

ROMANS - #9

ANTIOCH BIBLE CLASS

LESSON TOPIC

THE CHOSEN FAMILY

SCRIPTURE TEXT: ROMANS 9:1-33

MEMORY VERSE: ROM. 9:6-8. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

INTRODUCTION

When you study Paul's life and ministry in the Book of Acts and also his writings in the epistles, it is not hard to see the difficult battle he was constantly engaged in with his Hebrew kinsman. Christianity was a "new religion" in the world and the Hebrew nation and their law was an established fact all over the Roman Empire. In effect, when observed by the unlearned, it appeared as though Christianity was out to destroy Judaism. It should not be hard to see, that from a purely societal perspective, Judaism, though not embraced by Pagan Rome, yet was a known quantity and at least tolerated. Even Judaism, especially as it was vehemently defended by Jewish rulers, saw Christianity as a threat to their status and organization. Because of this, you read many extended explanations by Paul showing that Christianity was now God's chosen people in the world. That is essentially the message of this chapter.

Beginning with Paul's genuine concern for the spiritual welfare of his "kinsmen" according to the flesh, and from there his meticulous revelation of how "we", (that is both Jew and Gentile in the church, V24), are the ones to whom God has made known the riches of his glory as vessels of his mercy, and that the chosen seed of God's posterity descends, not through the primacy of the law, but through the chosen seed of Abraham, which was exclusive of the law, Paul unveils the marvelous sovereignty of God. Paul uses several Old Testament examples to show how Israel as a nation of people among other nations, is not thereby God's ultimate chosen people but that God's chosen seed descended through a specifically promised seed who, though they were citizens of the Hebrew nation, were, nevertheless, the embodiment of a totally different and more universal scope and plan than that given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. That universal plan by which all mankind, Jew and Gentile, was made the people of God is "FAITH IN THE SACRIFICIAL ATONEMENT FOR SINS THROUGH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST". This is the sovereign purpose of God which Paul sets forth in this chapter and it renders the popular notion that "Israel" (as a nation of people) is the "chosen people of God" as

moot, unscriptural and in fact, unnecessary. God, by his own sovereign will, forethought and predestination, determined that there were vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy. Seen in this light it supports the truth that Israel as a nation could also be a part of God's chosen vessels of mercy, but not through the auspices of the law, but by faith in Christ. If they cling to the law as their spiritual inheritance they will perish under the wrath of God, but if they turn from the insufficiency of the law to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they can be saved the same as any other member of the human family. That is what Paul is proclaiming in this and other chapters.

DAILY SCRIPTURES AND COMMENTS

MONDAY. ROM. 9:1-5. PAUL'S SORROW FOR WAYWARD ISRAEL.

SCRIPTURES.

V1. I say the truth in Christ, I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost. 2. That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. 4. Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. 5. Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

COMMENTS.

At this point in time, Paul has been ministering for twenty or more years all over the Mediterranean world. He has encountered continual hostility from his Jewish kinsmen. Yet he is so filled with sorrow for their refusal to accept Christ that he is even willing to forego his own Christian experience if it would be the means of causing Israel to turn to the Lord. How could he have that much compassion, especially for a people who have hated him and done all they could to destroy him? Maybe it would help to have been a recipient of great mercy from the Lord as Paul was and also to have been wonderfully delivered from the same bondage which they were in.

Israel had many advantages which should have enabled them to see that Christ was their long-awaited Messiah. For centuries God had poured out his power, providence and blessings upon them. His ultimate aim through them was that they might bring Christ into the world and then follow him for their own salvation. As John said in his gospel, He came unto his own and his own received him not. Now Paul, with the same kind of compassion which Christ had for them, also has that same feeling for them and surely would have given his life for their salvation. In fact he did.

TUESDAY. ROM. 9: 6-13. THE CHOSEN LINEAGE DESCENDS BY FAITH.

SCRIPTURES.

V6. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: 7. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God:

but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. 9. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son. 10. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac: 11. (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth;) 12. It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. 13. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

COMMENTS.

The message of these verses is that being a descendent of Abraham does not guarantee that you are a child of God. Abraham had children outside of the promise of God through Isaac and a descendent of other lines of his posterity would not qualify. The point being made is that the children of God are the product of God's "promise", not just biological descent. The promised seed was through Isaac. That is what Paul meant by the statement that they are not all Israel which are of Israel. Just being an Israelite, which naturally descended from Abraham, did not qualify as God's elect. We must differentiate between people who naturally descended from one of the tribes of Israel, which originally would have been considered Abraham's posterity, and the ancestry of the promise. Even all of the lines within the tribe of Judah were not in the "royal" lineage. In addition, those who were in the royal line were "children of the promise" only insofar as they lived by faith in that (ultimate) promise and not just by the daily requirements of the law.

So then, there was a genealogy of the tribes of Israel, known as nominal Israel and there was a genealogy of the promise by faith, known only to those who pursued the promise by that faith. These verses make it clear once more that just being called an Israelite did not and does not make one a chosen child of God.

Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated is not a reference to God's dislike for Esau and his favor to Jacob, except in a dispensational sense. God disliked the lineage of the flesh which Esau descended through. He loved the lineage of the promise of which Jacob was a patriarch. God is not discriminating against one of Isaac's sons by favoring the other; he is showing his approval of the "lineage of the promise" instead of the lineage of the flesh. It was through the lineage of the promise (of the coming Savior) that God's blessing and favor was bestowed. It still is today.

Again, these verses make it impossible to identify Jews all over the world today as "God's chosen people", who, as many teach, God will someday give them a special treatment to save them. Today is the day of salvation, both for the Jew and for the Gentile and there is no difference in God's plan for either.

WEDNESDAY. ROM. 9:14-22. THE SOVEREIGN PURPOSE OF GOD.

SCRIPTURES.

V14. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have

compassion. 16. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19. Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? 21. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? 22. What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.

COMMENTS.

If God is God, as we are sure that he is, then there is no answer or rebuttal that can be laid to his charge over anything. God is sovereign in the universe and regardless as to whether or not we like it or agree with it, his sovereignty rules. Notwithstanding this, that does not mean that in his sovereign rule that he will exercise tyranny or in any way be dictatorial. The only way to understand his mercy as shown to Moses and his wrath as shown to Pharaoh is to understand what his sovereign plan and purpose in the world is. It surely is not just to oversee a world ruled by kings and potentates and control their rise and fall along with all of the other functions of the universe. His sovereign plan and purpose is that he might redeem as many of the human family as possible from the abyss of sin and death into which we have fallen. That is his one primary objective in the human family. Everything else is, in every capacity, secondary to that or of no consequence at all. Everything else will be channeled to conform to that one sovereign purpose. Within that purpose, there is love, compassion and mercy for all who are a part of it by their choice.

Thus there are vessels of wrath simply because they abide in another world, with another purpose and in that world and purpose, there is no free gift of grace and mercy to change them unto God's plan and purpose. God did not decide to destroy Pharaoh because he did not like him but because Pharaoh was in another universe with his own will and purpose, and by his own words said, "who is the Lord that I should obey him".

Look at the overall history of the world and you will see that there has always been some who sought after God and sacrificed all they had to his cause. That is where the mercy of God has been shown. God puts before all mankind the opportunity through Christ, that whosoever will, may come to the water of life and drink and be filled with him. To those who do so, they are beneficiaries of his mercy and to those who do not they are the vessels of his wrath or judgment. Notwithstanding this, the mercy of God is extended to all mankind in countless ways; as the scripture says, he causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. In addition, God's offer of mercy is extended to everyone, even to a murderous soul like Paul. In the process of showing mercy to the vessels chosen in his will, there will be times when he will use the wrath of men to praise him and accomplish his will. Cyrus, the Persian king who did not believe in God, is a good example. God used him to show mercy to his people. There will also be times when the wrath of God will be vented against those who stand in the way of his sovereign providence. Pharaoh is an example of that. What if God in his sovereign purposes chose

to make his power known after much longsuffering toward vessels of wrath fitted for destruction (V22)? Who can charge God with folly in that?

THURSDAY. ROM. 9:23-29. VESSELS OF MERCY.

SCRIPTURES.

V23. And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24. Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? 25. As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved which was not beloved. 26. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. 27. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel. Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved; 28. For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. 29. And as Esaias said before, except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

COMMENTS.

Paul very clearly describes who the vessels of mercy are in verses 23-24. It is a distinction for a people whom he had afore prepared unto glory. That is, a people for whom he had determined before the world began that they would be glorified. Glorified in this sense would include the idea of being set apart in God's great plan as recipients of mercy and grace. Then he distinguishes even further in verse 24, when he says, "even us", whom he called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. In short, the church is the object of his mercy, whether made up of Jew or Gentile or both. The distinction that is really being made is that the vessels of God's mercy are not those who claim the law as their right and Israel as their citizenship, but those whom God has called to be his people in Christ Jesus.

Then Paul quotes both Hosea and Isaiah as proof that God has called Gentiles to be vessels of mercy and to be the people of God, while also rejecting nominal Israel. Hosea 1:8-10 and 2:23, foretells that God will call them his people who were no people and those who were his people will no longer be the people of God. See also Isaiah chapter 10. Though Israel is as the sand of the sea, yet only a remnant shall be saved. That remnant is the cut off portion which accepted Christ and followed after him, believing that he was their Savior.

FRIDAY. ROM. 9:30-33. THAT STUMBLING STONE.

SCRIPTURES.

V30. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. 33. As it is written, behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

COMMENTS.

If you convert the questions of verses 30 and 32 into statements you have exactly what Paul was saying. The Gentiles which followed after the righteousness which comes by faith (in Christ) have attained unto the righteousness which God ordained. But the Jews which tried to obtain righteousness by doing the works of the law, failed to obtain righteousness simply because they did not pursue it by way of believing in the work of Christ at calvary. Their problem was that they would not believe in Christ as their Messiah and therefore he became a stumbling stone to them. They could not see Christ through the law therefore that law became a snare unto them.

Christ was not only a stumbling stone to the Jews, but to countless other people also whose "knowledge" would not let them conceive of a plan of salvation through the "foolishness" of the cross. Expanding that further, the truth as it is in Christ is unacceptable to multitudes, both outside and within the church as well. In the dark ages the church craftily included paganism into its doctrine and ritual and, in many ways, Protestantism has followed their lead. Many doctrines of the church of the dark ages are basic teachings of most churches today. These make for a stumbling stone when confronted with the "doctrine of life only through Christ".

SUMMARY

This chapter is summarized in the thought that Gentiles have been shown mercy and have been called into Christ, while the Jews, having direct lineage that should have led them into Christ, allowed their law to be a stumbling stone to them. Thus proving the truth that they are not all Israel who are of Israel that is, just by being a Jew by blood ancestry does not give you a free pass into eternal life. Everyone, both Jew and Gentile, has been included in God's plan to make vessels of mercy through the free gift of life by way of faith in the Lord Jesus. Apart from that plan no one is a vessel of mercy but a vessel of wrath that is, destruction. The Gentiles came into the righteousness which comes by faith in the atoning work of Christ. The Jews were excluded from righteousness because they would not accept it by faith but thought they could be righteous by doing the works of the law. God's predetermined plan of salvation predestined to give salvation to all who would believe in Christ, thus also predestinating that all who would not, of their own free choice receive him, would become vessels of wrath (both Jew and Gentile).

"THE CHOSEN FAMILY OF GOD" is made up of Jew and Gentile who have placed their trust in the atoning work of Christ and sacrificed their lives unto his cause, including all time and dispensations. The Jewish nation, past, present or future, through their biological, blood posterity, have exactly the same opportunity for salvation as their "kinsman" Paul; no more or less, now or forever.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the cause of Paul's sorrow of heart?
2. What does the statement, "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel", mean?
3. What did Hosea mean that "they who were not a people are become the people of God"?
4. In what sense can anyone stumble over Christ?