

Romans 9 (DDC) – October 4, 2009

- Before we dive into this difficult section of scripture... lets first make sure we understand (and are up to speed on) the context of the Chapter.
- There is a quote I like.
- Lack of context is the quickest route to misinterpretation.

(pause)

- So... I thought let's begin by building the context for Ch.9.
- To do that lets start big picture.
- If we kind of zoom out... the book of Romans is broken up into three distinct sections.

(pause)

- Chapters 1-8... so what we studied thus far... deal with the principals of salvation... doctrine
 - Starting with Condemnation - Ch.1-3
 - Then Justification by Faith
 - Christ's triumph over sin and death.
 - The concept of Grace
 - All the principals of Salvation... what Christ accomplished.

- All of this is doctrine.

(pause)

- Well if we jump ahead to Chapters 12-16 we find Paul takes doesn't leave us with just principals or doctrine.
- In Ch. 12-16 Paul takes those principals and spells out practically what that looks like.

(pause)

- In Ch.1-8 you have the doctrine... the tenants of our faith.
- And in Ch.12-16 you have the duty... what that looks like in our lives.
- The way I like to remember it is:
- In Ch.1-8 you have the principals our faith.
- And in Ch.12-16 you have the practical's.

(pause)

- Paul is notorious for doing this.
- You will find that that he does this within many of his epistles.
- Paul doesn't shy away from doctrine.
- He gives us the fundamentals... the ideals.
- But he doesn't just leave us there.
- He shows us how these principals are practically lived out.

(pause)

- So... Ch. 1-8... what we've covered thus far... Covers Doctrine
- Ch. 12-16... shows how that doctrine is lived out.... the duty
(pause)

- But for many people the section in the middle.... Ch.9,10, &11 is rather puzzling.
- His approach of giving us the principals and then showing how they practically are lived out makes sense.
- But why in the world would Paul veer off in Ch.9-11 and talk about the people of Israel?
(pause)

- Many people say this is a parenthetical section
- That Paul's huge intellect was blown out at the end of Ch.8
- And Paul began to meander and wander intellectually and theologically.
- They say it's good stuff but doesn't fit in with Romans
(pause)

- Other commentators say that these chapters should rightly be called an Appendix to the book of Romans.
- That it was penned in the middle but it is an interruption intended to be placed at the end of the book as an Appendix.
- If you look at the end of Ch.8 there is a clear section break.
- And if you look at Ch.12 it begins a new section.
- So they say... 8 really flows better into 12... and that 9, 10, & 11 should be an Appendix.
(pause)

- Well as I was preparing there were also many commentators that I ran across who disagree strongly.
- They say that Ch.9-11 is not an interruption... rather it's an intentional illustration.
- That illustrates what Paul has been saying and summing up in Roman's Ch. 8 specifically.
(pause)

- So... why do they say that?
- Well here is the issue:
- If you recall... Ch.1-8 build on each other.
 - Ch.1,2,3 spell out the condemnation of man... both universally... and specifically
 - And then the doctrine of Justification by Faith is laid at the end of 3 and explained further ch.4
 - And the doctrine of Justification can't be understood apart from understanding that condemnation.
 - Ch.5 through 8 build on what that means.
 - Discussing Grace.

- And Christ triumph over sin and death.
- Each idea builds on the previous ideas.

(pause)

- And then... Paul ends Ch.8 with this glorious declaration.
- As he sums up what it means to be saved.
- As he sums up salvation he says:

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

...

Rom 8:38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,

Rom 8:39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ.
- Think about that.
- When that sinks in... when you own it... your heart is strangely warmed.
- It doesn't matter what I'm doing or where I've been... as a Christian... nothing will separate me from the love of Christ.

(long pause)

- But...at this point though... the scholar... the Bible student... or perhaps you or me... after thinking that through... would say wait Paul.
- Can we really believe what God is saying here?
- How reliable has God been in the past in keeping his promises?

(pause)

- And as you think it through the question comes up... what about the Jews
- God's chosen people.
- Was God reliable in keeping his promises to them?
- If you open up your Bible to the prophesy section of the Old Testament... (from Isaiah to Malachi) you will find thousands of prophesies and promises concerning Israel.
- Has God (and will God) continue to follow through regarding the Jewish people?

(pause)

- And more than that as a Christian... I can't help but wonder if they were God's people why weren't they saved?
- Why didn't God bring them into salvation?
- Instead in some way it looks as though he rejected them.
- So the question is blatant... if God rejected them... will god reject me... despite what he said in Ch.8?

(pause)

- It is an important question.
 - In fact... there are allsorts of explanations and doctrines that stem from this question.
 - Many people believe when Israel rejected the Messiah that the result was God gave up on Israel.
 - And now... the covenants and prophesies God made with Israel have been transferred to the Church.
 - And now... Israel is irrelevant.
 - This is called replacement theology... (Church replaces Israel).
- (pause)

- But if replacement theology is true... the skeptic might ask....
 - **if** God gave up on the Jew (his chosen people)..
 - (understandably.... because of their hard heartedness and their rejection of the messiah).
 - **then** will God give up on me (on me as a Christian)... if my heart gets hard.... or if I start to fall... ?

(pause)

- You see the dilemma?
- Paul... you say these great things... but is God reliable?
- You see why this section is critical?

(pause)

- The Guzik Commentary puts it this way:
 - “The question goes something like this: How can I be secure in God's love and salvation to me when it seems that Israel was once loved and saved, but now seems to be rejected and cursed? Will God also reject and curse me one day?”
- Another commentary put it this way:
 - "If God cannot bring his ancient people into salvation, how do Christians know that he can save them? Paul is not here proceeding to a new and unrelated subject. These three chapters are part of the way he makes plain how God in fact saves people."

(pause)

- That is why Ch.9-11 are essential to the flow of Romans.
- If Paul makes the statement that NOTHING will separate you from the love of Christ... how can he not address the Jews?

(long pause)

- And I think we will see that Ch.9-11 are not an **interruption** (as some people say) but is actually a powerful **illustration** of God's faithfulness.

(pause)

- Before we begin the text... Ch.9, 10, and 11 are organized generally like this:
- Ch.9... God's past dealings with Israel...
 - This is what we will be covering tonight.
- Ch.10... God's present dealings with Israel...
 - Showing his equality
 - We'll see that God has not rejected Israel he extends grace to them as well.
- Ch.11... God's promised dealings with Israel... showing his integrity
 - That he will indeed keep his promises.

(pause)

- Ch.9 the past... Ch.10 the present... Ch.11 the future dealings of God with Israel
- Past, present, future

(pause)

- So.... Lets begin Ch.9... God's past dealings with Israel
- Paul begins by saying:

Rom 9:1 I am speaking the truth in Christ--I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit--

Rom 9:2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

Rom 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

- Now remember the majority of the Jews at this time felt Paul had rejected Israel.
 - And they hated him for it and wanted to kill him.
- But Paul knew that it wasn't him rejecting Israel.
- Rather Israel was rejecting their messiah (Jesus Christ).

(pause)

- So Paul starts off saying:
 - I am speaking the truth in Christ.
 - I have great anguish in my heart for the current state of Israel.
 - I don't hate Israel... I love Israel... but I'm anguishing over them.
- And to illustrate his love towards Israel he says:
 - If it were possible (which it isn't) Paul says he would be eternally cursed if the Jews could be saved.

(pause)

- This statement is similar to what Moses said in Exodus 32 when he is praying to God interceding for the Israelites after they had sinned.
- Pretty incredible statement.

(pause)

Story about what would I be accursed for?

-Some people wouldn't be accursed for anyone.

-Me... My kids whom I love

-Paul... giant in the faith would be accursed for the Jews

*-Jesus chose to be condemned for us while we were enemies to God
-Paul's heart is impressive... but Jesus...*

(long pause)

- So the progression of thought is this:
- Paul presents doctrine in Ch.1-8.
- He concludes saying nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.
- But as we talked about... if that statement is true... then what about the Jewish People?
- So Paul begins and you can almost picture him...
 - Up beat after ch.8
 - And as he begins Ch.9 his face solemn.
 - And he says... oh how I anguish over Israel the nation and their rejection of Christ.

(pause)

- And next Paul goes on and begins talking about God's past dealings with Israel.
- And he starts by considering the gifts God gave to Israel in the Past.

(pause)

Next in Verse 4 he says

Rom 9:4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

Rom 9:5 To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

- Paul starts his analysis of the Jewish condition by looking at the past gifts God gave to Israel
- They are amazing gifts.
- Paul lists 8 of them here.

(pause)

- He starts with the Adoption.
- Referring to when God choose Israel... and adopted them as his people.
- In Duter. 7:6-8 says they were chosen not because they were more righteous than others.... rather it says they were a stiff necked and hard hearted people.
- But God adopted them.
- What a blessing.

(pause)

Side note... It is interesting that God choose them not because they were more righteous (Duter. 7:6-8 says they weren't chosen because they were more righteous than others.... says they were a stiff necked and hard hearted people.)

-he chose them that they might be trophies of grace

-not trophies of his Wisdom.

-And that is the way it is with we!!
-Eph Ch.1 tells us that we were chosen that we might be to the glory of his grace.
-NOT TO THE GLORY OF HIS WISDOM!!!
-That's not what we like to think.
-But when we are in heaven... we will be marveling.
Not that God was smart in choosing us.
But at the magnitude of the Grace it took to save us.

- So he adopted the Jewish people.
 - And he gave them The Glory
 - Which refers to the Shekina glory
 - The visible presence of God that guided them though the desert o the promised land
- (pause)

- And he gave them the covenants...
 - The law...
 - The worship...
 - And the promises.
 - Fantastic gifts.
- (pause)

- But....best gift of all.
 - Jesus Christ... (God in the flesh, the messiah, the savior)... was born to a Jewish mother
 - Grew up in a Jewish home
 - Went to a Jewish school
 - Sat in a Jewish synagogue
 - And ministered to the Jewish people
- (pause)

- Think about that... the world deserved damnation (as it talks about in Ch.1-3)
 - But... instead God chose to adopt the Jewish nation as his own.
 - Gives them these gifts.
 - And bring his son Jesus into the world as a Jew... to minister to the Jews... and ultimately save the world.
 - What a huge and unique gift.
- (pause)

- Now.... you can almost picture... Paul lamenting somewhat at this point.
 - The gifts that were given to the Jewish nation were tremendous.
 - But as a Christian... the question still remains.
 - It would appear that the Israelite nation is cursed... because as a nation the vast majority of them rejected Jesus.
- (pause)

- Why did God not bring his chosen people into salvation??
- Did he reject them?
- Paul begins to answer that by saying...

Rom 9:6a But it is not as though the word of God has failed.

- In other words... the Word of God didn't fail.
- Just because the majority Israel rejected Jesus... doesn't mean the word of God failed.
- Some of the Jews didn't reject Jesus.
(pause)
- Next Paul makes an important distinction between the natural or fleshly offspring of Jacob and the spiritual offspring.
- Important distinction
- So he says... It's not as though the word of God failed.

Rom 9:6b ...For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,

- What do you mean Paul?
- The problem is who we consider Israel.
- When we say Israel... who do we think of?
- We think of anyone who descended from Abraham through the 12 sons of Jacob.
(pause)
- But.... the word Israel literally means "governed by God"
- If you recall it was the name given to Jacob after he wrestled the angel who we find out was actually God.

Story:

- Jacob is on his way back to the land of his birth... He's been gone many years
- He left after he stole his father's blessing from Esau
- Well on his way back to Israel... he is fleeing from his father-in-law Laban.
- And while he is fleeing as he approaches his homeland... he hears that Esau is coming to meet him with 200 men
(pause)
- So he's got Laban behind him and Esau in front of him.
- A rough place to be.
(pause)
- So he divides his camps and tries to devise a strategy.
- Well that night before he is to meet Esau... as the sun goes down... Jacob is met by a man.

- And Jacob and this man wrestling intensely all night long.
- We find out later that this man was God.
 - It's what they refer to as a Christophony
 - A pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.

(pause)

- So they wrestle all night long and Jacob won't give up.
- And just as the morning light streaking through the sky God reaches out and touches Jacob's thigh and cripples him.
- So now Jacob has...
 - Men pursuing him from behind.
 - Esau pursuing him from in front...
 - And now he's crippled

(pause)

- He is in a completely broken state... things weren't really working for him.
- But we're told he won't stop wrestling
- And in Hosea it says he has tears streaking down his face.
- And he says to God... I won't stop until you bless me.

(pause)

- Now it's interesting what God says back.
- He Ask Jacob what his name is.
- Does an omniscient God not know that?

(pause)

- But remember... Jacob received his birthright and his blessing by lying and claiming to be someone else.
- So Jacob... broken beyond broken at this point... says my name is Jacob.
- I'm not Esau... I'm Jacob.

(pause)

- And in Jacob admitting who he was... God said you will no longer be called Jacob.
- But now you will be called Israel.
- Which... as we said... means governed by God.

(pause)

- Now... because a man claims to be Israel... he might be a descendant of Israel.
- But that does not mean that he is Israel
- Does not mean he is "governed by God."
- Kind of like when some one claims to be a Christian... doesn't really mean they are a Christian.

(pause)

- So... you might say... wait a minute Paul.
- Are you just making up an ethereal sort of excuse on why only a few of the Israelites are saved?

(pause)

- Paul goes on to explain what he means.

Rom 9:7 ... not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."

Rom 9:8 This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.

Rom 9:9 For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return and Sarah shall have a son."

- Remember Abraham was given a promise that his offspring would be as the stars in the sky.
- But you can almost hear Paul saying... think about it.
- Merely being the descendant of Abraham by the flesh means nothing.
- Rather it is the children of the promise that are counted as his true offspring.

(pause)

- He is alluding to Ishmael.
- If you ask any Jew if Ishmael is part of Israel... because he is a son of Abraham... they would of course say NO.
- So Paul's point is clear.
- Just being a son of Abraham by the flesh doesn't mean you are a son of the promise God made to Abraham.

(pause)

- Ishmael was a son according to the flesh
- Isaac was a son according to the promise
- One was the heir of God's covenant of salvation, and one was not.
- Both sons of Abraham.

(pause)

- Jesus... when he is talking to the Pharisee in John Ch.8 says:

Joh 8:37 I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you.

Joh 8:38 I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

Joh 8:39 They answered him, "Abraham is our father [by the flesh... true]." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did,

Joh 8:40 but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth This is not what Abraham did.

Joh 8:41 You are doing the works your father did."

He goes on to say in Vs. 44

Joh 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.

- Being a son of Abraham by the flesh does not make you an heir to the promise.
 - As is demonstrated by what Jesus said here as well.
- (pause)
- So Paul says it's not as though the word of God failed.
 - Rather not all that descended from Israel are Israel.
- (pause)
- Ishmael wasn't chosen as heir to the promise.
 - And likewise **all** the Israelites by the flesh aren't necessarily chosen for the promise.
 - The implication being that the Israelites who rejected Jesus... weren't descendants of Abraham according to the promise.

(pause)

- Now at this point... the question has to be popping into our minds...
- Why are some chosen to be descendants according to the promise.
- And some are not.
- Why was Isaac chosen... and Ishmael was not chosen.
- Is there a reason?
 - Perhaps it was because Ishmael was an illegitimate child.
 - That a logical idea.

(pause)

- Paul goes on... and explains further.

Rom 9:10 And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac,

Rom 9:11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad--in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call--

Rom 9:12 she was told, "The older will serve the younger."

- So why are some chosen and others are not?
- He makes it even more difficult to explain.
- He blurs any lines almost completely.

(pause)

- We could perhaps have explained Isaac being chosen over Ishmael by saying Ishmael was not a legitimate child.

- But Paul gives us this example.

(pause)

- Isaac has two children from the same mother... Jacob and Esau
- And more than that they were twins.
- And it says before they were born... one was chosen
- before they had done good or bad... one was chosen.
- In other words... on the surface there is no explainable reason why one was chosen over the other.

(pause)

- Rather the reason given is that God sovereignly chose one and rejected the other.
- He elected to call one and not the other.

(pause)

Paul goes on in Vs. 13 to say...

Rom 9:13 As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

- Some people have a problem with this verse.
- They have a problem that God could hate Esau.
- Newell in his commentary said:
 - "A woman once said to Mr. Spurgeon, 'I cannot understand why God should say that He hated Esau.' 'That,' Spurgeon replied, 'is not my difficulty, madam. My trouble is to understand how God could love Jacob.'" (Newell)

(pause)

- I agree with that.
- Paul said earlier in Romans that we are children of wrath.
- The longer I live the more I believe that in and of ourselves we are not good.
- So the real question here is not why Esau was hated... (that makes sense).
- But rather... why was Jacob loved and chosen.

(pause)

- And to that I would say... I don't know.
- But... something I think we should take into consideration is that God knows all things from beginning to end.
- That is why there is prophecy... God's sharing with us what's going to happen. Etc.
- And if God knows beginning to end... when he chooses one over the other... it's not like he doesn't know intimately ever detail of a person's life and actions, motivations, etc.

(pause)

- And in the example of Jacob and Esau
- God knew that Esau would be a man of the flesh.
 - Selling his birth right for a bowl of soup.
 - Numerous other examples.

- And God knew that Jacob would be (flawed) but was a man concerned with spiritual things.
- That is why it is interesting to me the two quotes that Paul includes here.
(pause)

- The first one in vs. 12 is a quote from Gen 25:23

Rom 9:12 she [**speaking of Rebecca - Jacob and Esau's mother**] was told, "The older will serve the younger."

- So when Jacob and Esau were born... God reveals his plan.
- The older will serve the younger... it's a prophecy.
(pause)

- But the next quote is from Malachi written approx. 2,000 years later.
- After their lives were complete.
- And their descendants lives were complete.
- Generations had gone by.
- God then says.... in Malachi.... "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

- So why didn't God say that when they were born.
- Or why didn't Paul just say that here?
 - From the beginning God hated him.
- Rather he points to something written 2,000 years later.
- The answer is... I don't know.

(pause)

- But in my mind... there is more to it than God playing ene mene miney mo
- He knows things from beginning to end.
- But we are in time... trying to understand how an infinitely complex God makes his choices.
- The one thing I can assure you is that he chooses wisely.
- And that we won't understand this side of heaven.

(pause)

- So... to recap:
 - Paul presents the principals of salvation in Ch.1-8.
 - At the end of Ch.8 he leaves us with the glorious fact that as a Christian nothing will separate us from the love of Christ.

(pause)

- And as an illustration Paul begins talking about the Jews.
- And he shows that he has great anguish over his "kins men according to the flesh" and the fact that the vast majority of them rejected Jesus the messiah.

(pause)

- But he said... it's not as though the word of God failed.
- Because not all that are of Israel are Israel.
- And Paul shows that just because you are a child of Abraham or Isaac... does not mean you are a child of the promise.
 - Pointing to Isaac being chosen over Ishmael
 - And Jacob being chosen over Esau.
- And he makes it very clear they weren't chosen because of works.
- Rather God chose.

(pause)

- Now... the fact that God chooses one over the other... might seem unfair.
- So the logical question is.... next here in verse 14

Rom 9:14 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? [**and Paul answers with a resounding**] By no means!

- So was God unjust in choosing one over the other?
- Paul's response is.... By no means!!

(pause)

- And we will see next... Paul hones in on a couple things we need to know if we are asking that question.
- The first is he talks about God's pardoning of Israel (Vs 15&16).
- And he contrasts that with God's punishing of Pharaoh

(pause)

- The point that he is making is that God is Good and merciful.
- But also that God is fair and just.

(pause)

- So is there injustice on God's part... By no means!!
- He goes on in verse 15:

Rom 9:15 For he [**God**] says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

- God said this to Moses shortly after the people of Israel had sinned and were dancing and worshiping the Golden Calf.
- So God is looking down at these disobedient people.
- And God says I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy on.
- It's my sovereign choice.

(pause)

Rom 9:16 So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

- They didn't deserve mercy.
- No one deserves God's mercy.
- Not the Jews... not us.
- But they received mercy because God chose to show them mercy.

(pause)

- Now contrast the pardon he showed Israel... (and that he shows you and me as Christians)... with the punishment that he gives Pharaoh.

Rom 9:17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

- The quote from Exodus.
- If you recall the story... the Israelites were in servitude to the Egyptians.
- Pharaoh was the ruler of Egypt... and thus he ruled over the Israelites.
- Well we are told here (and in Exodus) that Pharaoh was in his position of power over Israel because God had raised him for a purpose.
- The purpose being that God would show his power through him.

(pause)

- Well God directs Moses to ask Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.
- Pharaoh continually refuses.
- And Pharaoh's heart is continually hardened.
- And as the story unfolds... as God said... He shows his power mightily in bringing Pharaoh down.
 - Through the plagues and miracles, parting of the Red Sea, etc. and ultimately destroying him and his army.

(pause)

- So the contrast is this:
 - I'm going to lift up Israel.
 - And I'm going to come down on Pharaoh.
- Though they were both sinning equally.

(pause)

Paul sums it up in verse 18

Rom 9:18 So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

- God showed mercy to the Israelites.
- And God hardened Pharaoh heart and brought him down.

(pause)

- Now on the surface this sounds pretty unfair.
- Right?

- God arbitrarily shows favor to the Israelites.
- And poor old Pharaoh gets his heart hardened and is ultimately destroyed.

(pause)

- The point Paul is making it clear is that God does what he wants to do.
- He has mercy on who he wants to have mercy (ie Israel)
- And he hardens who he wants to hardens (ie Pharaoh)
- This is an important concept we all need to know.
- God is sovereign.

(pause)

- But I think a pit fall we can run into is that we start to feel sorry for Pharaoh.
- In that we believe that he was **wrongly** treated here.

(pause)

- In response to that I would say... we need to remember God is never less than fair with anyone.
- The perfect example is the Parable of the Landowner in Mathew ch.20

Describe the Parable...

- God is never less than fair with anyone.
- If you read in the book of Exodus you will read that 20 times it says that Pharaoh's heart was hard.
 - 10 of the times... it says Pharaoh hardened his own heart.
 - 10 of the times... it says God hardened Pharaoh's heart.
- I thought that was really interesting.
- I actually didn't believe it at first but I went and counted.

(pause)

- So what does that mean?
- To me it means... when God hardened Pharaoh's heart... it was confirming the decision that Pharaoh had already made.
- Pharaoh wanted to do what he did.

(pause)

- So... God raised him up... to put him down... to show his power....
- But God knew Pharaoh's desire.
- We shouldn't get caught up in feeling bad about Pharaoh
 - He hardened his heart... even though he saw miracles happen.
 - And heard God's word clearly.
 - Read Exodus... God gave him every chance in the world.

(pause)

- J. Vernon McGee said regarding this issue:
 - “When the Scripture says that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, it means that God forced Pharaoh to make the decision that was in his heart. God forced him to do the thing he wanted to do. There will never be a person in hell who did not choose to be there, my friend. You are the one who makes your own decision.”

(pause)

- So God has mercy on those he will have mercy on and hardens those he will harden.
- Now next Paul hones in on another question we may ask.
- And the answer is interesting.

In. Vs19 it says:

Rom 9:19 You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?"

- Natural man would say:
 - If God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, why should he find fault with Pharaoh?
 - Wasn't he accomplishing God's purpose?
- In other words... why is Pharaoh responsible for his actions?
 - If it was God who raised him up... and hardened his heart.

(pause)

- What's his response?

Rom 9:20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"

- Did you notice he doesn't immediately answer the question?
- Rather he says that's a disrespectful question.
- Who are you little man... who are you to answer back to God like that.

(pause)

- God says He chooses us... (he's made that clear).
- And God also makes it clear we are responsible before Him for our actions
 - (as is implicitly indicated in Vs.19)
- The point is... who are you to question God because you can't quite conceptualize how that works?

(pause)

- The fact is... we're the pot not the potter.
- Who can understand God?
- Our inadequate human reasoning is not the answer.
- The answer is found only in the mystery and majesty of God and his sovereignty.

(pause)

- To hammer this point home... Paul goes on and gives us an illustration.

Rom 9:21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use?

- In other words... when a potter is working making clay pots... he can make one that becomes a beautiful vase.
- And another that is to be a spittoon.
- That's the prerogative of the potter.

(pause)

- And likewise from the same lump of clay... God created Adam, and Moses, and Mother Teresa...
- But also from the same lump of clay he created... Pharaoh, and Nero, and Hitler... and Charles Manson.

(pause)

- Now you would think... If God knew everything... beginning to end... he would have realized what Charles Manson was going to do.
- If God knew Charles Manson was going to kill all those people.
- Or that Hitler was going to be responsible for all that atrocities....
- Why would God have allowed them to be brought into existence?

(pause)

- More than that... why does God allow anybody who in this life time doesn't come to Jesus....be brought into existence?
- If he knows the people that come to Jesus...
- So... why did he create the ones that don't come to Jesus?
- That's the question isn't it?

(pause)

- Paul goes on

Rom 9:22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

Rom 9:23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—

Rom 9:24 even us whom he has called [**now referring to the Church**], not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

- He tells us... it's about contrast.
- God allows people to exist who are not chosen... so we the church (made up of Jews and Gentiles) can understand his wrath and his power.
- And seeing his wrath gives contrast so we can see how incredible his mercy is.

(pause)

EXAMPLE: Kind of like my kids don't know how blessed they are w/o seeing Africa...

- Now I would note... it's hard for us to digest the fact that God creates someone that he knows will end up in hell.
- And more than that... that God is using them to show His wrath and His power.
- That's tough to understand.

(pause)

- But I would offer this again... God is never less than fair with someone.
- That is personally why I believe freedom of choice is important for this whole thing to make sense.
- God chooses based on his perspective which is being able to see beginning and end... the whole picture.
- And surely God doesn't choose ignorantly.
- He sees what we do... who we are... everything.

(pause)

- But from my perspective... I am responsible
- And that is why I will be held responsible.
- That is people who don't come to Christ
- Objects of wrath can justly be held responsible.

(pause)

- In my opinion you have to have both sides of the coin.
- But this will be fun to discuss afterwards.

(pause)

- Well next there is a division in the Chapter.
- Paul has made it clear that the nation of Israel was chosen by God's sovereign will.
- And that the word of God didn't fail in reaching Israel.
- Because not all Israel... are Israel.
- And in the same way God chose Jacob over Esau... God has chosen a remnant among Israel who did accept the Messiah.

(pause)

- Next Paul shows that God is calling people from among the Gentiles to be part of His people as well.

(pause)

- Now it is debated whether the Gentiles are called to be part of Israel...
- Or whether Jews and Gentiles are called to be the Church.
- How you interpret that makes a big difference on you eschatological view.
- I'm not going to spend any time on that.
- But I think it would be fun to talk about afterwards.

(pause)

- Well in Verse 25 and 26 Paul quotes from Hosea in regards to the calling of the Gentiles it says:

Rom 9:25 As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'"

Rom 9:26 "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

- This refers to the calling of the Gentiles.
 - He says "those who were not my people I will call 'my people."
 - Notice the words... **I will call** Speaking of God.
 - Paul now shows us that it is no different with us than it was with Israel.
 - God sovereignty chooses from the gentiles as well.
- (pause)

Going on in vs. 26 and 27 Paul quotes Isaiah

Rom 9:27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved,

Rom 9:28 for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay."

- So now this will brings us back to where we started.
 - Remember our question... what about the Jews.
 - How come they aren't all saved.
- (pause)

- After explaining to us that not all of Israel is Israel
 - And that God chooses his people.
 - Paul Quotes the prophet Isaiah... and shows us that's what we should have expected.
 - That though the number of the sons of Israel will be as the sand of the sea... only a remnant will be saved.
- (pause)

- And we will find prophetically that there is always a remnant.
 - There is a remnant of the Jews that are saved.
 - There is a remnant that are saved out of the Gentiles.
 - And this has big implications on end times events as hinted at in verse 28
 - I'm not going to go into right now... but we can discuss afterwards.
- (pause)

- Next Paul quotes from Isaiah 1:9

Rom 9:29 And as Isaiah predicted, "If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah."

The KJV says:

Rom 9:29 ... Except the Lord ... had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

- Speaking of Israel... Isaiah says if God hadn't saved us a seed or a remnant of Israel we would be wiped out completely.
- But God saved them a seed... or a remnant.
- And this is true both historically as a nation.
 - God has preserved a remnant through history.
 - Every time you see a Jew it's a walking miracle...admits the horrific persecution.

(pause)

- But also true spiritually.
- God preserved a group... a remnant that is to be brought into the church.
- That is why when Paul said earlier... It is not as though the world of God has failed.
- God preserved and chose a remnant who were saved... who did accept Jesus as the Messiah.

(pause)

- Well at the end of Ch.9 Paul kind of shifts gears and describes to us why only a remnant of Israel was saved.
- The key word here now being... WHY.

(pause)

- It's interesting as we read this.
- We really kind of see the other side of the coin.
- Previously it's explained that the reason Israel rejected Jesus was because they weren't chosen.
 - They weren't sons of the promise.
 - They weren't sons by way of Abraham spiritual seed.
- But we see it described differently here.

(pause)

Rom 9:30 What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith;

Rom 9:31 but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law.

Rom 9:32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone,

Rom 9:33 as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

- The majority of Israel wasn't chosen because they were seeking righteousness by the law.
- Think about that statement.
- They weren't chosen based on how they chose to seek righteousness.
 - They weren't chosen based on a choice they made.

(pause)

- But... Paul points out the Gentiles attained righteousness... by faith.
- Realizing they were sinners and believing.
- This would have been amazing to the Jews.
- They never would have never thought the Gentiles would attain righteousness.
- But they did.

(pause)

- The Jews on the other hand... attempted righteous by the law and failed.
- In Romans Paul has shown continually that the law can't save.
 - It wasn't intended to save you.
 - It was intended to show our guilt.
- In Gal. 3 it says the Law was a school master to show us who we really are.
- That we are sinners.

(pause)

- But Israel to this day... is trying to be saved by their good works.
- Through the law.

(pause)

- So the analogy is that Jesus is the stumbling block.
- The Jews had worked so hard at the Law.
- They loved the Law.
- But they loved the Law so much that they didn't see the fulfillment of the Law.
- And thus they tripped over the stumbling block.

(long pause)

- Well that brings us to the end of Ch.9
- So the progression of thought is essentially this:
 - Paul presents the principals of salvation in Ch.1-8.
 - At the end of Ch.8 he leaves us with the glorious fact that as a Christian nothing will separate us from the love of Christ.

(pause)

- And as an illustration Paul begins talking about the Jews.
- And he shows us he has great anguish over his "kins men according to the flesh" and the fact that the vast majority of them rejected Jesus the messiah.

(pause)

- But he tells us... it's not as though the word of God failed.
- Because not all that are of Israel are Israel.
- And Paul shows just because you are a child of Abraham or Isaac... does not mean you are a child of the promise.
 - Pointing to Isaac being chosen over Ishmael... both children of Abraham
 - And Jacob being chosen over Esau... both descendants of Abraham
- And he makes it very clear that God sovereignty chose one over the other.
- This means... the few Israelites who accepted Jesus as the messiah... were the real Israel.
 - They were the spiritual descendants of Abraham.
- Thus the word of God did not fail.

(pause)

- And as we begin to question why one is chosen over the other... Paul tells us:
 - God is God and he chooses sovereignty.
 - He raised Israel up... to show his mercy
 - And he brought Pharaoh down... to show his wrath and his power
 - And when we say man... is that unfair?
 - Paul says that is a disrespectful question.
 - Can we as little men really expect God to answer to us on how he makes choices?
- Next Paul tells us that the Gentiles are called to God in the same way.
 - God chooses them.
- And lastly Paul sheds light on the other side of the coin.
 - The Gentiles that were saved... were saved because they pursued righteousness by faith in Jesus.
 - But he explains the reason the majority of Israel wasn't chosen was by their choice to try to attain righteousness by the Law.

(pause)

- Well... next week in Ch.10 we will see Paul shifting his focus from God's past dealings with Israel... to God's present dealings with Israel.
- And we'll see that God has not reject Israel.
- He is extending Grace to them as he extends Grace to all who would accept it.

(pause)

Challenge:

- In closing... I know that a lot of this stuff can be difficult to reconcile in our minds.
- Which in some ways is the point.
- If we understood God... would he really be God?...
- He would be equal to us.

(pause)

- One point that is very clear in this section of scripture is that God chose you.
- You can't read this... and not come away with that.
- Yes... you are responsible... and there are lots of sections of scripture about that.
(pause)

- But coming away tonight... I would like to challenge you to some time thinking about what that means.
 - How awesome that is.
 - How personal it is.
 - That God knows me intimately and he chose me from before the foundations of the world were formed.
- And as a Christian nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.
- We can spend other time thinking about our responsibility (which is real).
- But I would challenge you to spend a little basking in the fact that God chose you.
(pause)

Closing Prayer