now some may argue against that, but again, here in these chapters of Romans, Paul makes it very clear that they will be saved! Paul tells us in Romans 11:25-27, **“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.’”**

This is really pretty simple, and we will cover it more when we get to Romans chapter 11, but who is Paul speaking about here? Listen again, **“... blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”**

This is not speaking of the church, it would make no sense and yet, there are some who claim that Paul is speaking about the church. But, does it make sense? “**. . . blindness in part has happened to the church until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.**” That is foolishness! The church is made up mostly of Gentiles today! So that would make no sense to make Israel the church!

So, if this is speaking of the Jews, and it is, how does God take away their sins? Just as He takes away our sins, through His shed blood. And that means that the Jews will turn to Jesus just as Jesus said in Matthew and Paul says here in Romans chapter 11 and really all three of these chapters we will be looking at that deal with ***ELECTION!***

So God has not forsaken His people, the Jews!

Now for the Gentile Christians in Rome, another question that they may have may be this, “***If God was not faithful in keeping His promises to the Jews, how can we be sure He will keep His promises with us?***”

You see, the character of God is on the line and Paul is going to show us that God is faithful and what He has promised He will bring to pass. Thus, just as God’s promises to the Jews will be fulfilled, so too will His promises to the believing Gentiles be fulfilled! God saves people!

Do you see how important this section is before Paul moves on in chapter 12 and discusses the ***APPLICATION*** of all these things?

You see; if God is not faithful to fulfill His promises, if there is no hope, why walk in His ways? But He is as we shall see in Romans chapter 9 through Romans chapter 11 and thus, we should have a walk that is worthy of the high calling by which we have been called!

Now before we move into Romans chapter 9 this evening, let me put these three chapters into perspective for you.

In Romans chapter 9:1-29 Paul deals with ***ISRAEL'S PAST ELECTION***.

In Romans chapter 9:30-10:21 Paul deals with ***ISRAEL'S PRESENT REJECTION***.

And then in Romans chapter 11 Paul deals with ***ISRAEL'S FUTURE RESTORATION***.

So, keep that in mind as we go through these chapters and also keep in mind that Paul is going to try to anticipate some questions that his Jewish audience might have after all he has written so far, and he will answer them.

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Romans chapter 9, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

ROMANS 9

VERSES 1-2

Keep in mind that Paul just finished speaking of God's rich and unfailing love for us, that there is no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus.

That is the mountaintop you might say. What a joy, what comfort to know those truths, but then comes the sorrow.

As we are going to see, Paul is broken over the Jewish people, his brethren. Why is he so broken, why so much sorrow for his Jewish brethren? Because, for the most part, they have rejected the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

That means that there is condemnation for them, their sins have separated them from God and Paul is devastated over this.

I think each of us have those same emotions, joy over our salvation but brokenness over family and friends who have rejected Christ!

Martian Luther put it this way, “Love is not only pure joy, and delight, but also great and deep heaviness of heart and sorrow.”

Let me share this with you because it will show you the importance of our anguish over our family and friends who reject Jesus. We are told,

In his retirement, Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia. Because Jefferson trusted that students would take their studies seriously, the code of discipline was lax.

Unfortunately, his trust proved misplaced when the misbehavior of students led to a riot in which professors who tried to restore order were attacked.

The following day a meeting was held between the university’s board, of which Jefferson was a member, and defiant students.

Jefferson began by saying, “This is one of the most painful events of my life,” was overcome by emotion, and burst into tears.

Another board member asked the rioters to come forward and give their names.

Nearly everyone did. Later, one of them said, “It was not Mr. Jefferson’s words, but his tears.”

- Today in the Word, March 29, 1993

May we not have the “*Turn or burn*” mentality, but a heart that is broken and interceding for our family and friends who don’t know the Lord! And may others see that love!

VERSES 3-5

This love that Paul had for the Jewish people was not a human love but a love that came from God. It is that *AGAPE* love.

Why do I say that? Because Paul is telling us that if it were possible, that he was willing to go to Hell so his Jewish brethren could be saved – that is how much he loved them. How much do we love people? Are we willing to sacrifice our time, get off the sofa and spread the Gospel message? Paul was willing to sacrifice his eternity!

Now, obviously he could not do that, but I truly believe that he meant it. But there is One who was not only willing but able to do that, and that was Jesus who died for our sins so that we can live with Him!

We see this also in the Old Testament. Notice the heart of Moses as he interceded for his people who had made the golden calf to worship God by and God was going to judge them for it.

We are told in Exodus 32:30-32, **“Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, ‘You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.’ Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, ‘Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin - but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.”**

That was the heart of Moses, to give up his eternity if his people would be cast out!

Folks, that truly is the heart of a believer, his love, his compassion for the lost no matter how they may respond, what they may do! It is the heart of Jesus and my prayer is that God would give me more of His heart, that kind of love for people and I am sure you feel the same way for yourselves!

To put things into perspective, listen to what Spurgeon said, “Get love for the souls of men – then you will not be whining about a dead dog, or a sick cat, or about the crotchets of a family, and the little disturbances that John and Mary may make by their idle talk. You will be delivered from petty worries (I need not further describe them) if you are concerned about the souls of men . . . Get your soul full of a great grief, and your little grief’s will be driven out.”

Perspective is everything!

Then Paul speaks of the blessings that the Jewish people had. God made them His own special people and He blessed them by adopting them as His own, gave them the covenants, the Law, they were to serve God, all of God’s promises were given to them, and yet they rejected the Messiah, they rejected Jesus, “**the eternally blessed God**” and as Paul looked at all they had, it now meant nothing without Jesus!

We have been so blessed by God, may we not lose that perspective and forsake Him and become complacent in what we have as the Jews did.

Now this statement here in Romans 9:5 is pretty amazing. Paul said, “**. . . Christ came, who is over all, the eternally bless God. Amen.**”

Look at what Paul said. Paul isn’t just saying that the Messiah was born of Israel, of Jewish descent. He is also saying that this Jewish Messiah, born of Israel according to the flesh, is in fact, God! ***JESUS IS GOD!***

Some translations today, the newer ones say that this is speaking of the Father and yet, that is not how this sentenced is structured.

Morris tells us, “The grammatical arguments almost all favor the first position [that it says that Christ is God], but most recent scholars accept the second [that God here refers to the Father] on the grounds that Paul nowhere else says explicitly that Christ is God.”

And Wuest, quoting Robertson, put it like this, “[This is a] clear statement of the deity of Christ following the remark about His humanity. This is the natural and obvious way of punctuating the sentence. To make a full stop after *flesh* and start a new sentence for the doxology is very abrupt and awkward.”

And when you look at the totality of the Scriptures, they clearly teach that Jesus is God, even Jesus taught that and that is why the Jews tried to kill Him. They could not believe that Jesus, being a man, was also God! It is sad when so many reject the deity of Jesus and go against what the Scriptures teach!

VERSES 6-9

Again, Paul is trying to anticipate the questions that they may have, the conclusions that they may come to because of what he has said.

Thus, the logical conclusion is that God’s Word has failed for Israel is lost. That phrase regarding God’s Word, has “**taken no effect**” carries with it the idea of a ship going off course. But that is not the case; God is faithful no matter what man may do with God’s Word.

You see, Israel means, “***governed by God***” and thus, it is not being born in the physical sense a Jew but in a spiritual sense. Only those who are governed by God are truly Israel!

Think of it like this. Over 80% of Americans call themselves Christians but the reality is, only those who are followers of Christ are truly Christians!

Thus, God has not failed, He always has His faithful remnant who love Him and serve Him!

And here was the problem for the Jews. They believed that the promises of God were given to the nation of Israel. But Paul is telling them, “Boys, this is where you are getting messed up!”

You see, the promises of God were not national based on bloodline, they were individual promises based on belief.

But the rabbis taught a national salvation that was based on blood and birth. And it did not matter what you believed or how you lived, if you were born a Jew, that was all that mattered.

And what we see here is Paul expounding on this by showing us that being a descendant of Abraham doesn't save you and he uses Abraham's son's; Ishmael a son of the flesh and Isaac a son of the promise.

Remember, Abraham had two sons, they both were born of Abraham! They both had the blood of Abraham in them. But only one was the son that the promises were given to!

Paul, in Galatians 4:22-26 tells us, **“For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar - for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children - but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.”**

Paul is speaking of Law and grace, entering into a relationship with God by the Law through works or by grace through faith. The Law can't save, it is a work of the flesh, but by becoming a child of the promise, and entering in by faith, you are saved!

Now for the Jew, the rational might go like this. Ishmael was a half-breed. He did not deserve God's blessings. On the other hand, Isaac was a full-blooded Jew and thus, he was worthy of the blessings. It may sound good, but that is not the reality as Paul goes on to say in the next few verses, as he looks at Isaac, the son of the promise.

VERSES 10-13

Now, the question here is, "What or to who is Paul talking about? Is he referring to a personal election to salvation for only a certain group of individuals and the rest are sentenced to Hell without any chance of being saved? Or is Paul talking about an election on a national level with the nation of Israel as God was going to use them to be a light to the world to show the people of this world who the true and living God is and this has nothing to do with an individual's salvation?"

That is an interesting question and I think it is the latter. Why do I say that? Because of what Paul tells us in Romans 9:13, "**As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.'**"

I think for most of us it is easy to see why God chose Isaac over Ishmael.

The problem comes in trying to figure out why God chose Jacob over Esau. The logical conclusion would be that Jacob was better than Esau, but that truly was not the case.

In fact, Paul tells us it was not of works or the things they did. Then what was it based upon? God's sovereign election, it was made before they were born.

Think of it like this. Why did God choose the nation of Israel, the Jews, to be His representative to the world?

In Exodus 32:9 we are told, “**And the LORD said to Moses, ‘I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!’**” You see, it was not because of how good they were, but God’s sovereign election.

Paul also quotes out of Genesis 25:23 where we are told in regard to the twins who were to be born, Esau who was the oldest and Jacob, and that “**the older shall serve the younger.**”

When did Esau serve Jacob? Not in their lifetime but in their descendants and thus, when Paul quotes out of Malachi 1:2-3 as he says, “**Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.**” he is speaking of the nations and not the individuals.

Think about this. Here in Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, it can’t be speaking of the individuals, Jacob and Esau because it is some 1500 years after they lived and died! He was speaking of the evil deeds that were done by the descendants of Esau, the Edomites to the Israelites, the descendants of Jacob.

And in Obadiah God declares His hatred over the Edomites for their idolatry, their violence against Israel, their rejoicing when Israel was defeated in battle and-so-on.

Also, God’s love of Jacob was also speaking of the nation, looking upon those who received Him as opposed to those in Israel that rejected Him for as Paul said, “**... For they are not all Israel who are of Israel.**” Romans 9:6.

You see, and I think this may help. I am not the pastor of this church because I am a great guy, I am so special that God needed me. But because of His sovereign election and I am always humbled by the fact that God used a donkey in the Old Testament to speak forth His Words!

And please understand that God has a purpose, He has a plan, He does not choose arbitrarily, He knows the beginning from the end!

This is God's sovereign will – we must accept it by faith because when we try to understand it with our finite minds, we will short-circuit the system!

It is as one seminary professor said, “Try to explain election, and you may lose your mind; but explain it away and you will lose your soul.”

God is fair, He is righteous, and all His judgments are perfect, that is the basis you must approach election.

Now Calvinists look at this passage and say that Paul is speaking about individual salvation and thus, God has predestined some to be saved and He also has predestined some to the Lake of Fire. You see, those who are not predestined for heaven have no choice in the matter. There is no free will at all, which is very unscriptural!

And just think about that for a minute. If you were part of that group that went to Hell, God predestined you to go there, you had no choice, whose fault is it that you are in Hell? It is God's fault, He sent you there, you had no choice!

That is so wrong. We go to Hell because we choose to go there by rejecting the free gift of life that is found in Jesus. It is so simple and yet, because people want to try to be so smart, they come to these wrong conclusions and it puts God in a bad light!

God is pure, He is holy, He is righteous, there is no darkness in Him at all. And He so loved the world that He sent His Son to save us! But it is also a choice on our part!

VERSES 14-16

The problem is when we come to a difficult passage where it seems as though God is acting unrighteously and unfairly. But is that true? Absolutely not! Therefore, we need to dig deeper into the passage to fully understand what is going on.

So, in speaking of mercy here, God is sovereign, and He can show mercy on whomever He chooses.

What is mercy? Mercy speaks of not getting what we deserve. We deserve death and God shows us His mercy and doesn't destroy us!

Thus, is God unrighteous in his actions towards us? **“Certainly not!”** **“God forbid!”** Why is that true? Because He, being God, has the right to extend mercy to whomever He chooses. The thing is, I believe God's mercy is extended to all, but because some may refuse Him, they will see His wrath! God is fair!

Thus, God's mercy is not given to us because of what we want to do (him who wills) or because of what we are doing (him who runs) but it is simply the mercy of God that He extends to us.

It is as we are told in Exodus 34:5-7, **“Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.’”**

That is our God in which there is no darkness at all!

And this is not a salvation issue here, it is an issue of blessing. God did not say, ***“I will send to hell whom I will send to hell.”***

He did say, **“I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.”** Romans 9:15.

Think about what we have read so far. The issue of God choosing Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau had nothing to do with salvation, but only with God's special blessings in this life.

That means that each of them, (Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob and Esau) had to choose to believe in God and His promises for salvation like everyone else.

And this fits in perfectly with what Paul is saying regarding the nation of Israel. Yes, the nation of Israel received many blessings from God, we saw that in Romans 9:4-5. But, as Paul is showing us, everyone in that nation still had to believe in God individually to be saved!

Just because God chose some (elected them) for special blessing didn't mean they were automatically saved any more than it meant those not chosen for special blessing were automatically condemned to hell.

VERSES 17-18

God raised up Pharaoh so that He may show His power, His strength through the hardness of Pharaoh's heart!

Now that does not seem fair. If God hardened Pharaoh's heart, he had no choice in the matter.

I disagree, I believe that Pharaoh had a choice in the matter. In Exodus 7:13 we are told, **“And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.”** (See also Exodus 8:15, 8:19, 8:32, 9:7, 9:34).

You see, Pharaoh made his heart firm, hard towards the will of God.

Then what did God do for the Scriptures also say that God hardened Pharaoh's heart?

We are told in Exodus 9:12, "**But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.**" (See also Exodus 10:1, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10, 14:8).

So which is it? Did Pharaoh harden his heart towards God or did God harden Pharaoh's heart? Yes! I know, how can it be both? It can. Let me explain.

The Hebrew word for "**hardened**" means "made firm." So Pharaoh hardened his heart and God made firm what Pharaoh wanted, He gave to Pharaoh the desire of his own heart!

Again, God shows mercy to all, but not all will receive it, they can harden their hearts to God, and God will make firm their decision.

And let me say this because again, many Calvinist try to use this to support their position that man does not have a free will to choose.

There is nowhere in the Bible where it says that God hardens anyone's heart who hasn't first hardened it to God.

Make no mistake about it, the hardening of a person's heart by God is only after that person rejects His love and grace and truth. And so, because they have rejected these things God will eventually, if they don't repent, solidify them in their position and choice.

Think about it like this. The same sun that melts wax will harden clay. What is your heart made up of?

You see, the same grace will melt a heart or harden a heart. It all depends on the condition of the heart. And that all depends on each individual person and how they choose to respond to the grace of God and the light He has given them.

VERSES 19-21

Again, the logical conclusion is that if it is all a matter of God's sovereign will, then He can't blame me for what I have done, it is just His will and thus, it is His fault!

Yes, it is God's sovereign will and it is also the choice we make. Judas couldn't blame God for what He did to Jesus, selling Him out for money but God did use the choices that Judas made to fulfill His will and God does the same today for He knows the beginning from the end.

To make his point, Paul gives to us an illustration of God being the potter and man, made from the dust of the earth, is the clay. (See Isaiah 45:9, Jeremiah 18:1-10).

As clay we can't complain what God is forming us into, all we can do is submit to His will, allow His hands to mold and shape us into the men and women He wants us to be, the vessels He wants, vessels of honor if we allow Him!

But please understand that God is not saying that He created some people to be vessels of dishonor. We are not helpless puppets in the hands of God. We have a free will!

He does not create some people for heaven, (vessels of honor), and some people for Hell, (vessels of dishonor).

We determine whether we will be a vessel of honor or dishonor by the choices we make. Look at II Timothy 2:20-22, where Paul tells us, "**But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**"

Did you notice that? It is an act of our will and not that God created us to be a vessel of dishonor. In fact, He created us to be vessels of honor, but it is our choice what we want to be!

Peter tells us in II Peter 3:9, **“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”** God desires all to be saved and it is truly up to us to respond to that invitation and receive it into our lives.

In regard to this issue of being predestined to Hell, Dr. Barnhouse tells us,

Calvin was very guilty at this point. He attempted to deduce from this passage what has come to be called ‘double predestination.’ The Bible nowhere announces the predestination of the lost. It would seem that Calvin and others have drawn an inference in purely human logic. They would hold that the choice of Jacob implies the reprobation of Esau. Both these brothers were born in sin; they both had the nature of Adam. They both grew up in sin. They both were children of wrath, disobedient by nature. If there had been any merit in these two sons, God would have been unjust in not rewarding that merit. The choice of one deserving man over another deserving man would have been favoritism. When we see that the two were equally undeserving, the whole picture becomes different. Everything that is said in the entire Bible about the nature of fallen man may be said – must be said – about both Jacob and Esau. God determined, for causes that are to be found in Himself and have not been revealed to us, to show favor to Jacob.

- Dr. Barnhouse

VERSES 22-24

Think about this for a minute. God is patient, He is longsuffering. How do I know that? Because if He wasn't we would all be toast!

In fact, when you look at the wickedness of people today, don't you wonder why God's judgment hasn't fallen upon us? It is because He is patient and longsuffering, desiring all to come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ!

Now keep in mind that Paul is still picturing Pharaoh, a vessel of dishonor, not because God predestined him to destruction, but he chose to go down that path, he hardened his heart to the will of God!

In contrast, to those who surrender to the Master Potter, to Jesus, we will shine as examples of God's mercy, the world will see the power of God to rescue sinful man from the miry pit they are in.

And if you are struggling with this, please listen carefully. The word "**prepared**" in Romans 9:22 does not suggest that *God* made Pharaoh a "**vessel of wrath.**" The verb is in what the Greek grammarians call the middle voice, making it a reflexive action verb.

What does that mean. Let me show you by reading this for you. That he, "***prepared himself for destruction.***" God prepares men for glory (Rom. 9:23), but sinners prepare themselves for judgment.

Here again the passage implies that the "**vessels of wrath**" are objects of wrath because they refuse to repent. They did not willingly bring honor to God, so they became objects of God's wrath.

This is evident, as I have said, from the fact that they are "**endured**" by God with "**much longsuffering.**"

In other words. Paul is saying that God was patiently waiting for their repentance. No one can say God never gave them a chance.

Furthermore, taking Paul as the best commentator on his own writings, he earlier said, **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”** Romans 1:18.

And in Romans 2:5-6 Paul wrote, **“But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who ‘will render to each one according to his deeds.’”**

Now, the Jews felt they were vessels of honor and the Gentiles, they were created to fuel the fires of Hell, they were vessels of dishonor.

But Paul is saying that not only are believing Jews saved but also believing Gentiles!

God does not prepare vessels of destruction, but He does prepare vessels of mercy and glory. It is as C. R. Erdman said, “God’s sovereignty is never exercised in condemning men who ought to be saved, but rather it has resulted in the salvation of men who ought to be lost.”

Let me sum it up like this. God knowing us from eternity past and knowing that we would receive His Son, God chose to use us to be vessels of mercy to glorify His name both now and forever.

But again, please remember that God’s sovereignty is never exercised in condemning men who ought to be saved, but rather it has resulted in the salvation of men who ought to be lost!

VERSES 25-26

Paul is quoting out of Hosea 2:23 and 1:10. And in Hosea we see that God gave Hosea children and He told them what their names would be. One son was called Lo-Ammi or *not my people*. The other child, a daughter, was called Lo-Ruhamah or *not . . . loved!*

And what God was doing was showing that He was going to abandon the Northern Kingdom of Israel for their wickedness. They were going into captivity by the hands of the Assyrians! (Hosea 1:2-9)

But this was not going to be a permanent casting away of the people of Israel. God promised that He would restore them.

But this is specifically speaking of Gentiles who were not God's people and yet, Paul shows us, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that they would be saved!

You see, salvation of the Gentiles was not just an afterthought, a New Testament idea. And we see that here as Paul quotes out of Hosea, an Old Testament prophet who spoke of the Gentiles being saved!

VERSE 27-29

Yes, Gentiles are saved but Paul wants the Jews to understand that God did not forget about them. Paul wants to make sure that the Jews understand that God is not done with them, He has not forsaken them, that there is a remnant of Jews who will be saved, and Paul quotes out of Isaiah to prove his point, another Old Testament prophet.

If God had forsaken them, if He was done with them, they would be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah was when God judged them, completely wiping them out and God's Word would have failed, and our hope as well as the hope of the Jews would be gone. But of course, that did not happen, the Jews are still around, and they are back in the land of Israel today!

Yes, God did judge His people, but He always has a faithful remnant that will be saved! It is as Bruce said, "But if only a remnant will survive, at least a remnant will survive, and constitute the hope of restoration."

Specifically, Romans 9:28 probably refers to God's work of judgment during the Tribulation, when the nation of Israel will be persecuted and judged, and only a small remnant left to enter into the Kingdom when Jesus Christ returns to earth.

But the application for today is clear. Only a remnant of Jews is believing; and they, together with the Gentiles, are the "*called of God*" (Rom. 9:24).

VERSES 30-31

In this section, Romans 9:30 through 10:21 Paul is going to deal with *ISRAEL'S PRESENT REJECTION*.

Now, some Jews may struggle with this idea of Gentiles being saved because they never pursued righteousness.

On the other hand, the Jews worked hard towards righteousness and didn't obtain it.

How can that be? Because the Jews tried to attain righteousness by the Law through works while the Gentiles attained righteousness by grace through faith!

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, "**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**"

Or as The Amplified Bible puts these verses, **“For it is by free grace (God’s unmerited favor) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ’s salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God; Not because of works [not the fulfillment of the Law’s demands], lest any man should boast. [It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.]”**

Notice what Paul goes on to say regarding this point, how the Jews tried to obtain this righteousness.

VERSES 32-33

Keep in mind that the Jews tried to obtain salvation, as we have said, by the Law through works and in that relationship with God they could not approach Him because the Law can’t save. The Law can’t make you righteous, it can only show you how far short you come!

You see, there were no chairs in the Temple because the priest’s work was never done, the sacrifices were offered day and night.

Thus, as the Messiah came, Jesus, to save them from their sins, being the fulfillment of what the Old Testament prophets said of the Messiah, they rejected Him and remained lost in their sins.

He was a stumbling block to them as Paul said in I Corinthians 1:23-24, **“but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”**

The interesting thing to me is that our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, has sat down at the right hand of the Father. That tells me that the Father not only accepted the payment for our sin but that the work is finished because Jesus is sitting down!

Now, for the Gentiles and the Jews who believe in Jesus, they shall be saved. You see, if you humble yourself and fall upon this Stone, upon Jesus, you will be saved, but if you rejected Jesus, this Stone will fall upon you and crush you, you will be eternally separated from Him!

Remember as we began our study this evening, we said that here in Romans chapter 9 Paul spoke of *ISRAEL'S PAST ELECTION*, "**who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.**" Romans 9:4-5.

As Paul concludes this chapter he spoke of *ISRAEL'S PRESENT REJECTION* of the Messiah. And we will continue to see that as we move into Romans chapter 10 next time.

As I begin to wrap things up this evening listen to the words of Peter as he stood before the Sanhedrin for his faith in Jesus and he said beginning in verse 5 of Acts chapter 4, **“And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, ‘By what power or by what name have you done this?’ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the “stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.” Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”** Acts 4:5-12. Let us not forget that fact, outside of Jesus there is no hope, no salvation but in Christ there is hope, there is salvation!

Now, as we have seen tonight, God is faithful, He is righteous, God is just, God is gracious, He is merciful, and thus, we can depend upon Him, we can trust in His promises for the unfaithfulness of man does not negate the faithfulness of God! It is as Numbers 23:19 says, **“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”** May we learn to trust in Him more and more as we grow in the Lord!

And I will leave you with these words from one writer,

“You will never be able to reconcile the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. But Paul is making it very clear here that if you are going to be saved it is *your* responsibility. It is “whosoever will may come” (see Mark 8:34) and “. . . him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). You can come; don’t stand on the sidelines and say, “I’m not elected.” But I have never heard of anybody being elected who didn’t run for office. If you *want* to be saved, you are the elect. If you don’t, you’re not.” (Source Unknown)