

Romans 9:30~33

Chapter 9 is given to explain the role of the nation Israel in God's plan of salvation, *as it concerns* their rejection and crucifixion of Christ. Paul reveals that *through their rejection of Jesus Christ*, they ushered in final phase of God's plan...the "Inclusion" of the Gentiles.

(Chapter 11) Speaking to Israel... ¹¹*I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

²⁵*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.*

This is extremely important to understand... It was absolutely imperative that Israel "reject" Christ Jesus. If they had have "received" him, there would be no hope for us Gentiles. "Righteousness" would have been associated with the "deeds of the law" rather than faith! It would have sent the wrong message, it would have suggested that "because of Israel's faithfulness to God's Law," they were saved.

Listen very closely... As a result of their adherence to God's law, the Law of Moses, Israel became proud and taken on a *spirit of haughtiness*. They "saw themselves" as better than their surrounding neighbors, the Gentiles. Not that they were, mind you, they simply saw themselves that way. They looked on those around them with utter disgust, proclaiming "Condemnation and Judgment" upon them. While they saw themselves as just before God on the basis of their "supposed obedience" to God's law, they didn't do the "things" those Gentiles did. The "Self-righteousness" produced by their adherence to the law, had resulted in bringing about "a spirit of superiority" to rise up in their hearts! One that God would "bring low" through Christ Jesus. Through Christ Jesus, Israel would be HUMBLED!

They would be humbled in either one of two ways...

- 1) They would realize their sinful condition and fall at his feet for mercy...
- 2) Or, if they refused to acknowledge their sinfulness and seek him for mercy, he would become a "stumbling stone" to them, causing them to fall.

Either way... Israel would be brought low!

Which is exactly what happened. **Read (Vs 30~31)**

God's Plan has "Resulted In"... *That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. ³¹But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.*

- The "Gentiles," who never pursued after righteousness... **have** attained righteousness.
- And "Israel," who diligently pursued after righteousness... **have not** attained righteousness.

I'm not sure that *we westerners* can truly grasp the profoundness of what Paul is saying here... If you have ANY understanding of the zealotry of Israel in seeking to please God, such a declaration shakes you to the core.

(Vs 32a) Why Not? How is that possible?

³²*Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.*

Israel “*Trusted in themselves*” that they were righteous by their “*Deeds in the law.*” They considered themselves as being right with God, on the basis of their goodness.

But regardless how “*diligent*” Israel was in serving God’s law, in spite of their zealous efforts in trying to please God by their goodness, **it was to no avail!**

Given the fact that the Gentiles, who never sought righteousness by the law at all, but by simply receiving Christ, they attained righteousness, the “*Message*” could not be Clearer...

Salvation comes not by the “*Deeds of the Law,*” but by “*Faith in Christ*” alone!

T: (Vs 16) ¹⁶*So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.*

God “*Elected*” to use Israel with the Law and the Gentiles without the law, to make it abundantly clear, that salvation comes not by the deeds of the law, but by the mercy of God, which is in Christ Jesus. Paul had just illustrated God’s plan through the analogy of the clay and the potter.

Paul uses the analogy of the Potter and clay to refute man’s objection to “*God’s Election.*”

(Vs 19) ¹⁹*Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?*

If God chooses to harden someone, (*as was the case with Pharaoh*)...

How is it fair that God Judges a man, that’s simply fulfilling the will of God for his life?

God “*Sovereignly orchestrated*” the events in Pharaohs life, resulting in him acquiring the throne of Egypt, to be the one that would oppose Moses, to fulfill the ultimate purpose of God.

Having knowledge of that, when you think about it...

In “*Opposing*” Moses and his God, Pharaoh was actually fulfilling God’s will for his life!

(Vs 20) Paul’s answers the man who questions the “*Election*” of God... ***with a question.***

²⁰*Nay but, O man, who art thou that **replies** against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?*

...*who art thou that **replies** against God?* Paul never answers the question directly, but rather deals with the attitude of the heart that produced the question. That word carries the meaning of disputing, reply against, to answer back or according to the context, the best definition would be, to *talk back too*. This word is well illustrated in that of a small child questioning the choices of a parent. It’s like the parent telling the child something, and the child “*answering back,*” rather than accepting what was said.

Such a question implies a total forgetfulness of the relationship between the “*created*” and the “*Creator,*” the relationship between man to God.

Verse 20 could be stated, “Who are you to question God?” ^{20b}...*Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* ²¹*Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?*

P: The point of the analogy is to illustrate man’s *proper relationship* to his Creator.

Paul says, “*I don’t know who you think you are...but I’m here to remind you, that you and I are NOTHING!*” We’re like a *piece of clay*...that the “*Almighty Potter*” has chosen to pick up, and shape into whatever he so desires.

(Vs 21) ²¹*Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?*

Can He not do with it what He wills? ... Can't he make anything he wants?



Having made his point clear through the *analogy* of “*The Potter*” and the “*Clay*,” Paul now moves to the application of that point...concerning the *Will of God* for Israel

(Vs 22~24) ²²*What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: ²³And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, ²⁴Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*

“*What if...*” At first it seems like he is speculating, but it soon becomes apparent that he’s not, he’s right on the mark. Its really like, “*What if this is what God was doing...*” **smart guy!** Those of you who question what he does, those who obviously know more than God...

What if God... -Willing to show His Wrath, willing to make His Power know by Judging the sin and rebellion of men...

What if... instead of sending Judgment & Wrath, He chose to show Mercy and Patience on the vessels “*fitted for destruction.*”

What if... He did that in order that He might make known the “*Riches of His Glory?*”

Illustration: Unfit Vase... Notice, he refer's to them as “*vessels of mercy...*” which he had before prepared for glory... What if this one, which is really “*fit*” for nothing, other than to be destroyed, thrown away... What if the potter, the one who created it, unable to bear the thought of destroying it, simply chose to keep it. In doing so, this piece of pottery becomes a “*vessel of mercy.*” The only reason that its not cast aside and destroyed is by the mercy of its creator.

(Vs 24~29) Paul says... **That's exactly what he has done!**

²⁴*Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? ²⁵As he saith also in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.*

²⁶*And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.*

Paul reveals that these scriptures are speaking of *Gentiles*...

I will call them my people, which were not my people ...

I will call her beloved, which was not beloved.

Those who are not my children ...shall be called the children of God...

And as far as the Nation Israel is concerned...Paul points to Isaiah...

²⁷*Isaiah also cries concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:*

Isaiah prophesied that a “*very small number*” of the entire nation of Israel would be saved!

Paul points to the account of “Sodom & Gomorrah” to show that God spared a small number...

²⁹And as Isaiah said before, **Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed**, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

Except it were for God’s Mercy on Lot and his family, no one would have escaped... A very small number in comparison to the number of inhabitants that lived there. In like manner, by his “Sovereign Election,” God has chosen to “spare” a remnant of Israel...

Just as Pharaoh withstood Moses... Israel withstood Christ...

But only to result, like Pharaoh, in Israel being brought Low...

^{32b}...For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; ³³As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Paul declares to all of Israel... **Jesus Christ is Isaiah’s “Stumbling Block!”**

The reason Christ is a “stumbling stone, a rock of offence” to them, is the fact that he offers mercy and grace for SINNERS! And they don’t see themselves as SINNERS. They have lived the best they could, they have kept God’s law, they attend synagogue regularly... They don’t do the “things” those Gentiles do. In short, they “live right.” They live in a way that is pleasing to God!

To suggest they’re just as sinful as the Gentiles, that they’re no different than them is “offensive!”

Jesus Christ was Israel’s DOWNFALL... They had “exalted themselves” above the Gentiles by their “self-righteousness” in their adherence to God’s law. They “boasted” of their righteousness, and judged and condemned those around them. Well... God brought them down, and he did so with Christ. He humbled the nation Israel to the point, that they are flat on their face before God. The only alternative they have, the only hope they have, is to call out to God for help.