

A Study of the Epistles of Paul

NT Survey Lesson 118--Romans 9

Introduction: Paul's teaching that salvation by grace was the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham presents a special difficulty to the Jewish reader. The Jews had for the most part rejected the gospel; yet it was Abraham's seed to whom God had promised the inheritance. Has the word or promise of God failed? If not, why are not all Jews enjoying the blessings God promised?

Lesson aim: To show that God has the right to choose who will receive his blessings and that those who reject his way exclude themselves. It is those who are of faith, not merely physical descendants, that are the true heirs of the Abrahamic promise.

Paul expresses his sorrow at the Jews' lost condition--Rom. 9:1-5

1. What feelings does Paul express in the first two verses? For who does he have these great feelings? (v. 3) What does he wish could be true for the sake of his Jewish brethren?
2. What are some of the things Paul said the Jews possessed? (v. 4) Who did Paul say came from the Jewish people? (v. 5) Thought question: Why do you think Paul mentions these special privileges and opportunities?

God has the right to choose who are the heirs of his blessings--Rom. 9:6-29

1. Did the fact that the Jew had rejected Jesus as Christ mean that the word of God (i.e. the Abrahamic promise) had failed (v. 6)?
2. Not all were Israelites who were descended from whom? (v. 6) In a similar way, not all who were descended from Abraham were what? (v. 7) What statement from God had indicated this?

3. Are the true children of Abraham children of the flesh or children of promise? (v. 8) What OT statement indicates this? (v. 9)
4. How else did God demonstrate his right to choose who his people would be? (v. 10) Did he choose to accomplish his purpose through Jacob or Esau? (v. 11) Was this choice based on anything these children had done or would do?
5. Do you think that reminding the Jews of how God had exercised his right of choice in the past with Isaac and Jacob would help them see he also had the right to choose who the children of Abraham are?
6. Was God unjust to make these choices of who he would use to accomplish his purpose? (v. 14-15) Is this because God's choice does not depend upon what man does? (v. 16)
7. Does God have the right to choose who is the object of his mercy or compassion? (v. 18-18) Does He have the right to harden who He wills to harden?
8. Are we to infer from what Paul says here that man does not have free will and that one's salvation is based solely on whether or not God picks him for salvation? Are we to infer that the right to choose upon what conditions men may be His people is solely God's?
9. How might a rebellious heart respond to the statement that God has a right to choose who will be his people, hardening some and showing mercy to others? (v. 19) How does Paul answer those who might contend that God is not fair to do this? (v. 20-21)
10. Does God in fact endure some individuals who have been prepared for destruction? (v. 22) He does so in order that He may do what? (v. 23) Who is included in that group of saved people? (v. 24)
11. Did the prophets predict that Gentiles would be among the "children of Abraham"? (v. 25-26) Did the prophets predict that though there were many Jews, only a few would be saved? (v. 27-30)

The Jews have excluded themselves from the blessing by pursuing righteousness by works rather than by faith--Rom. 9:30-33

1. Why did the Gentiles attain what the Jews did not? (v. 30) Why did the Jews not attain the blessings promised to Abraham? (v. 31) Christ became to them a what? (v. 32-33)