

Romans – Session # 21

We left off last time with Vs. 19 of Chapter 9. – Paul has been dealing with the issue of God’s relationship with His chosen people, and making the claim that you are truly a Jew not based on your biological ancestry and birthright, but rather – by your faithfulness and by virtue of being a child of promise. God is sovereign, and He chooses who as He wishes to choose. Even though Esau was born first, God chose Jacob to be the one through whom God’s promise and God’s will, will be accomplished. We do not always understand God’s choices, His plan. But says in Vs. 15 – “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and compassion on whom I will have compassion.” I will harden the heart of Pharaoh because I the Lord God have the right to choose. God knows best!!

Read 9:19-33

In these verses, Paul makes His claim that because God is sovereign, He has the freedom to do as He pleases, and that He indeed is doing a “new thing”. He is extending His mercy to the Gentiles.

Vs. 19 – Paul asks concerning the Jews – why does God still find fault with us? Why does God blame us? For who can resist His will?

Vs. 20-21 – Paul uses the image of the potter who forms the clay to address God’s freedom to choose as He wishes. Who can question the potter’s will? He can mold and make whatever He wants with the clay. He can take one lump of clay and make two different vessels, one that is for beauty and one that is for menial work.

Vs. 22-24 – Vs. 22 is a very difficult verse to translate. God’s wrath has been tempered by His mercy, his patience towards a wayward Israel. Vs. 23 – This is to reveal God’s glory, whom he has given not only to the Jews, but now also to the Gentiles.

Vs. 25 – Paul cites Hosea, in essence saying we should not be surprised by this new thing God is doing. Hosea says in 2:23 – “those who were not my people, I will call my people, and her who was not beloved, I will call my beloved”

Vs. 26 – Paul takes another quote from Hosea - 1:10. Paul says though the Gentiles were not my people, they will now be called my “sons”. The Gentiles are now part of God’s plan of salvation!

Vs. 27 – Paul turns back to the status of Israel, citing Isaiah who says God’s chosen people, though they were as numerous as the sand of the sea, will only have a remnant saved (Isaiah 10:22-23).

Vs. 28 – “God will execute his sentence upon the earth with rigor and dispatch”, a scary thought to the hearers and to us today. Judgement will be swift, it will be unrelenting.

Vs. 29 – Another quote from Isaiah 1:9 – If it had not been for God’s saving intervention, it would have been total destruction for Israel, as with Sodom and Gomorrah, a statement that Paul does not think very highly of Israel’s faithfulness. Apart from God’s mercy and care, all of Israel would be gone, but God will save a remnant.

Vs. 30 – 33 – Paul goes back to the Gentiles.

Vs. 30 – ironically, Paul says the Gentiles did not pursue righteousness, as did the Jews, who tried but failed to attain it, but the Gentiles will be declared to be righteous through their faith in Jesus Christ.

Vs. 31 – The Jews on the other hand pursued righteousness based on the Law, and could not succeed in fulfilling its demands, thus not being able to be righteous before God on their own efforts.

Vs. 32 - Why did they fail? Because they did not pursue it through faith, but through works. They were doomed to failure. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone.

Vs. 33 - Ch. 9 ends with a quote from Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14. Jesus is the stone that is both a stumbling block and also a foundation to stand on. He brings judgement to those who do not put their trust in Him, and salvation to those who do.