**WITHOUT EXCUSE**

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**Israel, Faith and God’s Sovereignty**

***Review from Romans 8:***

**Romans 8:38-39**“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Paul moves on from his writings about *The Flesh vs.* *The Spirit* and the depth of God’s love even in adversity to a new set of topics.

Chapter 9 is the first of three chapters about; Israel, God’s Sovereignty, His choosing, and our choices

[Romans 9,10,&11 could easily be one chapter. Questions he raises in 9 are answered in 10 and 11. Thoughts he puts for in one of these chapters are predicated on, or completed by one of the others. If they were one continuous chapter it would be 90 verses long, so they cut it in thirds.Stephen Langton, an Archbishop of Canterbury. Langton put the modern chapter divisions into place in around A.D. 1227.]

**It's important to remember in this study, these Three Attributes of God;**

### God is Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent

### “All-knowing, All-present, and All-powerful” – Meaning he knows *everything* (future and past), He is everywhere, and can do anything.

### God is all-knowing, meaning He knows the future, otherwise he could not give message to prophets that foretell the future. This is very hard for human beings to conceptualize because we are limited in knowledge, presence, and power.

### Mark 10:27 “With man this is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”

### He knew every person that was ever created even before they were conceived.

### He also knew every choice they would ever make, including whether or not “to believe”. This does not mean however that He made those choices for them.

### *If you remember these principles, the next few chapters will make a lot more sense.*

### Chapter 9 begins with Paul’s Anguish Over Israel. Bear in mind that when he uses the term *“Israel”,* it can mean several things depending on context;

### “The chosen people of the promised land” (Jews that are adherent or not adherent to the word of God).

### The *non-believing* Jewish people everywhere.

### The *believing* Jewish people everywhere, and also the Gentiles (non-Jews) who were “grafted in”.

### \*He is certainly. NOT talking about just the “Church”, he never calls the church “Israel” to the exclusion of the others. That is *“replacement theology”* – a false doctrine that undermines God’s promises and purposes for Israel and the Jewish people.

### Paul is in legitimate anguish over unbelieving Israel, so it’s best to try to empathize with Paul’s mindset as he writes these verses.

**CHAPTER 9**1”I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it *through the Holy Spirit*— **2**I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. **3**For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of ‘*my people’*, *those of my own race,* **4**the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. **5**Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

Paul is talking here about ethnic Israel – “my own race”. This is the Jewish people who predominantly lived in the land of Israel, but have yet to receive Messiah.

In this case “Israel” is “*unbelieving Jews”.*

“Theirs is;

1. the adoption to sonship; Isa. 63:16 “you, Lord, are our Father,
    our Redeemer from of old is your name.”
2. theirs the divine glory – God continually showed His glory to them.
3. the covenants – the promises God made to His people.
4. the receiving of the law – The Torah was given to these people alone.
5. the temple worship – Worship of God took place in the temple
6. the promises – all the prophecies concerning the Jews
7. the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, etc.
8. the human ancestry of the Messiah – Jesus’s human ancestry was all ethnically Jewish.

So what happened? Why didn’t *all* the Jews believe on The Messiah when He appeared to them?

**6**It is not as though God’s word had failed. For “not all who are descended from Israel are Israel”.

(Example: Not all “Christians” are really “Christians”. [Christian from Serbia?]

Just because your parents were believers, does not mean you are as well. Each of us must choose to serve the Lord on our own.)

**7**Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” **8**In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring. **9**For this was how the promise was stated: “At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.”

Throughout the Bible, Abraham’s name has been synonymous with *Faith*. He is the called the *“Father of Faith”.* Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. The promises of God for His people did not pass to Ishmael, even though Abraham was his father, they came only to the descendants of Isaac who was symbolic of *“Abraham’s faith”* (bearing a son in old age, obedient faith - even willing to sacrifice).

**10**Not only that, but Rebekah’s children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. **11**Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: **12**not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” **13**Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

Isaac and Rebekah also had two sons, Jacob and Esau, but only to one were the covenants (promised blessings) of God passed to. It was Jacob. (God chose Jacob for a special purpose before he was even born. He didn’t do anything to deserve His special calling, in fact he wasn’t even a very good guy. His name was changed to “Israel”. His son’s names were given to his descendants and would become the “twelve tribes of Israel” and bring forth the Messiah.)

Don’t be put off by the use of the word *“hate”* (*gr. mise’o*) .It’s Biblical meaning is “to esteem less, comparison”. It does not necessarily mean to despise and wish evil toward. In fact Jesus used a similar word in Luke 14:26 *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate (mise’o) father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.”* Jesus certainly does not want us to despise, and wish evil toward our families, but He does ask us to *“to esteem them less”, in comparison to our love for God.*

But the point is that God in His sovereignty can choose *some* for specific purposes that are not chosen for others.

*[examples: “Isaac over Ishmael”, “Jacob over Esau”,*

*out of Jacob’s sons, he seemed to favor his 11th son Joseph best, but God chose the 3rd son Levi to be the only one whose descendants could be priests (Moses, Aaron).*

*God also chose the son 4th son Judah to be the one to bring forth the lineage of King David and also the Messiah (Jesus).*

*Jesus himself chose only twelve of His followers to be Apostles, and only three to reveal His transfiguration to.]*

**14**What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! **15**For he says to Moses,

“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
    and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

**16**It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.

God maintains the right to extend mercy to whoever he pleases. He can choose to forgive anyone, or to bless and elevate anyone He pleases for His own purposes. He is God.

Mercy, like grace, is *“undeserved”.* *GRACE = “undeserved favor”, MERCY = “undeserved pardon”.* ***If it’s earned, it’s neither mercy nor grace.***

*[Example: Torch Run America Todd carried the torch into the stadium in California. The leaders showed mercy on the guy who couldn’t run.]*

**“17**For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” **18**Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.”

That portion of Exodus is actually a message from God to Pharaoh telling him, that by this time, He could have annihilated the Egyptians, but instead He is showing mercy.

**Exodus 9:15-16** “For by this time I *could have* stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with a plague to wipe you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power to you, and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

God was very involved in the interactions between Moses and Pharoah, even to the point where he hardened Pharoah’s heart.

**19**One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?” **20**But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” **21**Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use? **22**What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? **23**What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— **24**even us, whom *he also called*, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

Once again, just because God knows the future, and knows the choices we will make, it does not mean He makes them for us. He has given us “free will” to choose to follow Him, or even to reject him.

### *“CALLED”* - *“*whom he *also called”* (“called” – gr. klétos *“invited”)*

### Remember: Jesus chose the 12 apostles, and called (invited) them to follow Him. They needed to respond on their own free will and follow Him. God knew who would and who wouldn’t follow, but the invitation was still genuine and legitimate.

### There was someone whom He called to follow that chose *not* to – “The Rich Young Ruler” (Matt 19). It’s possible to be chosen for a purpose, but not be obedient to follow.

### He invited all people to become his “followers” but not all were invited to be among the twelve apostles.

### *(Lazarus - his “best” friend, Joseph of Arimathea – a godly religious leader who believed, The former demoniac from the Gerasene’s who begged to come along, etc.)*

### *There are specific purposes for some, that do not apply to others, but regarding SALVATION, God wants ALL PEOPLE to be saved.*

### 2nd Peter 3:9 “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

### 1st Timothy 2:3-6 ”This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.  For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.”

### Review: The Bible is very clear about *how* “all people” can be saved, *by “believing in Him”*

### John 1:12 “those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”

### John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

### Acts 16:31 “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

### Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

### Romans 10:9 “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

The beautiful part about this is that before Jesus, only Jewish people (Israel) could be God’s people, but because of Jesus, anyone can become God’s children by believing upon him by Faith.

**25**As he says in Hosea: “I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people;
    and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,” **26**and, “In the very place where it was said to them,
    ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’”

**27**Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved.
**28**For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.”

**29**It is just as Isaiah said previously: “Unless the Lord Almighty
    had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.”

**30**What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; **31**but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. **32**Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. **33**As it is written:

“See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who *believes in him* will never be put to shame.”

In these last verses, Paul emphasizes two very important things in regard to salvation;

1. “Righteousness is by faith” (v.30) - Abraham’s faith was reckoned unto him as righteousness.
2. “Believing in Him” (v.33) - Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved

**The words “Faith” and “believing” are inseparable, because if you have Faith in Him, you will believe in Him.**

**Romans 1:16-17“**For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. **17**For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last.”

The most vital question you can ask yourself or anyone else in this life, because so much depends upon it, is; “***Do You Believe?”***

### What does it mean *to “Believe in Jesus”?*

* Does it just mean **simply** acknowledge **His** existence**?**  NO.
* Does it mean to A**gree** that He **was a good person**? NO.
* Does it mean to **just try your best to follow his teachings**? NO.

### It’s much more than that…

The word “*believe”* in Greek is *“PISTEUO”.*

*Pisteuo* is the verb form of the noun *Pistis* (Faith/Trust)

*“Believing” can be described as “faithing”****.***

### *Putting your life completely into His hands. Confessing that your only hope for salvation is in Him, and pleading for his mercy and grace to forgive your sins.*

*It literally means “trusting Him” with your hope, your health, your future, your passions, your time, money, energy, and talents.*

…and ultimately, “to believe” is to put your eternity completely in His hands.

That means surrendering your will to His will, committing to live for Him,

and trusting Him with your heart, your life and your entire future.

***It’s very important, because* whoever “believes in Him” shall not perish but have eternal life.”**