

Session 1: Israel's Stumbling ***Romans 9:30-33***

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 1)

(Note: If you are viewing the Monahans videos, a question was asked in the middle of Session 1 (the questions asked are not audible). The answer to that question took up the remainder of session one and all of Session 2. That same information was covered in the Glen Rose videos in The Sonship Review, Part 4 Establishment Part 5 (7), Sessions: 37-40.

Having finished with the objections, Paul now turns his attention to the subject matter which will take us into the next chapters: the stumbling of Israel. Therefore, I have decided to make this Sonship Review Part 4 Establishment, Part 8. This Part 8 will cover these last four verses of Romans 9 and continue to the end with Romans 11.

Summation of the Objections

In Romans 9, the apostle Paul has answered the three major objections to his message of a dispensation of Gentile grace interrupting God's prophetic program with Israel. There are three major points that Paul makes as he answers the objections: 1) Israel is in an accursed status before God, 2) God has not yet accomplished his plan and purpose with Israel, and 3) Israel has not yet received everything that was promised to them.

Four Wrong Assumptions about why the Dispensation of Gentile grace

In answering 'why' the above propositions are true, Paul also makes it clear that the delay in finishing his program with Israel is:

- Not because God's word was insufficient.
- Not because God has been unfair in his dealings with Israel.
- Not because God is dragging out his program with the Gentiles longer than necessary.
- Not because God has changed his mind and has decided to abandon Israel forever.

What we read in Hosea and Isaiah should make that latter point indelibly clear.

The Application of the Doctrine

What should be the effect of what Paul has written here in Romans 9? Well, for the members of the little flock who were living back at the time Paul wrote Romans, this should stop their

complaining about the dispensation of Gentile grace. If the word has done its effectual work in them, they will not only cease from their complaints, but their understanding of what God is doing by showing mercy in this dispensation of Gentile grace would produce a rejoicing in them; it would produce a patient endurance that should last all the way through their lives.

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 2: Israel's Stumbling, Continued

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 2)

Continuation of Session 1 Notes from: The Sonship Review, Part 4 Establishment Part 5 (7), Sessions 37-40.

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Session 3: The Application of the Doctrine, Continued ***Romans 9:30-33***

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 3)

Romans 9 is not just written for the members of the believing remnant of Israel who were living at the time of Paul; it is also written for our benefit as members of the body of Christ.

Before we read Romans 9:30-33, let us look at a brief outline of this Sonship Review Part 4 Establishment, Part 8.

A Basic Outline of the Completion of our Establishment as Sons

- Romans 9:30-33: God has turned to the Gentiles in response to Israel's stumbling over Christ. (God has turned to the Gentiles while Israel stumbles.)

Before we continue with this outline, I would like to have a discussion with everyone about what I perceive to be a misconception concerning 'why' God turned to the Gentiles. (I understand that I am pretty much alone on this, so I may be wrong, and if so, I will come back and correct myself.)

The accepted idea among those who understand there has been a dispensational change is that God turned to the Gentiles in response to Israel's stumbling. (Do not confuse the 'rejection' at the cross with the 'stumbling' during the extension of mercy in Acts 1-8.)

I disagree with that position for several reasons:

1. That position implies that if Israel had not stumbled, then there would have been no dispensation of Gentile grace, and that is just not the case. God determined to have adopted sons and daughters, who would be engaged in reconciling the heavenly places and that is not part of Israel's vocation. God has always had a plan to repossess both the earth and the heavens. In accordance with those two aspects of his purpose, he has two programs to achieve them. Therefore, if Israel had not stumbled at Christ, God would still have to have the body of Christ for the heavenly places, and what would we then say was the reason for bringing in a dispensation of Gentile grace? No, I think it better to understand that God determined to do what he is doing with us no matter what Israel's response to Christ was.
2. That position also makes it appear that the dispensation of Gentile grace is God's punishment for Israel. By changing the status of the world from being "vessels of wrath" to being "vessels of mercy," that hardly sounds like a punishment. The prescribed

punishment for Israel's behavior during the extension of mercy is found in the 5th installment of the 5th course of punishment. (Nowhere back in their scriptures did God say that if they rebelled that he would stop working with them and turn to the Gentiles. What makes their program 'prophetic' is the fact that they outlined all of what would be done ahead of time. There is no 'mystery' component to Israel's program.) Israel did stumble and God's response to that was to put them in an "accursed" status and bring the final installment of the 5th course of punishment upon them. He did make them to be "accursed," but instead of wrath, he gave the world mercy. He is being "longsuffering" and that hardly sounds like a punishment. Therefore, I see Israel's "accursed" status as a result of their stumbling, but I see the bringing in of the dispensation of Gentile grace as a result of God wanting to accomplish the aspect of his eternal purpose.

If we are not careful, these two issues can get tangled together. I see it this way, Israel is deserving of their accursed status because they stumbled. That stumbling will be punished once their program resumes. God, enduring with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction is not meant to be their punishment; it is mercy.

- Romans 10:1-21: The details of Israel's stumbling:
 1. Verses 1-13: Why Israel stumbled and continues to do so.
 2. Verses 14-21: Israel is responsible for her own stumbling.

- Romans 11:1-29: Israel's Present and Future State:
 1. Verses 1-6: God has not cast Israel away and why.
 2. Verses 7-10: Israel not cast away, but blinded.
 3. Verses 11-24: Israel's blinding does not mean she cannot be restored in the future and why.
 4. Verse 25: Israel's blindness is temporary and when it will end.
 5. Verses 26-29: The fulness of God's program with Israel has yet to come and will come.

- Romans 11:30-36: How should we view what God has done in temporarily setting Israel aside and his turning to us Gentiles.

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 4: The Gentile Response to Mercy ***Romans 9:30-33***

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 4)

In particular, it is written as part of our establishment as sons. Romans 9:1-29 contains several forms of doctrine which must be established in us prior to beginning our education proper. By saying it that way, I do not mean that we are not being educated now, but by the ‘education proper,’ I am referring to our education in the four sonship decision-making skills of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity. As you know, these begin in Romans 12:3.

To say it again, before we receive our initial instruction in the first decision-making skill, it is important that our establishment is fully working in us. Romans 9-11 pertains to our establishment in the dispensational change.

So, what is it exactly that we are being established in?

The Doctrinal Application for Us:

1. It establishes the understanding that both programs cannot be running simultaneously.
 - a. There cannot be the continuation of the prophetic program (wrath) and the instigation of the mystery program (mercy) at the same time. This doctrinal understanding keeps us from looking at events that take place during this dispensation of Gentile grace as fulfillments of prophecies in Israel’s program.
2. It establishes God’s intention to “finish the work” (verse 28) which he started with Israel.
 - a. Therefore, we are established in our understanding that as members of the body of Christ, we are not the assumers of Israel’s identity, promises, program, or blessings.
3. God’s promise to restore Israel and fulfill his ultimate plan and purpose with them is not negated by this unforeseen dispensation of Gentile grace which interrupted their prophetic program.

In a nutshell, Romans 9:1-29 teaches the members of the body of Christ:

1. What time it is (and what time it is not).
2. Who we are (members of the body of Christ) and who we are not (Israel, in any form).
3. What God is planning to do once this dispensation of Gentile grace is concluded.

For Israel, Romans 9:1-29:

- Explains their present “accursed” condition.
- *Comforts* them with regard to the certainty of their future.

Now that all of the objections have been answered, in the final verses of chapter nine, Paul will reveal the real reason why Israel has been made accursed from Christ.

Let us read the final passage in the chapter before we look at the details.

Romans 9:30 *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 stumblingstone; ³³ As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

The Real Reason Israel is Accursed

The opening phrase of verse 30 tells us Paul is now going to bring everything to a conclusion.

Romans 9:30 *What shall we say then?*

The next phrase explains the Gentile’s response to God’s offer of mercy and grace.

Romans 9:30 *What shall we say then? **That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.***

The Gentile Track Record

To say that the Gentiles did not follow after righteousness is an understatement. The Gentiles worshipped every god except the true and living God (see Acts 17). The Gentiles were godless and depraved, as is described in so many passages.

Romans 1:21 *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²²Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ²³And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. ²⁴Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own*

hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: ²⁵Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

Romans 1:29 *Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, ³⁰Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:*

2 Timothy 3:2 *...lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;*

Ephesians 2:12 *... without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: ¹³ ...were far off...*

Colossians 1:21 *And you, that were sometime **alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works**, yet now hath he reconciled*

To say that the Gentiles were not following after righteousness is putting it mildly. The next phrase in vs. 30 shows us the Gentiles' response to God's mercy.

The Gentile Response to Mercy

Romans 9:30 *What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, **have attained to righteousness...***

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 5: The False Comparison

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 5)

When God broke down that middle wall of partition...

Ephesians 2:14 *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and **hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us**; ¹⁵Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

The “middle wall of partition was not the law. We know that because the law is not mentioned until the next verse. The “wall of partition” is the division placed between Israel and the Gentiles that showed them to be a unique and separate people. That started at the Abrahamic Covenant, which means that “wall” was in place long before the law came along.

I am not saying that God did not abolish the law of commandments contained in ordinances: he did. But before he gave the law, God had already raised up a “hedge” of distinction. This was a wall that went around Israel (so to speak) that walled them off from every other people in the world.

Through the blood of [Jesus’] cross, God has “broken down” that wall that separated Jew and Gentile and he “abolished” the law of commandments.

So, when God broke down that middle wall of partition, and abolished the law of commandments, ... and began offering Gentiles the gospel of justification, those Gentiles laid hold on it ‘with both hands’ – eagerly and with resolve.

Romans 9:30 *What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, **even the righteousness which is of faith.***

Notice that there is no mention of ‘election’ or ‘predestination’ here in verse 30. The criterion for attaining this righteousness is by faith in the gospel of Christ. Gentiles’ attaining that righteousness is only possible because God (acting upon something he himself established back in Exodus 33, which Paul quotes in Romans 9) chose to be merciful and gracious to us Gentiles.

God did not choose to extend mercy because we Gentiles were so good and deserving, but He did so in order to accomplish another aspect of his eternal purpose.

Because God reserved the right to “have mercy on whom he will have mercy,” God had a legal right to show mercy to Gentiles. As a result, the Gentiles, who were “far off” and not following after righteousness at all, have now attained unto righteousness.

Israel’s Stumble

Romans 9:31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

Ironically, Israel, who was instilled with religious and moral zeal, did not attain that righteousness. Why not? Again, notice that Paul does not say that they were not elected. Therefore they did not attain unto righteousness. Neither did he say that Israel was not chosen or predestinated to that righteousness. Israel did not attain the righteousness which is of faith because they tried to attain it by following the law of righteousness, the law of Moses, which was an impossible task.

Ironic, is not it? Those who never tried to attain righteousness ended up getting it while those who were trying to attain unto righteousness missed it completely. The problem was that they were trying to attain that righteousness in a way that God rejected.

I want to make a point here about the importance of learning to see things the way your heavenly Father does and doing things his way.

To talk about this, I want to use the example of how people serve God in their everyday lives.

Basically, everyone tried to do good things and stop sinning as best they could.

At church, the preacher declared a set of rules for everyone to follow. (By the way, that is about the only thing you can do when you do not know how to teach people to live out of grace.) People follow those rules for a number of reasons; they are trying to: please God, please the preacher, avoid punishment, avoid condemnation, be righteous, do the right thing, etc.

But all of that misses the point, for if it were possible for us, by sheer force of our will, to please God with our best efforts, then we would not need the sanctification provision Jesus made for us on the cross.

If we are fortunate enough to hear the truth about living for God, then we understand that all the things we did in the flesh (our best efforts) are not going to be accepted by God, at all.

However, it is not natural for us to live out of grace. We have to be taught how to do that. It seems a little awkward for us to live out of the sanctification that was given us when we trusted

Jesus Christ as Savior. It is so much easier to revert back to what we know and what feels comfortable.

Lack of effectual working makes us vulnerable to the policy of evil.

We may even try to justify not living the grace life by comparing our living for God in our flesh with those who do not live for God at all. Unless the forms of doctrine in Romans 6:1-8:13 have done their effectual work in us, we will fall victim to Satan's policy of evil; we will be deceived about our service.

A wrong comparison

One of the problems is this: we make a comparison between 'honestly doing the best we can do' and 'not trying to serve God at all' and we think that one is better than the other. If we are not thinking about this the way our Father does, we will come to the conclusion that it is better to try (even if we try the wrong way) than to not try at all.

But, if we were thinking about it like our Father does, then we would not be making any comparisons at all, for God considers them both to be abominations.

When we think that one of those is more acceptable than the other, we are thinking just like the lost world with the wisdom of men.

To give you an example, let us talk about the issue of salvation.

According to the word of truth, there is only one way for a person to be justified unto eternal life in this present dispensation of Gentile grace; by trusting in the work of Jesus Christ to fully satisfy God's justice against us so that we are no longer deserving of his wrath.

Think of how absurd it sounds for a man to say that he is not going to hell because he lives a better life than the Christians he knows. To him it is not absurd. Their failures justify him, in his eyes.

What about the lost man who does not lie, who deals honestly with others, who is a good husband, a good father, a good son, a good employee, who is kind and generous; what are his chances of getting to heaven on his good works? None.

Why does not God accept his good works? First, God does not accept his good works because the requirement is perfection. Therefore, it does not matter how 'good' he is, if he has ever failed one time, then he is disqualified. No amount of good works can undo sin.

It is the same way with sanctification (living for God) as it is with justification (being saved).

The good works of our best efforts are no more acceptable to God in his service than they were capable of saving us. Why does God reject the honest best effort that we can make in order to serve him? The reason he rejects that kind of service is because it is a service that based on self-righteousness instead of the grace that he has provided for us.

Self-righteousness is another way of removing God out of the picture.

I bring this issue up to emphasize the point that thinking like God and learning to do things his way is more important than we might think; it is critical for us as sons.

What we have here in Romans 9 is a good opportunity to look at that issue the way our Father does. The Gentiles were just a bunch of unclean, reprobates who followed their vile affections.

Israel was religious and they tried to follow the law of Moses in order to be righteous. The truth is, in that condition, Israel was not any better off than the Gentiles; neither one was righteous.

In God's eyes, was it any better to be a religious Israelite who rejected God's provision of his Son than to be an unrighteous Gentile who did not care about God's righteousness? It was not.

That is exactly the way God sees all the religious effort to do good works in the energy of our flesh. Both the wayward sinful acts of an uncaring believer and the determined trust in some kind of law in order to please God are counted by God as abominations. God's preference is not one over the other, but the equal rejection of them both for that which is truly acceptable to him.

Do not get me wrong; I am not defending either wrong approach. I am correcting the erroneous view that one is somehow better than the other. In view of what God is doing today, our 'preference' needs to be for that which is acceptable to God without settling for anything less.

If a man is saved but he lives like he is not, it is the same to God as a man being saved, but he walks after the flesh (which you know does not mean that he engages in sinful behavior, but he follows the law in order to be righteous.) Serving God in the energy of our flesh is not one whit more pleasing to God than not attempting to serve him at all. Why? Because neither one is truly serving him!

Let me give you another example: Trying to save yourself by doing good works, or by being baptized, or by joining a church, or by keeping the ten commandments, or by living by the golden rule, or by being good to your neighbor, or by giving to charities, all amount to the same amount of salvation as not trying to be saved at all. We do not have much trouble seeing this in the area of salvation (justification).

However, when it comes to serving God in the everyday details of our lives, (sanctification), we have trouble seeing it the way God does. We think the self-righteous acts of a man who serves

God in his flesh is somehow superior, or more desirable than the apparent ‘sinner.’ The truth is, God rejects them both equally. There is never a day, not even a single moment in the day, when God ‘prefers’ either one of those. Both are unacceptable all the time. And it should be to us as well.

Our goal should never be to ‘keep up appearances,’ but it should be for real salvation, real living for Christ, real sanctification, real service which stems out of what has been given to us as free gift of grace.

Space for personal reflection and notes