

“GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY; MAN’S RESPONSIBILITY”

Wednesday, August 10, 2011

Text: Romans 9:1-33

INTRODUCTION:

The next three chapters deal with Israel’s spiritual history: ***past (chap. 9)***, ***present (chap. 10)***, and ***future (chap. 11)***. Paul’s purpose is to explain how God could set aside His chosen people and save the Gentiles, and how He will restore the nation at some future date.

God’s desire for Israel was that they would turn from those things that were separating them from His divine purpose, and from His grace. There were a number of things personally and nationally, as well as religiously, that had come between Israel and their God. The most notable of these were;

[1] Pride, demonstrated through their rejection of Christ. This was an inability to see the truth of the revealed messiah in the teachings of the Old Testament.

[2] Idolatry, worship of everything other than the one and only true God. In some instances it was pantheistic worship (Jehovah and other God’s at the same time. BAAL-god of self, MOLECH-god of the intellect, ASTARAH-god of sensual desire.

[3] Disobedience, rooted in rebellion. This disobedience manifested itself in three areas.

{1} Disobedience toward God revealed through a disregard for worship in holiness.

{2} Disobedience toward the covenants/law, seen in their miss-use and miss-application of the law.

{3} Disobedience toward the prophets of God. An un-willingness to listen, learn, and to be lead by God’s appointed prophets and shepherds.

ILLUSTRATION:

Contemporary Christian musician Kathy Troccoli was a rebellious teen who drank, partied, and was caught in a vicious cycle of bulimia. But at a summer job, she couldn't escape the Christian witness of co-worker Cindy:

"She was the epitome of a girl I could not hang out with. When she started telling me about Jesus, I made fun of her. And yet, deep down inside, I admired her. I liked that she didn't seem to care what people thought about her. I even suspected she was right, and I was on the wrong path.

"Finally, Cindy said to me, 'You know, Kath, Jesus is Lord whether you accept him or not.' I went home thinking about that. If Jesus was real, I had to check him out. I plowed through the Gospel of John and when I got to the end, I knew I had to make a decision. Everything would have to change. And sixteen years ago, it did."

-- Kathy Troccoli with Jim Long in Campus Life. Christian Reader, Vol. 33, no. 5.

Paul wants to remind Israel that the simply need to make a decision, and that's what it comes down too for anyone who wants to have a relationship with a Holy God, you have to make a decision.

Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

Matthew 18:3 and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Acts 3:19 "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

James 5:19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

I. REJECTION OF A **PERSON!** (CHRIST) {VV. 1-5}

ILLUSTRATION:

IT IS SAID THAT DR. MORTIMER ADLER SUDDENLY LEFT A DISCUSSION GROUP AT A TEA QUITE DISGUSTED, SLAMMING THE DOOR AFTER HIM. ONE PERSON TRYING TO RELIEVE THE TENSION, REMARKED, "WELL, HE'S GONE." TO THIS THE HOSTESS REPLIED, "NO, HE ISN'T. THAT'S A CLOSET!" WE SHARE THE SAME PLIGHT WHEN WE ATTEMPT TO RUSH FROM GOD'S PRESENCE. WE ARE CONFINED TO OURSELVES.

Exodus 33:3 "Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way for you are a stiff-necked people."

Hosea 6:6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

II. REJECTION OF A **PURPOSE!** (COVENANT) {VV. 6-13}

Israel had forgotten what the purpose of their relationship with God, and His with them was really all about.

Illustration:

Dear Pastor,

You often stress attendance at worship as being very important for a Christian, but I think a person has a right to miss now and then. I think every person ought to be excused for the following reasons and the number of times indicated:

Christmas (Sunday before or after)--1

New Year's (Party lasted too long)--1

Easter (Get away for the holidays)--1

July 4 (National holiday)--1

Labor Day (Need to get away)--1

Memorial Day (Visit hometown)--1

School closing (Kids need a break)--1
School opens (One last fling)--1
Family reunions (Mine and wife's)--2
Sleep late (Saturday night activities)--4
Deaths in family--4
Anniversary (Second honeymoon)--1
Sickness (One for each family member)--5
Business trips (A must)--3
Vacation (3 weeks)--3
Bad weather (Ice, snow, rain, clouds)--6
Ball games--5
Unexpected company (Can't walk out)--5
Time changes (Spring ahead; fall back)--2
Special on TV (Super Bowl, etc.)--3

Pastor, that leaves only two Sundays per year. So, you can count on us to be in church on the fourth Sunday in February and the third Sunday in August unless providentially hindered.

Sincerely,
Faithful Member

III. **REJECTION OF A PROMISE! (CONVERSION) {VV. 14-29}**

The biggest problem for Israel was their inability to recognize the obvious.

Illustration:

Cary Grant once told how he was walking along a street and met a fellow whose eyes locked onto him with excitement. The man said, "Wait a minute, you're ... you're--I know who you are; don't tell me--uh, Rock Hud--No, you're ..." Grant thought he'd help him, so he finished the man's sentence: "Cary Grant." And the fellow said, "No, that's not it! You're ..." There was Cary Grant identifying himself with his own name, but the fellow had someone else in mind.

John says of Jesus, "He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him" (John 1:10, NIV). And even when Jesus identified who he was--the Son of God--the response was not a welcome recognition, but rather the Crucifixion.

Conclusion: Vv. 30-33

What shall we say about the Gentiles?

Here is the paradox of history: the Jews tried to be righteous and were rejected; the Gentiles, who did not have the privileges the Jews had, were received! The reason is because the Jews tried to attain righteousness by works, while the Gentiles received righteousness by faith through the grace of God. The Jews stumbled over a crucified Messiah (see [Isa. 8:14](#) ; [28:16](#) ; [Matt. 21:42](#) ; [1 Cor. 1:23](#) ; and [1 Peter 2:6-8](#)). They wanted a Messiah who would lead the nation to political freedom and glory; they could not believe in a crucified Christ.

Paul's purpose in this chapter is to explain Israel's position in the plan of God. Israel was an elect nation, given privileges that no other nation had; yet it failed miserably to follow God's program of blessing for the world. The entire chapter exalts the sovereign grace of God without minimizing the responsibility of men and women for making right decisions. God's Word will prevail regardless of human disobedience; but disobedient sinners will miss the blessing. No human mind can fathom or explain the wisdom of God (see 11:33-36), but this we know: without the sovereign grace of God, there would be no salvation.