
a *Grace Notes* course

The Epistle to the ROMANS

an expositional Bible study

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Lesson 9

Romans 9:1-33

Grace Notes

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The Epistle to the Romans

Lesson 9 - Contents

Chapter 9	3
Romans 9:1	3
Romans 9:2	4
Romans 9:3	4
Romans 9:4,5	4
Romans 9:6	5
Romans 9:7	5
Romans 9:8	5
Romans 9:9	6
Romans 9:10-12	6
Romans 9:13	6
Romans 9:14	7
Romans 9:15	7
Romans 9:16	8
Romans 9:17	8
Romans 9:18	9
Romans 9:19	9
Romans 9:20	9
Romans 9:21	9
Romans 9:22	10
Romans 9:23	12
Romans 9:24	12
Romans 9:25,26	12
Romans 9:27	12
Romans 9:28	13
Romans 9:29	13
Romans 9:30-33	13

Chapter 9

Introduction to Romans 9:1-13

What do we do with Romans 9, 10, and 11? Some see these chapters as a parenthetical, totally separated from chapters 8 and 12. They see these three chapters as an explanation of Paul's desire and love for Israel. Some do connect them with what Paul had to say back in Romans 3 and 4 regarding Israel and the salvation of the Jews through faith in Christ. I see a much stronger connection however.

Paul has been talking about justification by faith (chapters 3 and 4) and sanctification by faith (chapters 5 through 8). He has established a principle of faith both at salvation and in the Christ centered life. This strong emphasis on faith gives rise to a number of questions.

- What about the sovereignty of God?
- What about Israel under the Law?
- Is this faith system a totally new system?
- Does grace preclude the Jew from salvation?
- Are there now two groups of God's people, Jews and Church?
- What should the Christian think regarding the Jew?
- And is there a future in God's plan for Israel?

All these questions and more Paul answers by talking three chapters to show how God has dealt and is dealing with Israel. By doing this Paul uses Israel as an illustration of what can happen, even to us, if we do not pursue God by faith.

There are three important statements in these chapters that bind them not only together but connect them to the rest of Romans:

Romans 9:30-32, What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because [they did] not [pursue it] by faith, but as though [it

were] by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

Romans 10:17, So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Romans 11:6, But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

These statements result in the conclusion that Paul gives in Romans 11:33-36

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?

Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

And that fulfills the purpose of God, to bring many sons to Glory and in doing so give maximum glory and honor to His Son, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 9:1

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,

Because God had called Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles and His work was mainly among the Gentiles, many Jews, even those who had become Christians, perceived him as rejecting his heritage and his people.

This perception, like so many perceptions, is wrong.

People perceive us in many ways, ways that are very different that the reality of what is in our souls or even what is going on.

About the only thing you can do in the midst of mis-perception is declare the truth. And that is what Paul does in this verse. He calls upon both

the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit to be his witnesses.

In both statements he uses EN with the dative of advantage. Our current position is in Christ. We are in Him; and He is in us.

In the Spirit is synonyms for both Paul and Jude for being F/HS or Spirituality.

So Paul's witness is that he is a believer [in Christ] and that he is spiritual [in the Holy Spirit].

Romans 9:2

That I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

Paul does not bring his sorrow and grief up as a validation of the truth. But rather as the statement of truth itself.

There were those who said Paul did not care about Israel any longer, that he turned away from his people, abandoned his roots.

Paul says this is not the case and the Lord and the Spirit are my witnesses to this...I have sorrow and grief over Israel.

Paul uses two words that are almost indistinct in meaning to show how deep his pain is and how continual his pain is. These words are so close in meaning that the emphasis falls to the adjectives GREAT and UNCEASING.

These sensitivities in Paul's heart then are heavy [mega] and continual.

Romans 9:3

For I could wish that I myself were accursed, [separated] from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

Paul's desire for Israel, my kinsmen he states, is so strong that he would even go so far as to lose his relationship with Christ if it would mean their salvation.

Exodus 32:31-32 Then Moses returned to the Lord, and said, Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin--and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written!

The Lord Jesus in the Garden, Matthew 26:39 And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the only one who was called upon to lose His relationship with the Father in order to provide salvation for those whom He loved.

Yet we see that same attitude that was in Jesus Christ in Moses and in Paul.

Romans 9:4,5

Who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,

Whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Paul describes his kinsmen, Israel, by listing seven spiritual privileges which belong to them:

This is parallel to what Paul said about the Jews back in Romans 2:17-21 when he spoke of the advantage held by the Jew and their great benefit of being God's people, if they would only use what they have to move on in faith (Romans 3:1-3).

Seven Spiritual Privileges:

1. Adoption as Sons
2. Divine Glory
3. The Covenants
4. The Mosaic Law
5. The Temple Worship
6. The Promises (especially concerning the Messiah)
7. Descendant of the Patriarchs from whom came the Messiah who is God, blessed forever

Tremendous assets, tremendous privileges, tremendous position. Yet as Paul pens these words, Israel for the most part is lost and destined to eternal separation from God.

NOW THE QUESTION THAT IS BEGGING FOR an answer at this point is, if they had all this going for them, what went wrong?

Why have the Jews, for the most part, rejected their Messiah, Jesus Christ?

In Romans 9:6 through 33 (The remainder of the Chapter) the question is answered.

Romans 9:6 through 12 What is True Israel?

Let me give you the conclusion first: True Israel relates not to Moses and the Law but to Abraham and the Promise.

Romans 9:6

But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are [descended] from Israel.

ISRAEL here is a reference to JACOB. In Genesis 32:28 God changed Jacob's name to Israel which means the one who has power with God or God's fighter.

Israel had twelve sons and from him came thirteen tribes (Joseph's two sons became two tribes Manasseh and Ephraim, half Egyptian).

Identification by tribe and family would assume that if one was a descendant of Jacob [Israel] then they were of Israel. But Paul says this is an incorrect conclusion.

For they are not all Israel who are [descended] from Israel.

The Jews made two mistakes in forming their spiritual identity. They thought that if they were physically related to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that they were true Israel.

But the next verse tells us this is not so..

Romans 9:7

neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but, through Isaac your descendants will be named.

Isaac was just one of Abraham's sons. Remember Hagar and Ismael? Genesis 16:1-15

The second mistake in their identity was that they determined they were true Israel by their relationship to the Mosaic Covenant, the OT Law.

But v 8 states that it is their relationship to the promise that will result in their spiritual identity:

Romans 9:8

That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

WHAT IS AMAZING is that Christians repeat these mistakes today:

1. They assume they are Christians because their parents were or because they belong to a so-called Christian nation.
2. They assume they are Christians (and others are not) by way of their obedience to some rigid system of law.

BUT JUST LIKE WITH ISRAEL our identification as believers will relate not to our heritage nor to our production, but to the promise, the same promise that was given to Abraham almost 4000 years ago.

Abraham's first son was Ismael, then fourteen years later Isaac was born. Abraham did not even understand that the promise was not to be through Ismael but through the son of promise.

Genesis 21:8-11, And the child (Isaac) grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking. Therefore she said to Abraham, Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac. And the matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son. But God said to Abraham, Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.

v 8 Makes the issue the promise not the progeny: That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

Now what is a child of the promise? Well, it is a child who has been promised.

LET'S GO BACK TO Romans 4:13-21

Now if someone makes you a promise, what is required on your part? You have to believe it.

With the promises to Abraham the same principle is true, and that is why Paul emphasizes the faith aspect in Romans 4.

Seven Aspects of Faith:

1. Abraham was not weak in faith: The word means to be feeble. He understood that the strength of faith was not in Him but in the Lord. Hence there was not inner doubt but outward faith. True faith originates with God not with us.
2. He did not look at his own personal inability: He was nearly 100 years old and was sexually dead but that problem was God's problem, not his.
3. He did not look at the difficulties of circumstances: His wife, Sarah, was also old but the deadness of her womb was a circumstance and God was greater than circumstances.
4. He did not see God's promise as impossible: With man many things are impossible. That is part of the reality in which we live. To deny it is to delude ourselves. But with God, all things are possible.
5. He grew even stronger in faith: He knew that his faith was in something of great strength, the promise of God and therefore it was a strong faith. The more he matured as a believer the stronger his faith became because he knew more of the One his faith rested in.
6. Who whole attitude was that of being fully persuaded as one who knows something without question.
7. His name ABRAHAM, meant Father of a Great Multitude. He had that name given to him by God prior to the birth of Isaac. And it was the name he used with confidence.
8. Faith, true faith results in action: v 21b He was also able to perform.

Now all the promises of the birth of Isaac would not do any good if they were just talked about. I could hear Abraham and Sarah now, in the moonlight of Canaan, by the flickering fire, the tent shades drawn, talking about having a son...folks, they did not talk about it, they did it.

Faith takes the action!

LET'S ALSO LOOK AT Galatians 3:1-14 and verse 17 and the conclusion in verse 29.

Romans 9:9

For this is a word of promise: At this time [next year] I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.

Paul quotes from Genesis 18:10-12

This promise was given by the Lord and Abraham believed it. Another proof that true Israel is based on the promise not on the progeny.

Romans 9:10-12

And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;

For though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls,

It was said to her, (Genesis 25:23) The older will serve the younger.

Why did God say this? Was this an arbitrary choice by God to favor Jacob and reject Esau?

Study the life of these two and you find that Esau was the strongest, the bravest, the one most likely to succeed. Jacob was a schemer and a chilsler, which is what his name means.

Yet it was Jacob who carried on the promise...And God knew that his heart, his volition would be towards the promise and Esau's would not be.

Remember the difference between omniscience and foreknowledge.

What if neither Esau nor Jacob were positive? Then Isaac and Rebecca would have had a third son, guarantee it!

Because the promise would not be frustrated...

Romans 9:13

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

A difficult verse if one does not understand omniscience and foreknowledge:

Some Principles:

1. The word LOVE and the word HATE are both verbs, aorist, active, indicative. This indicates an attitude at a point in time. The point in time would have been when Esau and Jacob came to a point when they considered what Isaac told them regarding the promise. Esau dismissed it, Jacob accepted it.
2. The word HATE is MISEW and of the nine words for hate and anger, can be the most mild. W.E. Vine says of this word: it can be used for relative preference for one thing over another, by way of expressing disregard for the claims of one person relative to another. God disregarded the claim of Esau because Esau rejected the promise God had made.
3. In this passage in Romans 9, Paul quotes from Malachi 1:2-3.

"I have loved you, says the Lord. But you say, How hast Thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the Lord. Yet I have loved Jacob; but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation, and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness."

This was spoken by the Lord about 1500 years after Jacob and Esau lived.

The reference is not to Jacob and Esau but to their progeny or the nations that came from them. The Edomites came from Esau.

4. Here in Romans 9, Paul is dealing with those who saw not special privilege but a special position because they were from the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

They had, as a nation, fallen into national arrogance. So Paul shows them the weakness of their logic. Esau came from Abraham and Isaac also but was not heir to the promise.

The Hebrew language is rich with hyperbole and that is what we have here as quoted from the Hebrew of Malachi chapter one. The extremes of love and hate are used to drive home a point.

THEREFORE: Why do they think they are automatically heirs of the promise? The promise is claimed by faith.

Romans 9:14-18

Paul has used two illustrations thus far, Ishmael and Isaac, and Esau and Jacob. These demonstrated that God did not work His purpose in Israel according to a human system of progeny. A son may be a first born but that was not the issue. Neither was the issue works but as we shall see at the end of this chapter, the issue is faith.

BUT EVEN IN THIS WE must be careful not to fall into the trap of seeing faith as a work of merit on our part which demands that God must respond. To do that would make God subservient to our faith and God is not subservient, He is sovereign. And that is what these verses establish.

Romans 9:14

What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

Paul asks a question that would be asked by those reading this passage...and it is asked today. Isn't God unfair? Wasn't He unjust in His rejecting of Esau and His acceptance of Jacob.

Paul, as with previous rhetorical questions, gives the answer himself, an emphatic no, may it never even be considered.

The verb is in the optative mood, which indicates that some would think this but they should not.

Romans 9:15

For He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.

Paul quotes from Exodus 33:19

In Exodus 32 and 33, Moses had just won two rounds of argument with the Lord. The first one occurred after the golden calf incident when Moses contended with God for the forgiveness of the people. The second argument which is still somewhat ongoing at least on Moses part is for God to God with and lead His people. God had said He would send an angel but Moses argued that that was not good enough.

Exodus 33:17, And the Lord said to Moses, I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight, and I have known you by name.

This term "find favor is thy sight" was used to express humility and faith in making a request

upon which there was no reason for the request to be granted. The phrase then deals with the MERCY of God.

The phrase "I have known you by name" is often used of the relationship God had with Moses but is also found in Isaiah 45:1-4 where we find that God knew Cyrus the king of Persia by name and yet Cyrus did not know the Lord God. This phrase describes the sovereignty of God.

In Exodus 33 Moses requested that he might see the GLORY of God.

God's answer is that He will show His GOODNESS to Moses, not based upon His request, but because He is God and as God He will be gracious to whom He will be gracious and show compassion to whom He will show compassion.

IN OTHER WORDS, GOD IS GOD, and will do what He determines to do in fulfilling His purpose.

In Romans the quote from Exodus uses Greek words and states, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

MERCY is God holding back what we rightly deserve.

COMPASSION is God's choice to deal with us in an active manner of mercy based upon His essence.

"Mercy" is OIKTIRMWN and found only here in the NT. The noun form is often translated MERCIES as in Romans 12:1. From the time of Homer it looked at the active action of entering into empathy with another. SO WITH BOTH THESE WORDS we see this is the choice that God makes that is not based upon what we do or desire.

Romans 9:16

So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

God is not under obligation to show mercy to anyone. He can make this decision as a sovereign choice.

NOW AT THIS POINT IN Romans 9, PAUL IS dealing with the false idea that man can do this or

that, will this or that, and God must jump up and respond. We have already seen where the argument is headed and the last verses of Romans 9 pursue righteousness by faith not by law.

1. The issue is Israel who had wonderful advantages but these did not result in reality.
2. Those who belong to God do so based upon the promise, not on birthright or law observance.
3. Now in verses 14-18 God is God, He alone is sovereign in the universe and His mercy and the action of that mercy will be given as He wills.
4. We must not take this too far, the only plank in the argument Paul wants to nail down at this point is that God is God and we aren't.
5. Man deserves nothing and does not earn something based upon his own will or based upon his running (performance).
6. To draw out from this any reference to salvation or sanctification ignores the remainder of the chapter.
7. To show that this does not have any reference to salvation or sanctification, Paul's next witness of testimony is an unbeliever, the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

Romans 9:17

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.

This is a quote from Exodus 9:16

Exodus 9:16, But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.

Could God have removed Pharaoh? Of course, He is God. But He did not and He did not because of His sovereign choice. His sovereign choice to not remove Pharaoh (probably Tutmosis III) so that God's power (another attribute of God) could be shown both to Pharaoh and in Pharaoh.

Other nations did hear of Israel's escape from bondage in Egypt and were awed by it.

Exodus 15:14, The peoples have heard, they tremble; Anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia. Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed; The leaders of Moab, trembling grips them; All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. Terror and dread fall upon them; By the greatness of Thine arm they are motionless as stone; Until Thy people pass over, O Lord, Until the people pass over whom Thou hast purchased.

So God's purpose with His people was demonstrated by His sovereign choice to not only let Pharaoh live but to elevate him to the position of power he had over Egypt and over the Hebrews.

Romans 9:18

So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

So the bottom line in these verses is that it is God's choice to show mercy and God's choice (desire or will) to harden those who He chooses.

QUESTION: Is His sovereign choice an indiscriminate choice? Or is there a basis upon which He makes this choice? Especially when it comes to hardening the heart of man.

Romans 9:19-24 The potter and the clay illustration:

Romans 9:19

You will say to me then, Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?

This a question that is even often asked today. If God is sovereign, if He is God, if He made me, why does He find fault with what I do? This is an over emphasis on sovereignty alone.

The fatalist would have to answer this question by coming to the conclusion that God cannot find fault with us, because He made us. But this ignores the fact, demonstrated from the Garden and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, that He has also given mankind free will. Even to the extent of resisting His will.

This is demonstrated with the potter and the clay illustration.

Romans 9:20

On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, Why did you make me like this, will it?

Paul uses a very common OT statement to make a point regarding the sovereignty of God. God is God, and He alone is sovereign. Just as the pot cannot complain to the potter, neither does mankind have any right to complain to God.

In Isaiah 29:15-16 this same illustration is used to emphasize the omniscience of God. God who is not man is not equal man in understanding but superior to man, knowing all that is knowable.

In Isaiah 45:9-10 the potter and clay illustration is used to show the uselessness of arguing with God who has made you. Compared to a child complaining to a father or mother regarding his or her birth.

In Isaiah 64:8 it is said by the believer who puts himself into the hands of God and humbles him or herself before God.

SO THESE ADD UP TO THE fact that God is God and as God we are left with no room for complaining about His works.

Romans 9:21

Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?

Notice the OR: used to show a change in the illustration, still the same figures, potter and pots, God and man. But now with a different application.

One potter, one lump of clay, two types of vessels, one for honorable use the other for common use.

So one potter can make two pots, knowing one will be used for honor (the believer) and one for dishonor (the unbeliever). But they come out of the same lump of clay.

PRINCIPLE: This argues against predestination for salvation because the lump of clay is the same. The difference comes when the vessels are finished. Not in the making.

These are not vessels of the temple because they were brass. These are household vessels or pots. They could look exactly alike, but in the use of them they may have honorable use or common use...cup collection. Some are just not for drinking out of, they have a place of honor in my study reminding me of trips taken and friends I have been with. Others I use every day.

Romans 9:22

What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

God is sovereign and He could will to demonstrate wrath and to make known His power.

This part of the verse looks back to God's sovereignty. No one can argue that God does not have a right to do this if He so chooses to do this.

BUT WHAT IF HE DOES NOT. What if instead He chooses to bear with much long suffering the vessels (the unbeliever or the Believer who is destructively OOF and in reversionism) who have been fitted for destruction.

That would be grace. And as with Pharaoh, God can demonstrate His power even through evil vessels.

SO HERE IS THE POINT, IF THE POT GOES BAD, WE cannot blame God and if God destroys then and there, it is His right. If He bears with endurance, that too is His right.

REVIEW

Romans chapter nine is a very logically developed argument that Paul uses to illustrate the previous four chapters. The issue of Romans 5 through 8 is that what we have is by grace and what we can access is to be accessed by faith.

Romans 5:21, As sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

How can grace reign in our lives? How can we walk in the newness of life, how can we walk in the Spirit? By faith alone...

But even faith must not be seen as that which is a work of our will that demands that God must act or bless in a certain way.

And what better way to show this than by examining Israel. And in using Israel as an illustration, Paul also shows us his heart, his desire to see his fellow countrymen saved. And by the end of these three chapters, Romans 9 to 11, he also shows that God is not finished with Israel. That His OT nation has a future in His perfect plan.

Romans 9: The Outline and the Argument

v 4-5 The advantages Israel has as God's OT people

v 6 But advantage does not mean reality

v 6 All Israel is not Israel

v 6-12 True Israel is not established by physical desendency nor by adherence to the Law.

The issue is the Promise of God not the progeny of man or the proficiency of behavior.

NOW IN OUR THINKING this would be a perfect time for Paul to mention FAITH, but he does not. Not until the end of the chapter and then in Romans 10 we have the greatest chapter in the Bible on faith.

Paul holds faith back at this point because he wants to nail down a few more principles. To mention faith at this point could result in man thinking faith is a work that we can do that demands that God perform in a certain manner. And that would be tragic and is tragic on the part of many believers today.

So in Rom. 9: 15-18 Paul drives home the issue of God's sovereignty.

v 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.

v 16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

It is not our will or our works that cause God to be and act towards us with mercy, but His sovereign will.

A mistake would be made to end at this point. Paul is not talking about salvation or sanctification but only establishing God's sovereignty at this point.

He uses Pharaoh as an illustration, God allowed Pharaoh not only to live but to gain power so that God's greater power would be known throughout the world.

Then in vv 19-24 Paul considers if this sovereign action of God in mercy is indiscriminate. Is there anything on our part that God considers in His decision to show mercy to man.

The answer is given in the illustration of the potter and the clay which is really two illustrations using the same figures.

First: v 20 The pot cannot say to the potter, why did you make me like this. This part of the illustration goes back to firmly establish God's sovereignty.

Second: v 21-22 Two pots from one lump, one for honorable use another for dishonorable use.

v 22 God even endures with patience the pots who go bad in the making or in the oven. More on that in a moment.

At vv 24-29 we will see that God in His sovereignty will always preserve a remnant. That was understood by the Jews but it certainly was not understood that this remnant could be Gentiles!

Then in vv 30-33 Paul gets to the conclusion. It is by faith and by faith alone that the righteousness of God must be pursued by man...no other system works because any other system puts the emphasis back on man.

NOW LET'S GO BACK TO THE illustration of the potter and the clay:

v 22-23 God's right to not only make different pots but to endure with much patience the pots that go bad even then showing mankind His power.

What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.

Jeremiah 18:1-10

v 1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying,

v 2 Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I shall announce My words to you.

v 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel.

v 4 But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make.

v 5 Then the word of the Lord came to me saying,

v 6 Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does? declares the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.

v 7 At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it;

v 8 if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it.

v 9 Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it;

v 10 if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.

The principles are very simple:

1. God is the potter, people, nations, all creation is in His hands.

2. If the pot goes bad the potter has the right to destroy it, or remake it into another vessel.

While this is not prophecy regarding the church it certainly allows for God to establish another people as His people.

3. The potter intention is not to make a bad pot, but it happens, sometimes the clay seems to have a mind of its own and will not be formed correctly.

4. This is not the fault of the potter but the fault of the clay.

5. If God has promised blessing to Israel and yet they do evil in God's sight, He can discipline them just as the potter can destroy the pot that goes bad.

6. If God has promised discipline to a nation and they repent, He can relent the discipline and bless them.

7. Their actions however cannot be blamed on the potter nor can the actions of man be blamed on God.

Romans 9:23

And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.

Notice the vessels are vessels of or belonging to mercy. They do not earn nor deserve the riches of His glory. These vessels are "prepared beforehand" for glory.

PREPARED BEFOREHAND is one word in the GNT which is found only here and in Ephesians 2:10

In Ephesians 2:10 it referees to the good works that God prepared in eternity past in which believers are to walk. Here it refers to believers themselves. Zodhiates says of this word that it is equivalent to predestination.

God, knowing you would believe in His Son, prepared in eternity past a plan for you and you, with the various divine operating assets of the believer, the power to walk in that plan.

This was done FOR GLORY, with a view towards glory; looking ahead to glory.

This statement then reflects back to Romans 8:29 and 30 and follows the same pattern: For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

verses 24-29 Another plank in the argument:

Even us...Paul is now going to use the Church as an illustration of how God took the vessels that the Jews saw as common and without honor, those horrid Gentiles, and made them into the remnant.

Romans 9:24

Even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

Paul numbers himself with those who are called by God whether they are Jews or Gentiles. The church brings together people from all nations into one body, the body of Christ, His church.

Galatians 3:28-29, There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

God called us because in His foreknowledge He knew we would believe in His Son and because of this foreknowledge He prepared a plan for each one who would believe, and that is predestination (for the believer only).

Romans 9:25,26

As He says also in Hosea (Hosea 2:23 and 1:10), I will call those who were not My people, My people, And her who was not beloved, beloved. And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, you are not My people, There they shall be called sons of the living God.

What God has done in calling the Gentiles to salvation is nothing that should surprise these Jews, but it did.

Throughout the history of Israel, God's nation was to be a blessing to all the nations, to the Gentiles. However they fell into national and racial arrogance and dismissed the Gentiles as not being worth salvation. But God consistently told them that He would bless the Gentiles even if they refused to.

Romans 9:27

And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved.

Paul goes to Isaiah 10:22 to further establish the principle. Isaiah states that only a remnant of Israel will be saved.

Romans 9:28

For a complete destruction, one that is decreed, the Lord God of hosts will execute in the midst of the whole land.

Here Paul looks ahead to the Second Advent and the destruction, the massive destruction that is predicted by God and yet even in that there is a remnant preserved. But Paul is also planting an idea that he will develop in Romans 11, that there is a future for Israel.

Romans 9:29

And just as Isaiah foretold, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah.

And just so no one thinks that this is done by the effort, the ability, the merits of man, he quotes Isaiah 1:9.

The LORD OF SABAOTH is the Greek equivalent of THE LORD OF HOST, the Lord of the Armies, Jesus' preincarnate military title.

And it is He who preserves a remnant, a posterity, in the midst of calamity. If He did not do this Israel and Judah would be like Sodom and Gomorrah, removed off the face of the earth.

Romans 9:30 through 33 Paul is ready now to form a conclusion:

PRINCIPLE: The issue as we have seen in Romans 2-4 with salvation and Romans 4-8 with sanctification is FAITH.

Romans 9:30-33

What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;

But Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.

Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

Just as it is written (Isaiah 28:16), Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.