

## Romans 9 – What About Israel? 05-21-17 PM

Romans chapters 1 through 8 covered the scheme of redemption. That scheme looked like this:

1. Sin leads to spiritual death (1-2)
2. Law reveals sin (3)
3. Justification in Jesus is by faith and is apart from Law (4)
4. Christ brings justification by propitiation (5)
5. We access this freedom by baptism (6)
6. Sin holds us captive through the flesh (7)
7. Being free requires being Spiritual (8)
8. The Holy Spirit does His part too (8)

Romans 9 moves the subject to answer a question? What about Israel? If God's eternal purpose was the church (Ephesians 3:10-11), then the covenant of Israel was not His ultimate purpose. That means God intended for that covenant to be put away in order to reach that ultimate purposes. In a sense, that means that God intended for the covenant of Israel to fail. Is that correct? If so, does that mean God was unfair to Israel?

Paul begins this reasoning by reminding the audience what made Israel something special. As we recall, a covenant is the convergence of a law and promises. To Israel belonged the law of Moses (replaced by the law of Christ, Romans 8:2). As well, to them belonged the Promises: a special people; a special place, a particular glory (temple worship), the Seed Promise (Christ). Of course, many of those things were lost when they broke the covenant. They lost their special protected status; they lost their land; they lost the particular glory. Yet the Seed Promise, which had existed before Moses (Galatians 3:16) remained, as did the law (which was without reward). When Christ came, these last two things were completed.

God's purpose for Israel was not in itself, but in what He intended to use Israel to accomplish. As we already said, chiefly it was to bring forth the Messiah. Paul also told us in Romans 3:2 that Israel brought the oracles of God, which become part of the New Covenant in the form of establishing authority (1 Cor. 10:11, Rom. 15:4). This serves to make His Divine Nature clear, particularly in the realm of His Divine Judgment. Thus, all of this was destined to end (as Moses himself predicted in Deut. 18:18). Israel's failure was forecasted. Paul makes the case between Esau and Pharaoh that God can raise up someone for the purpose of failing to accomplish His God. As God chose Jacob over Esau beforehand, and as God raised Pharaoh to demonstrate His will, so God raised Israel to fall so that His eternal purpose (the church) could be established.

***Romans 9:14 - What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!*** Paul then makes several cases why this is not unfair, and why we have no place to question it. First, he points out God's will to have mercy on men (*"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy"*). God WILL have mercy on many of Israel. In fact, that mercy comes through Christ, before whom Israel needed to fall. Secondly, God does not judge ALL in Israel for Israel. In other words, God does not hold all guilty for the sins of some or even many (Ezek. 19). Paul stated earlier that God eternally judges men as individuals (Rom. 2:6-8). Third, we need to remember that God's mercy on ALL Men is through Christ. This is to the Jew AND the Gentile, not the Gentile alone. Indeed, the better covenant is in Christ, and to that better covenant God invites the Jew first (Rom. 1:16, 2:9-10). Fourth, God's wrath on Israel was well earned. The Old Testament testifies that Israel (as a whole) utterly rejected God. This is the point of Romans 2. Finally,

that wrath also reflected that God was particularly patient with Israel (Rom. 2:4). In this light, God was completely fair in His dealings with Israel.

The big idea is that God's desire from the beginning was total salvation, not just the blessings on one group of people. We are told repeatedly that His desire was that all men might be saved. Paul continues his point by reminding the audience that the testimony of the prophets reveal this truth. But the only way for salvation for men was justification by faith; in other words, a propitiation in Christ and the obedient faith in His covenant. Paul laments that the problem was that Israel (as a nation) pursued justification by works of law, and missed the point of faith.