

A PROMISE LOST

Romans 9:1-13

Difficult theological issues perplex our minds!

Rom 9 is that kind of ch.—it makes us struggle!

As frequently the case, 2 facts are true about this problem:

1) Basic issue—in passage—is clear.

We don't like what it says!

2) *WE* struggle with same issue as Paul's original listeners!

14: Is there injustice on God's part?" =>Is God unjust?

Don't get lost in theological fog! ***Don't miss MAIN idea:***

Israel lost it

because they thought they had it made!

Presentation of gospel, forces people who know OT to ask: ***What about God's chosen people?***

How does this gospel affect Israel?

Doctrinal argument concludes pointing out relationship of ISRAEL to gospel

NOT just parenthetical insertion to talk about Israel!

Object lesson about Gospel—supreme ***illustration***

Warns us of danger of trying to earn acceptance by God

If we try to make it *on our own*, we miss way GOD provides

Only way to God: trust what Christ has done.

Israel's Relationship to God's Plan IN PAST 9

Israel forgot their inability to live holy life

Tried to earn way to God by keeping law.

Result: in spite of privileged position, they miss blessing!

Paul's Sorrow because of Israel's Rejection 1-5

Israel's cursed; cut off from Messiah 1-4a *"I speak the truth in Christ—I'm not lying, my conscience confirms it in H.S.—²I have great sorrow & unceasing an-guish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were cursed & cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race ⁴the people of Israel"*

Paul grieves, watching God's people.

He's one of them=>wants God to bless them.

He can't feel content about ministry to pagan Gentiles, knowing Israel is left out!

Paul wishes he could trade places with them

He'd give up *his* blessing if Israel would return to God

Lit., he'd do this *in their place, as their substitute*.

He can't be content with his privileged position, knowing Israel is separated from God

He knows rebel people will never accept offer

Israel enjoys a privileged position with God

4b-5 *"Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship & the promises. ⁵Theirs are the patriarchs, & from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen."*

GOD HAS GIVEN THEM EVERYTHING!

He adopted them as His own children

His glory was present in their midst

God entered covenant relationship with them

He gave them law—charged them to keep & care for it.

He entrusted worship of Living God to them.
 He gave promises—plan revolves around them.
 They're descendants of patriarchs—godly men known for
 intimate communion with God.
 Through them Jesus, Messiah came to earth.
 They had *everything*. Could people so loved by God reject
 Him & insist on trusting selves?

Israel's privilege hasn't led to faith!

How does Paul show concern for his people?

—anger?!! criticism?!! => grieves & prays for them

How do WE show concern for *OUR* countrymen?

**We're often quick to condemn pagan attitudes and
 lifestyles, but slow to reach out with good news.**

[What went wrong? What happened to God's promise?]

Israel's rejection & God's promise 9:6-13

They lost it because they thought they had it made!

God's promise hasn't failed 9:6a

"It's not as though God's word had failed."

Blessings God gave Israel show God hasn't failed.

Problem isn't God nor His Word—He fulfilled promise

Problem's *always* been unbelief & rebellion

God warned them of danger of trusting themselves

They'll *never* receive God's blessing that way—Nor will *WE*!

God's promise doesn't include everyone 6b-13

It isn't for ALL physical descendants 9:6b-9

Physical descent make them God's children 6b-8a

"For not all who're descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷Nor because they're his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It's through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

⁸In other words, it's not the natural children who're God's children."

Blessings aren't for *all* Abraham's descendants

Only one receives the promise.

God says heirs of promise will be those He chooses

God's promise produces God's children 8b-13

8b *"...**children of the promise** are regarded as offspring."*

2 examples make his case: Sarah & Rebekah

God's promise re. Sarah results in promised son 9

*"For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I'll return, & **Sarah** will have a son."*

God chose 1 of Abraham's children—**1 of 8!**

Heirs aren't Abe.'s physical children;

but those who trust God's promises

God's promise to Rebekah results in God's chosen son 10-13 [next narrowing=>] *"Not only*

that, but Rebekah's children had one & the same father, our father Isaac. ¹¹Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: ¹²not by works but by him who

calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger."

¹³Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

God's choice isn't based on works 10-11a

God's choice based on God's purpose 11b-13

God decides to whom He'll give promises

Principle seen choosing Jacob rather than Esau

God didn't choose Jacob because he *deserved* it.

Jacob's incredibly undeserving; that never changed

He's a scoundrel! [Like some others I know!]

God declares plan before they're born.

Choice based on God's plan; *not* their works

"Love/hate" = heb. idiom—*not emotion*

=> *choosing* one over another

=> Esau "*despised*" birthright; *chose* bowl of soup!

God chose Jacob *before* he was born

—without regard to what Jacob would do!

Some people claim Paul isn't talking about salvation, he's talking about God's promise to Israel.

True! It only makes sense, in explaining Gospel, *if* principle applies to God's choice of *us*, for *salvation*.

GOD makes choice, but *still exhorts us* to trust Him.

WE struggle with that; we've grown up hearing

"*It's all about us!*" *Everything* revolves around us!

It's *NOT* all about us. It's all about GOD!

This isn't democracy! GOD rules!

Our future's in hands of **just, loving, merciful** God,

Who *cares more about us than we do. **We can trust Him!***

Student told Griffith Thomas he's struggling over this: He couldn't understand why God **hated Esau**. Thomas responded: "I have problem too: "I can't understand why God **loved Jacob!**"

Rest of ch. clarifies *real* issue is God's *mercy!*

Implications: OUR SALVATION...

Doesn't depend on our heritage. Do we rely on *OUR* inheritance=>our parents, church, past performance?

Doesn't depend on our efforts

Have we been deceived, thinking we can *earn* eternal life by our efforts?—**Israel's mistake**

Depends on God's grace! God calls whom **HE** chooses!

Israel lost it; they thought they had it made!

If we try to make it—by our efforts, —we'll lose it!

If we think we have it made, we'll never turn to Jesus!

God's promises are for people who *don't have it made!*

—people who could never make it on our own! Aren't you glad?

Church is filled with people who **don't** have it made

"Church: only organization, with requirement for member-ship:

NOT be worthy!"

God changes the life of unworthy/undeserving people!

Israel LOST it because they didn't get it!

God's promise of eternal life is for people who trust Jesus!

Blessing is promised to those who trust Jesus!

Tit. 3:5 "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but **because of his mercy.**

God saves people who trust Jesus! What are we trusting?