

Romans 9-11 Introduction

It is difficult to define exactly what Paul was trying to accomplish in writing Romans 9-11. If you don't believe me, these are what some of the great scholars said about chapters 9-11.

Robert Haldane said it is about God's sovereign election in relation to Jews and Gentiles
Charles Hodge said it is about the inclusion of the Gentiles and the exclusion of the Jews
Many contemporary scholars say it is about the place of the Jews in the fulfillment of prophecy

Krister Stendahl said it is about Jewish-Gentile solidarity in the family of God
Several others said it is about whether justification by faith is compatible with the promises of God

Tom Wright said it is about the Christian mission to the Gentiles which also includes Jews.

John Murray, James Denney and Martyn Lloyd Jones said it was about the vindication of God in relating His purpose and promises to the present Jewish unbelief.

As you read chapters 9-11 I challenge you to define its purpose. I agree most with Martyn Lloyd Jones. I think he best captures the essence of why it was written. I will borrow heavily from his material as I cover these chapters. But most of the others are correct about the **themes** that run through this passage. The hard question to answer is, what is the primary purpose of these chapters.

When we read the book of Romans we have to always keep in mind that at least some of the audience were Jewish. I think when we reach the end of Romans you will be saying, "well, we **ought** to know the book. Every time Jon moved ahead he **reviewed the whole book.**" That might even be a valid criticism. But I don't know how to understand the book without continually getting the context. And the context is what brings out **the one point** that the text was written to make.

This morning lets start by looking at the **Jewish** theme from the beginning of Romans. In Chapter 1 verses 16-18 Paul lays out the Gospel. Then in the next chapter and a half he talks about how this is worked out in respect to the Jew and the Gentile. In Chapter 3 Paul brings up an objection and then meets it head on. What advantage does the Jew have? Paul then deals with that issue. And by the time he is done he has shown that the Jews never did very good at keeping the law. Paul then proves in chapter 4 that Abraham was saved by faith. He knows if he can prove this is true for Abraham he has put his Jewish audience **on his side.**

Later in chapter 7 Paul takes on the law. And he teaches what it was for and what it was not for. Then in Chapter 8 Paul comes back to the main topic of the summary of the salvation of the individual.

That brings us to our text today. Chapter 9 can be best understood if we recall what the end of chapter 8 told us. Remember what we learned about God's purpose? We learned that it is the fact that **God** will carry out **His purpose** in salvation that grants us **our** absolute certainty. It is God's purpose to **conform His children to the image of His Son** and it is God's purpose to **have those children share with Him in Christ's glorification**. And it is the fact that those things are **God's** purpose. And it is **His** purpose that assures us that He will finish what He starts. Because God can and will finish what He starts. Paul puts that in the most glowing terms.

Now if you were a Jew, and you were sitting in that audience, what would be the terrible question you would have? You might even be afraid to ask it. You are a Jew. You are one of God's chosen people. These people have received the promises of God. And yet look at them now. They are persecuting the Christians. They are obviously excluded, in large part, from the kingdom of God revealed by Christ. In light of the glorious things that Paul has said, how can they even raise their hands to ask the question? Well the good thing about Paul is that he has done this long enough he knows what you are going to ask. And he sets about to answer that question. What about the Jews and the Old Testament? How should we understand God's purpose throughout time?

Chapters 9-11 are primarily about God's purpose. If you want to best understand chapters 9-11 you've got to realize that Paul is harmonizing the Old Testament with the New Testament. He is justifying the ways of God to man. Paul here reconciles what he has said **up to chapter 9** with the whole Old Testament. He will again take on what was **commonly believed** and show the error in it. He will show that God has always been doing the same thing. And He has not, in any way, violated His eternal plan or purpose. Now, along with this major theme are sub themes that weave through these three chapters.

One theme is the tragedy of the Jews rejecting their Messiah.

Another is God's freedom in His absolute sovereignty.

A third is the defense of salvation to any gentile or Jew, by faith, as proven by the Old Testament.

The fourth is the danger of misapplying the wonderful doctrine of election.

The fifth is the case of the Jews in the purpose of God.

And the sixth is God's purpose in Christ, and salvation, with respect to the whole universe.

Paul was answering questions that he knew his listeners would have. Here are a few questions he was answering.

- 1- If the gospel of Christ offers salvation to all Gentiles, then hasn't God forsaken the people of Israel. The Jews would have seen the doctrine of justification by faith as a new thing and would have concluded that Paul was saying that the old way of salvation was done away with.
- 2- If salvation was offered first to the Jews, why did Israel reject the Savior?
- 3- If individual Jews must be saved by personal faith, how does God now regard the nation of Israel?
- 4- If God did not keep His promises to the nation of Israel, how do we know He will keep them to individual gentiles?

I am going to borrow John Stott's headings here for the next three chapters.

Chapter 9 Israel's Fall- God's purpose in predestination and election

Chapter 10 Israel's Fault- God's dismay over her disobedience and the understanding of justification by faith alone

Chapter 11 Israel's Future- The temporary rejection of the Jews along with God's long term design.

We will see in each of these chapters Paul starts with personal identification with the people of Israel. His heart goes out to them.

Then he lays out his theology. And he ends each chapter with an Old Testament verse that solidifies what he taught. While Paul did not write Romans in chapter and verse, the guy who divided it into chapters got it right in 9-11. It is almost as if Paul wrote them to be understood as chapters with natural dividing lines.

Chapters 9-11 Chapter Outlines (borrowed from Martyn Lloyd Jones)

Chapter 9

1-3 Introduction to the topic from Paul's perspective of concern

4-5 The particular position and case of the Jews

6 Key Verse- Not all Israelites are true Israel

7-13 Explanation of the true meaning of the term Israel. God's word has had the effect that God wanted it to have.

14-24 To object to the purpose God had and carried out is unfair. God can call whoever He wants.

25-29 Everything Paul says has been foretold by the prophets

30-33 Summary of the position so far that the Gentiles were coming in and the Jews were staying out.

Chapter 10 This chapter is a minor digression in which Paul elaborates on what he said in 9:30-33

1-3 Introduction again to the tragic case of the Jews.

4-11 An outline of the true way of salvation. The Jews had a wrong view of salvation. He shows how the Jews tried to establish their own righteousness and did not understand justification by faith.

12-17 Salvation is the result of justification by faith. All that will be saved will be saved in this way, since God is the God of all, Jew and Gentile. So salvation is as open to the Gentile as it is to the Jew.

18-21 Paul shows how this has been foretold in the Old Testament

Chapter 11

Vs 1 Paul again identifies as a fellow Israelite. And he makes it known that God has not cast away His people.

2-6 Paul gives the doctrinal key to understand this whole situation. There is a difference between one person and another and the difference is bigger than Jew and Gentile. The difference is between true Israel and not true Israel. He introduces the doctrine of the remnant.

7 Key verse- Israel is divided into 2 groups- the elect in Israel and the rest, who were blinded.

8-24 Paul works out the difference between the elect and the rest, with his focus being primarily with the rest. In this he warns the Gentiles that if this could happen to the Jews it could happen to the Gentiles as well.

25-32 Paul sums up the current situation in his day. He gives an outline of God's carrying out of His original and grand purpose which involves both Gentiles and Jews. He shows that it will end exactly as God intended from the beginning

33-36 Paul breaks out in worship of the God who is doing all this.

I hope that this outline will help you as you study this passage. I am not guarantying that I will stick to it. When studying scripture we must always be ready and willing to **go** where **it takes us**. We cannot direct **it** where we think it ought to go.

For the rest of this morning I would like to make an application from Chapters 9-11. Now remember that Paul has just finished laying out the doctrine of salvation. He has laid out the gospel message from chapters 1-8.

Remember how we learned in the early chapters that every person born is born in the state of sin. We learned that the **state of sin** that we are born in damns us, and every sin we commit after that is just proof of the state we are in. We say things that God hates. We do things that God hates. And we think things that God hates. And we do all this because down at the core of who we are we don't want our Creator telling us what to do. In fact when we are told that God has commands, we find a resentment welling up inside of us against that God. That is the state that we were born in. And we, as young children, displayed that well whenever our parents told us what to do.

We learned early in Romans that the problem with us is sin. And that sin has a penalty that we completely deserve. That sin demands **punishment** by the justice of God. It **must be** tried in His court and condemned. So that puts us in the worst of all spots. We stand condemned in a court of absolute justice. There is nothing we can do to escape it. But then God sent Christ. Christ lived a perfect sinless life. This qualified Christ to take our sin upon Himself and to take the full brunt of God's wrath, the wrath that **we fully deserved**, upon **Himself**.

Now the message is held out to everyone, that you can have what Christ did **count for you**. Either **you** will die for your sins and be punished eternally, or you can receive what **Christ did for you** and be free from the penalty and the power of sin. You can repent of your sin and turn to Christ, or you can continue to resist God's provision for you and take your chances. Romans puts that on our laps. If you are here this morning and have never claimed what Christ did for you by faith, you would do well to consider it the most important decision in your life and settle this as your highest priority. Every person dies. Wise people prepare for that event.

Now, Paul has made the point in chapter 8 that our security is based on God's decision, not our decision. It is based on **God's purpose**, not **our intention**. It is based on God's **love for us**, not our **love for God**. Every person who is a child of God is Foreknown and Predestined to become a child of God. So we have seen and explored this fact. I hope

that you have been encouraged by the security you have in Christ. I hope you could cry out with Paul in the final verses of Chapter 8. We have seen the sovereignty of God at work for our good. And we have been assured that it is the sovereignty of God that determines who will come to Christ.

Now, like Francis Schaeffer said, "How shall we then live?" How does someone who lives with that belief behave?

Let's look at verses 1-5 of Chapter 9.

Romans 9:1-5 (NKJV)

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

2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,

4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises;

5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

How did Paul apply the sovereignty of God here? Look what he says. Take it in. Here is the **logical application of the doctrine of election** by the Biblical expert in the topic. Here is the man whose lead we should follow. If anyone knows the implications of Sovereign election, Paul does. And this is how he applies it.

Paul has great sorrow and continual grief in his heart about his fellow countrymen. Paul allows their lost status to affect him every day of his life. Paul is concerned about them as people. It bothers him deeply that they are headed to hell.

Why? Doesn't Paul know that God has chosen some and there is nothing he can do about it? Doesn't he understand that God is Sovereign? Doesn't Paul know about predestination and foreknowledge? Yes of course he knows. He is the one who taught it to us. Then why is he so bent out of shape?

Because Paul shares the heart and mind of Christ. It is one thing to have good doctrine. It is another to be like minded with Christ. Christianity is, for sure, based upon good doctrine. But it involves more than good doctrine. It involves new life. It involves seeing the world the way Christ saw the world. It involves loving our neighbors the way we love ourselves. It involves compassion and long suffering.

Philippians 2:4-8 (NKJV)

4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

**6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,
7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.**

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

We see here that the mind of Christ, the mind that we should have, is one that reaches out to meet the need of those around us at our own expense. It causes us to leave our comfort for the needs of those suffering. It causes us to take risks for their salvation. To have the mind of Christ is more than having the factual doctrine of Christ, as important as that might be. We must also have the intention of Christ. We must have the **willingness to sacrifice** for the needs of others that Christ had.

Next we see the picture of Christ coming into Jerusalem. He knows He will eventually be crucified there. He knows the hearts of these people. But this is what happens.

Luke 19:41-44 (NKJV)

41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,

42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."

See- Christ knew the theology. He knew these people could not see the spiritual truth if God did not open their eyes. But He still felt compassion. He knew what they would suffer. And they must suffer. But it was still profoundly sad.

43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side,

44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Jesus wept over a city that had rejected Him. Christ knew all the good doctrine. He knew about foreknowledge and predestination. But he was still gripped by the sadness of the suffering that this city would experience.

We can never separate the doctrine of Christ from the life of Christ. We can never think to apply these doctrines in ways that are contrary to the way that Christ lived. If we ever apply the doctrines in such a way that we no longer care that the people around us are headed for hell, we have missed the point of our salvation. Paul never applied his doctrines that way. Paul never said, "Well, if God is sovereign it doesn't matter what I do." These doctrines never drove Paul to complacency or to inactivity. Paul understood and believed these doctrines more than we are likely to ever believe or understand these doctrines. But what effect did they have on him? They drove him to greater and greater service. They drove him to deeper and deeper compassion.

When other people were sleeping, he was working. When other people were safe, his life was in danger. When other people had plenty, he suffered lack. And he did it because he shared the heart and mind of Christ.

You and I tend to share good doctrine. And that is a something, not a nothing. But it is not an everything. We must have more than good doctrine. We must have a new life that drives us to share our Master's heart. We must have a concern for the welfare of those who are in Christ. Christ called us to do discipleship. We must have a concern for those who outside of Christ. Christ called us to do evangelism.

Paul understood that. His heart ached for the need around him. Paul didn't apply his doctrine in a way that made his life easier. He applied it in a way that made his life harder. When your life is absorbed with the needs of those around you it will always be more difficult.

When he looked at his fellow Jews he didn't say, well God has blinded their eyes and that is why they are the way they are, so there is no sense in doing anything about it. No. Paul felt for their lostness and he preached the gospel to them every chance he got. He felt like he would be willing to give up his salvation in order to gain salvation for them. Now that is an example to follow. That is the zeal that drove him to reach so many for Christ.

Do we ever wonder why our lives are not used dramatically for God? Well, really, how much do we care? How much does it bother us that people around us are headed for hell? How much does it bother us when we see believers who are growing cold spiritually? The truth is when we care like Paul cared we will be used like Paul was used. Because our lives will be absorbed in spiritual activity. We won't be deciding to give up useless stuff. We will give it up because we simply don't have time for it because our lives are filled up with the things that matter.

I'd like to read something that continually troubles me. Look at the message from God that was given to the church of Ephesus.

Revelation 2:1-7 (NKJV)

1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

2 I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.

6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." '

Look at this church of Ephesus. They were the good doctrine church. They not only had good doctrine, they protected themselves doctrinally. They wouldn't put up with the nonsense that was continually coming at them. And all that was good. There are some that would say that to be so concerned about their doctrine was a sign they weren't following the Holy Spirit. But that is not what God said. Their good doctrine and their doctrinal purity was clearly seen as a very good thing. But they were still missing something.

What were they missing?

They left their first love. They used to love Christ. Christ used to be the center for everything they did. Pleasing Christ was their goal in life. It defined them. Christ's interests were their interests. But they had gradually lost their love for Christ. Other stuff had allowed equal status. Maybe it was their love for comfort. Maybe it was earthly success. Maybe it was their fears. Maybe it was their families. Maybe it was earthly amusement. We don't know. But we know that they fell from their first status. So what was the remedy?

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.

The first thing they are told to do is remember. They were to remember their lives when their love for Christ was hot, when it fueled all they did.

How about us?

I am afraid this is talking about us. We know good doctrine. We are solid and we spot bad doctrine and kick it out. We have some substance. But do we love Christ like we used to. Do we remember those days when serving Christ was everything? When everything took a back seat to doing those things we knew were close to Christ's heart? If so the first step is to remember that. We should compare how our lives are now to how they were then. Let that sink in.

Then we should repent. We should turn around in our tracks. We should do a 180 and start doing those things that we used to do. It doesn't matter who you are and what your situation is. You can do this today. You can love Christ with a greater fervor and

begin doing the acts that are inspired by that love. But we must start by saying that we have drifted. We must start by repenting and saying, "Yes, this is true of me. My love for Christ used to absorb more of my life. But I have become distracted." If we will start there we can get back to the love for Christ that we had.

This is the kind of love that Paul had when he said what he said in chapter 9 verse 1-3. We must never allow our doctrine to move us away from Christ's heart. Doctrine should only fuel greater love. That is what it did in Paul. That is what it should do in us.