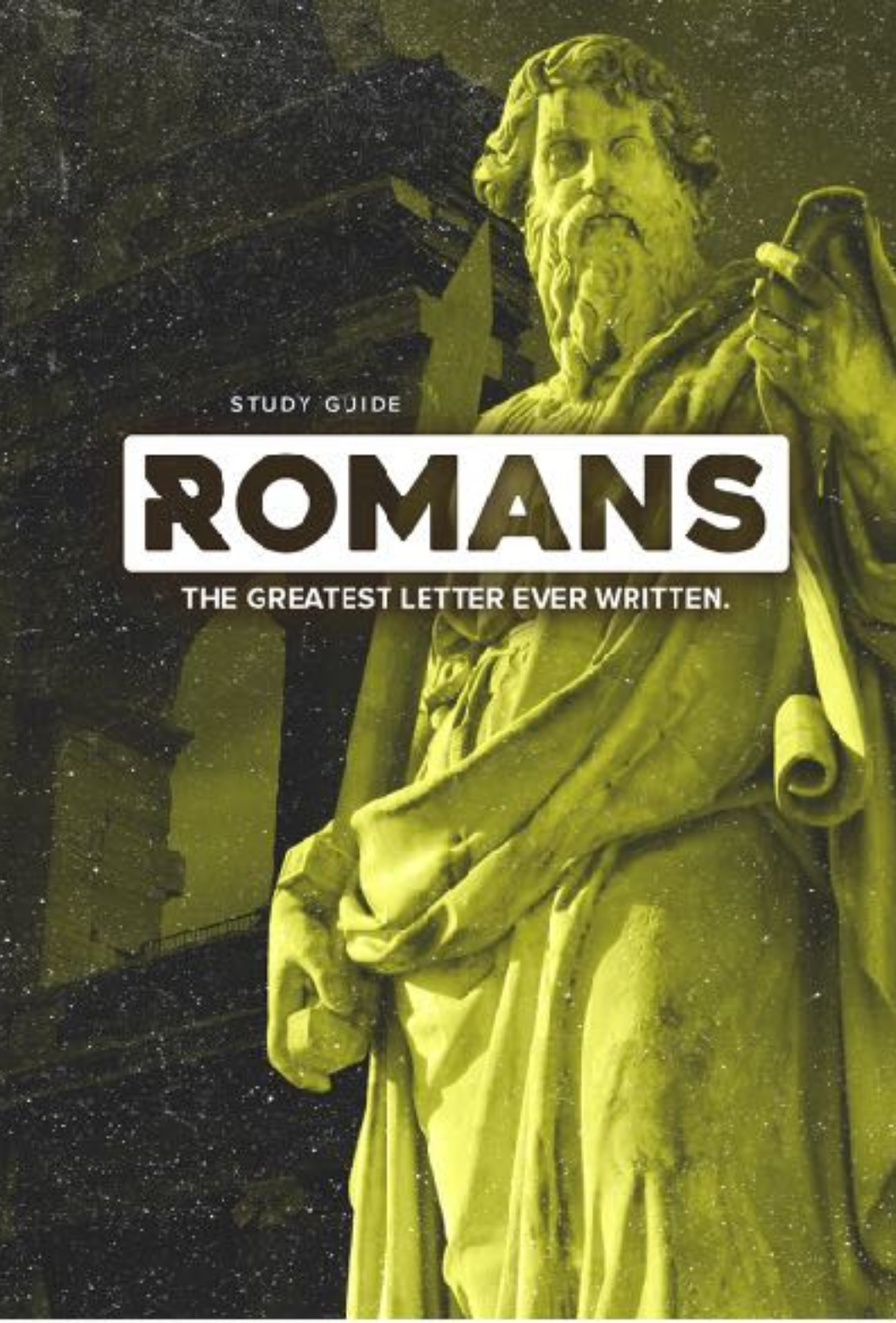
STUDY GUIDE

# ROMANS

THE GREATEST LETTER EVER WRITTEN.



PART 3 - HOW DEEP IS THE GOSPEL? - ROMANS 8:1–11:36

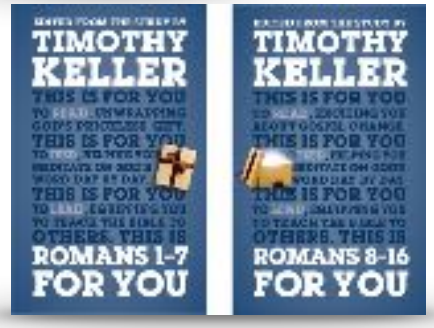
## STUDY GUIDES AVAILABLE FROM EKKLESIA MUSKOGEE

## RECOMMENDED HELP FOR STUDYING
## *ROMANS: THE GREATEST LETTER EVER WRITTEN*

From technical to very accessible

**Technical**

*The Epistle to the Romans*
by Douglas Moo

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*Romans For You*
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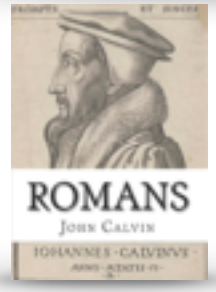


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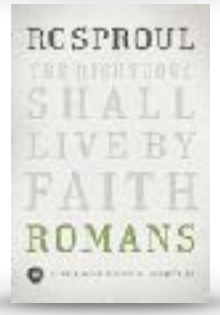
*Commentary on Romans*
by John Calvin




**Accessible**

*Saints Andrews Expositional Commentary: Romans*
by R.C. Sproul

## CONTENT

The study questions were written, and the excerpts were compiled, by Brett Baggett. This Study Guide was edited by Brandon Allen and James Hoover. The excerpts contained are from sermons, books, and articles by various pastors, authors, and theologians, both current and from church history.

## HOW TO USE IT

This Study Guide is designed to help you work through *Romans 8:1–11:36* in 12 weeks (one week of introduction and 11 weeks of Bible study). I pray this will be a great tool for personal study, small groups, and leadership training of various kinds.

## PURPOSE

My hope for this study guide is to equip the people of Jesus Christ to understand, love, and obey the written Word of God. I believe when that happens they will more joyfully understand, love, and obey the Incarnate Word of God—Jesus Christ the Righteous.

For God's glory and the joy of all people,

# ROMANS

*the greatest letter ever written*

STUDY GUIDE PART 3

HOW DEEP IS THE GOSPEL? ROMANS 8:1–11:36

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Study 0

# INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

## THE GREATEST LETTER EVER WRITTEN
BY BRETT BAGGETT

Martin Luther said the book of Romans is “the greatest letter ever written." Why would he say that? I believe it is because the Apostle Paul writes to the 1st century church at Rome, as well as to us today, about the depths of God’s holiness, man’s sinfulness, Jesus’ sufficient work to save, and God’s salvation given to sinners, free of charge. The book of Romans is the high point of all of Scripture, teaching most clearly who God is in sovereignty, what God requires in his holiness, and what God provides in his grace toward His people. This letter answers with great detail questions like *why do we need the gospel*? *what is the gospel*? *how deep is the gospel*? and then beautifully finishes with *how then should we live*? Come and study the greatest letter ever written.

## WHO WROTE IT? BY THE ESV STUDY BIBLE

As the opening words of the letter indicate, the apostle Paul wrote the book of Romans. Only a few scholars in history have doubted his authorship, and their doubts have been shown to be groundless. The title of the book indicates that the letter was written to the Christian churches in Rome.[1]

## WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN? BY THE ESV STUDY BIBLE

Paul probably wrote Romans from Corinth, on his third missionary journey, in A.D. 57 (Acts 20:2–3). Having completed his work in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, he hoped to travel to Rome and then on to Spain; but first he needed to go to Jerusalem to deliver the money he had collected for the church there (Rom. 15:19–32; see Acts 19:21). Paul commends Phoebe (Rom. 16:1–2), and she was likely the person who brought the letter to Rome. She resided in Cenchreae, which was near Corinth and was one of its port cities. Furthermore, Gaius was Paul’s host (16:23), and this is likely the same Gaius who lived in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14). Finally, two fairly early manuscripts of Romans have subscriptions (brief notes that a copyist added to the end of a document) which say that the letter was written from Corinth.[2]

1. What stood out to you in these sections and why?

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## WHAT WAS THE ANCIENT CITY OF ROME LIKE?

**BY THE ESV STUDY BIBLE**

The city of Rome was founded upon seven hills on the eastern shore of the Tiber River. Rome grew from a small city to an empire through its conquests of Italy (3rd century B.C.), Carthage in north Africa (3rd century B.C.), Greece and Macedonia (2nd century B.C.), western and northern Europe (2nd century B.C.–2nd century A.D.), and Egypt and much of the Near East (1st century B.C.). By Paul's day, the senatorial rule of the Roman republic had succumbed to a centralized empire under the leadership of Augustus (27 B.C.–A.D. 14), Tiberius (A.D. 14–37), Gaius (37–41), Claudius (41–54), and Nero (54–68).

Archaeological evidence in Rome confirms monumental structures that stood during the time of Paul, such as the Circus Maximus, Tabularium (state archives), theaters (including those of Pompey and of Marcellus), and multiple forums. Later, in the third century A.D., the Umbilicus Romae stood in the center of the city, and this cylindrical monument marked the theoretical "center" of the Roman world (likely this way of thinking about Rome's place in the world stemmed from well before the NT period). The prestige of the early emperors was memorialized during Paul's day in their basilicas, arches, and forums (e.g., the Forums of Caesar and of Augustus), in the Altar of Peace, in the Mausoleum of Augustus, in porticoes and images honoring their extended imperial family, and in imperial cult temples (such as the temple of Julius Caesar from 29 B.C. and the temple of Claudius). Innumerable pagan gods received worship in Rome. Especially impressive temples were dedicated to such ancient gods/goddesses as Mars, Saturn, Castor and Pollux, Vesta, Venus and Roma, Apollo, and Jupiter. Indeed, devotion to all the great Roman gods was offered in the monumental domed Pantheon, which stands in Rome to this day. (An earlier Pantheon—depicted in the illustration—was built in 27 B.C. and destroyed by fire in A.D. 80. The present-day structure was built c. A.D. 120.)

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A significant portion of the city was destroyed by fire during Nero's rule in A.D. 64. Nero, who was suspected of having started the blaze, blamed and persecuted Christians for the conflagration. The fire allowed Nero to design and construct his own monumental buildings, including his 200-acre imperial dwelling, the Domus Aurea ("Golden House").

Among the structures that are contemporary with the last books in the NT canon, one should especially note the Arch of Titus and the Colosseum. The Arch of Titus, built in A.D. 81 by the emperor Domitian (reigned 81–96), commemorates the capture and destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in A.D. 70. The two generals who reconquered Palestine received such fame from this war that they both attained imperial rule, which went first to Vespasian (A.D. 69–79) and then to his son Titus (79–81). The Arch of Titus still manifests a relief portraying the captured temple menorah and other Jewish sacred objects being carried through Rome in processional tribute to Titus. Vespasian and Titus built the Flavian Amphitheater, better known as the Colosseum due to its proximity to a gigantic statue (Gk. kolossos) of Nero. The Colosseum is estimated to have seated more than 45,000 for gladiatorial spectacles.

Daily life in Rome could be luxurious for the wealthy but onerous for others. Multiple aqueducts and a huge sewer system provided for the immense water requirements of Rome, including the many bathhouses, fountains, and latrines. Food had to be imported to satisfy the needs of this thriving metropolis, and the emperor often directly oversaw the vital grain supply. Luxury villas in Rome were the privileged possessions of the wealthiest

families (often of senatorial or equestrian rank) and especially of the emperors, but most of the housing in ancient Rome consisted of insulae (multistory apartment buildings often constructed above first-floor shops). Contemporary authors spoke of a severely overcrowded, loud, and smelly city—a place that provided every virtue and vice known to mankind. The residents of Rome were mostly pagan, although a sizable Jewish population also existed (as evidenced both by 1st-century literature and by later remains of inscriptions). The expulsion of the Jews under the emperor Claudius (A.D. 49) was a limited measure.

Today, churches in Rome built during the fourth- to fifth-century Byzantine period mark the traditional burial places of Paul and of Peter, reflecting the post-NT church tradition which claims that Paul and Peter died as martyrs in Rome during the reign of Nero (c. A.D. 64–65, perhaps after an incarceration in the Mamertine Prison). The Roman catacombs house early Christian burials (from the 2nd century A.D. and after), and these catacombs contain some inscriptions and graffiti testifying to Christian martyrdom prior to the legitimization of Christianity by Licinius and Constantine (by the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313).[3]

2. What stood out to you in this section and why?

## WHY DID PAUL WRITE THIS LETTER? BY THE ESV STUDY BIBLE

Romans provides the fullest expression of Paul's theology, though it is doubtful that he intended it to be a complete summary statement. For example, Romans lacks any detailed treatments of Paul's doctrine of Christ (see Phil. 2:6–11; Col. 1:15–20), of the church (see Ephesians), or of last things (see 1 Thess. 4:13–5:11; 2 Thess. 2:1–12).

It is more likely that Paul wrote the letter to address particular issues of concern to the Roman church. Specifically, he addressed matters of interest for a church that included both Jewish and Gentile Christians: (1) Can one be right with God through obeying the law (Rom. 1:1–3:20)? (2) What can be learned from Abraham, and is he the father of both Jewish and Gentile Christians (4:1–25)? (3) What role does the law play with reference to sin (5:20; 7:1–25)? (4) What does the salvation of Gentiles indicate about the future of Israel as God's people (9:1–11:36)? (5) Should Christians observe OT food laws, and how should they relate to fellow believers on such matters (14:1–15:13)?

The focus on Jew-Gentile issues suggests that tensions existed between Jews and Gentiles in the church in Rome. The Roman church probably began as a Jewish church, though it is not known exactly when it was established. Perhaps Jews from Rome returned from Jerusalem after Pentecost (Acts 2:10) and founded the church, or perhaps the church was established later. Some have suggested that Peter founded the church in Rome, but no significant evidence supports this premise.

As time passed, of course, Gentiles in Rome also became Christians. The Roman historian Suetonius records that the Roman emperor Claudius (reigned A.D. 41–54) expelled Jews from Rome in A.D. 49 because of strife over "Chrestos." Suetonius likely misunderstood the name, so that the dispute probably was about "Christos" (Latin for Christ). The expulsion of Jews from Rome is confirmed by Acts 18:2. Because of the expulsion, the Gentile churches would have developed for a number of years apart from the Jews. Over the years the Jewish Christians slowly filtered back into Roman churches. It is not difficult to imagine that tensions would develop between law-observing Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians who lived free of the restrictions in the Mosaic law. It seems, however, that the church was made up mainly of Gentile Christians (see Rom. 1:5–6, 13; 11:13; 15:15–16).

Paul's selection of themes (gospel and law; the significance of Abraham; the future of Israel) suggests significant tensions between the Jews and Gentiles in Rome. Paul wrote Romans so that they would be united in the gospel he preached, and so that they would comprehend how the gospel spoke to the issues that divided them.

A closer look at Romans reveals another purpose as well. Paul wanted the Christians in Rome to rally around his gospel so that Rome would become the

base of operations by which he could proclaim the gospel in Spain (15:22–24). If Roman Christians did not agree with Paul's gospel message, especially on the issues being debated among Jews and Gentiles, then they would not support his proposed mission to Spain. Paul needed to explain the gospel in some detail so that the Christians in Rome would become the base from which he could proclaim the gospel in new regions.

Of course, the ultimate aim and purpose for the preaching of the gospel is the glory of God. Paul longs for the Gentiles to come to the obedience of faith for the sake of Christ's name (1:5). God has planned all of salvation history to bring glory and praise to his name (11:33–36).[4]

3. What stood out to you in this section and why?

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(1) Taken from the ESV® Study Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright ©2008 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. (2) IBID. (3) IBID. (4) IBID.

Study 17

# THE SPIRIT

**Romans 8:1-11**

## ONE SIGNAL PRIVILEGE OF TRUE CHRISTIANS BY MATTHEW HENRY

The apostle here beings with one signal privilege of true Christians, and describes the character of those to whom it belongs: *There is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. 8:1. This is his triumph after that melancholy complaint and conflict in the foregoing chapter—sin remaining, disturbing, vexing, but, blessed be God, not ruining. The complaint he takes to himself, but humbly transfers the comfort with himself to all true believers, who are all interested in it. It is the unspeakable privilege and comfort of all those that are in Christ Jesus that there is therefore now no condemnation to them.

He does not say, "There is no accusation against them," for this there is; but the accusation is thrown out, and the indictment quashed.

He does not say, "There is nothing in them that deserves condemnation," for this there is, and they see it, and own it, and mourn over it, and condemn themselves for it; but it shall not be their ruin.

He does not say, "There is no cross, no affliction to them or no displeasure in the affliction," for this there may be; but *no condemnation*. They may be chastened of the Lord, but not condemned with the world.

Now this arises from their being in Christ Jesus; by virtue of their union with him through faith they are thus secured. They are in Christ Jesus, as in their city of refuge, and so are protected from the avenger of blood. He is their advocate, and brings them off. There is therefore no condemnation, because they are interested in the satisfaction that Christ by dying made to the law. In Christ, God does not only not condemn them, but is well pleased with them, Matt. 17:5.

**– Matthew Henry, in his *Complete Bible Commentary*, https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/matthew-henry/Rom.8.1-Rom.8.9**

NOTES:

1. Read **Romans 8:1**. How does **Romans 7:24-25** help us understand what Paul means by "There is *therefore now* no condemnation in Christ Jesus"? What does "condemnation" mean? Paul says there is therefore now no condemnation "for those in Christ Jesus." What does it mean to be "in Christ Jesus"? How does the truth of what Paul says in **verse 1** give you courage and constant hope in this life?

2. The first word in verse 2 is "For" which could also be translated "Because." In **verses 2-3**, Paul is explaining how **verse 1** is true. What has God done, according to **verses 2-3** to ensure that "there is…no condemnation for those who are in Christ"? What does Paul mean by "God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do?" What does Paul mean by "[God] condemned sin in the flesh"?

3. Read **verse 4**. Do you think Paul means the requirement of the law is fulfilled in the new life that Christians live on the basis of Christ's work, or does it refer to the full penalty of the law being met at the cross? Either way, what Paul says is true. The righteous requirement of the Law is fulfilled in us as we walk according to the [Holy] Spirit.

4. Read **verses 5-8**. How do these help us gain insight into what Paul means in **verse 4**? What is Paul getting at in these verses? How do **Galatians 5:16-23** and **Galatians 6:8** help clarify?

5. Read **verse 9**. What conclusions does Paul draw concerning every true Christian? In **verse 9**, Paul uses the phrase "the Spirit of God" as well as "the Spirit of Christ." Does he have two different Spirits in mind or are the synonymous?

6. Read **verses 10-11**. How does this give you hope as you follow Jesus and seek to continually rejoice in Him and put your still indwelling sin to death? Do you ask God to give you this "life" continually? Why or why not?

## THE MANNER IN WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS ON THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO ARE SAVED BY J.C. RYLE

I approach this branch of my subject with much difficulty. I am very sensible that it is surrounded with difficulties, and involves many of the deepest things of God. But it is folly for mortal man to turn away from any truth in Christianity, merely because of difficulties. Better a thousand times receive with meekness what we cannot fully explain, and believe that what we know not now, we shall know hereafter. "Enough for us," says an old divine, "if we sit in God's court, without pretending to be of God's counsel."

In speaking of the manner of the Holy Spirit's working, I shall simply state certain great leading facts. They are facts attested alike by Scripture and experience. They are facts patent to the eyes of every candid and well instructed observer. They are facts which I believe it is impossible to gainsay.

**(a) I say then that the Holy Spirit works on the heart of a man in a MYSTERIOUS manner.** Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself tell us that in well-known words, "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound thereof —but cannot tell whence it comes and where it goes; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8.) We cannot explain how and in what way the Almighty Spirit comes into man, and operates upon him; but neither also can we explain a thousand things which are continually taking place in the natural world. We cannot explain how our wills work daily on our bodily members, and make them walk, or move, or rest, at our discretion; yet no one ever thinks of disputing the fact. So ought it to be with the work of the Spirit. We ought to believe the fact, though we cannot explain the manner.

**(b) I say furthermore, that the Holy Spirit works on the heart of a man in a SOVEREIGN manner.** He comes to one and does not come to another. He often converts one in a family, while others are left alone. There were two thieves crucified with our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary. They saw the same Savior dying, and heard the same words come from His lips. Yet only one repented and went to Paradise, while the other died in his sins. There were many Pharisees besides Saul, who had a hand in Stephen's murder; but Saul alone became an apostle. There were many slave captains in John Newton's time; yet none but he became a preacher of the Gospel. We cannot account for this. But neither can we account for China being a heathen country, and England a Christian land—we only know that so it is.

**(c) I say furthermore, that the Holy Spirit always works on the heart of a man in such a manner as to be FELT.** I do not for a moment say that the feelings which He produces are always understood by the person in whom they are produced. On the contrary, they are often a cause of anxiety, and conflict, and inward strife. All I maintain is that we have no warrant of Scripture for supposing that there is an indwelling of the Spirit which is not felt at all. Where He is, there will always be corresponding feelings.

**(d) I say furthermore, that the Holy Spirit always works on the heart of a man in such a manner as to be SEEN IN THE MAN'S LIFE.** I do not say that as soon as He comes into a man, that man becomes immediately an established Christian, a Christian in whose life and ways nothing but spirituality can be observed. But this I say—that **the Almighty Spirit is never present in a person's soul without producing some perceptible results in that person's conduct!** He never sleeps—He is never idle. We have no warrant of Scripture for talking of "dormant grace." "Whoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him." (1 John 3:9.) Where the Holy Spirit is, there will be something seen.

**(e) I say furthermore, that the Holy Spirit always works on the heart of a man in an IRRESISTIBLE manner.** I do not deny for a moment that there are sometimes spiritual strivings and workings of conscience in the minds of unconverted people, which finally come to nothing. But I say confidently, that when the Spirit really begins a work of conversion, He always carries that work to perfection. He effects miraculous changes. He turns the character upside down. He causes old things to pass away, and all things to become new. In a word, the Holy Spirit is Almighty. With Him nothing is impossible.

**(f) I say, finally, under this head, that the Holy Spirit generally works on the heart of man through the USE OF MEANS.** The Word of God, preached or read, is generally employed by Him as an instrument in the conversion of a soul. He applies that Word to the conscience—He brings that Word home to the mind. This is His general course of procedure. There are instances, undoubtedly, in which people are converted "without the Word." (1 Pet. 3:1.) But, as a general rule, God's truth is the sword of the Spirit. By it He teaches, and teaches nothing else but that which is written in the Word.

**– J.C. Ryle, in a sermon titled *The Holy Spirit*, https://www.gracegems.org/24/Ryle_holy_spirit.htm**

Study 18

# THE CHILDREN

**Romans 8:12-17**

## FATHER IS THE CHRISTIAN NAME FOR GOD BY J.I. PACKER

You sum up the whole of New Testament teaching in a single phrase, if you speak of it as a revelation of the Fatherhood of the holy Creator. In the same way, you sum up the whole of New Testament religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one's holy Father.

If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new, and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. "Father" is the Christian name for God.

**– Packer, J. I.. *Knowing God* (pp. 226-227). InterVarsity Press.**

NOTES:

1. Read **verse 12**. What does "So then" indicate? What does it mean that we are no longer "debtors" to the flesh?

2. According to **verse 13**, if we "live according to the flesh" what is the result? In this verse, what is contrasted with "live according to the flesh"? What does it mean to "by the Spirit…put to death the deeds of the body"? What is the result of continually killing your indwelling sin?

3. Read **verse 14-15**. What does Paul mean when he says all Christians, male and female, are "sons of God"? What does Paul contrast "slavery" with and what does he contrast "fear" with? What does it mean to "cry, Abba! Father!" According to **verse 16**, how do we know we truly are the children of God?

4. According to **verse 16**, how do we know we truly are the children of God?

5. According to **verse 17**, if we are children, what are we in addition to that? What does it mean to be an "heir"? What does Paul mean by "provided we suffer with [Jesus] in order that we may also be glorified with him"?

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## SUFFER WITH HIM IN ORDER TO BE GLORIFIED WITH HIM

**BY JOHN PIPER**

. . . what does it mean that we must suffer with Christ in order to be glorified with him in this way? Remember what the text (Romans 8:17) says: "If children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, *if indeed we suffer with him* so that we may also be glorified with him." Our glory with him — our inheritance — is conditional upon our suffering with him.

Jesus said it. Luke 9:23: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Paul said it. 2 Timothy 3:12, "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." The author of Hebrews said it. Hebrews 12:6–7: "For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises *every* son whom he receives. It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons." Peter said it. 1 Peter 4:13, "To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, *so that* also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice with exultation."

No pain, no gain. No cross, no crown. No suffering, no inheritance. That's the way it is. And if you ask, "What kind of pain? Is it just persecution he's talking about? Or is it other miseries we face in this life?" I answer from the following verses in Romans 8 that it is all the groaning that comes with the futility of this fallen age — persecution, calamity, disease, death. Any suffering that you meet on the road to heaven and endure by trusting in Jesus. Any hardship that might destroy your faith and lead you away from God. Read Romans 8:18–25 and see for yourselves.

**– John Piper, in a sermon titled *Children, Heirs, and Fellow Sufferers*, https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/children-heirs-and-fellow-sufferers**

Study 19

# THE WILL

**Romans 8:18-30**

## PERSEVERING GRACE BY JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

What can separate my soul
From the God who made me whole,
Wrote my name in heaven's scroll?
Nothing. Hallelujah!
Trouble, hardship, danger, sword
Brought by those who hate my Lord?
Slander here? Or no reward?
Nothing. Hallelujah!

**- Boice, James Montgomery. The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Evangelical Gospel (p. 155). Crossway.**

## RUSTLING WITH THE RUMOR BY C. S. LEWIS

If we take the imagery of Scripture seriously, if we believe that God will one day give us the Morning Star and cause us to put on the splendor of the sun, then we may surmise that both the ancient myths and the modern poetry, so false as history, may be very near the truth as prophecy.

At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of the morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendors we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumor that it will not always be so.

Some day, God willing, we shall get in. When human souls have become as perfect in voluntary obedience as the inanimate creation is in its lifeless obedience, then they will put on its glory, or rather that greater glory of which Nature is only the first sketch.

**- C. S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses (1949; repr. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1969), 13.**

NOTES:

1. Read **verse 18**. For Paul, what is "this present time" marked by for Christians? What is the future going to be marked by for those whom God has saved? What do we learn about suffering in this verse? **Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28** to remind you of some of the "sufferings" that Paul says "are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

2. What is the creation waiting for, according to **verse 19**? What does this mean, exactly? What does this tell us concerning what is the *pinnacle* or *highest* of all created things?

3. Who subjected the creation to futility, according to **verse 20**? What is the ultimate goal of all creation, according to **verses 20-21**? What does Paul mean by "the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now" in **verse 22**?

4. According to **verse 23**, what or who else is longing for Christians' fully realized adoption and redemption? Can you relate at all to this statement by Paul—do you "groan inwardly…as [you] wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of [your body]"?

5. In what sense does Paul use the word "hope" in **verses 24-25**? How does this encourage you as you continually put your sin to death and follow Jesus?

6. According to **verses 26-27**, what does God the Holy Spirit do *in* and *for* those who are in Christ? **The phrase "groanings too deep for words" does not refer to speaking in tongues or anything of the sort, since what Paul says here applies to all Christians and, according to **1 Corinthians 12:30**, only some Christians speak in tongues*. Who intercedes for us before the Father in prayer? How does this encourage you to pray, even when (especially when!) you do not know what to say to God?

7. In **verse 28**, is Paul writing about all people in general when he says "all things will work together for good"? Explain your answer. What does Paul mean by "called according to his purpose"? Why do you think Paul says "And we know" before the rest of **verse 28**, almost as if he assumes this should be an evident truth to all Christians? How can **John 16:33** help clarify? How can **Genesis 50:20** help clarify?

8. In **verse 28**, Does Paul mean all things *are* good, even the seemingly bad that happens to us? What does Paul specifically say concerning "all things" in **verse 28** and what does he mean?

9. What is the first word in **verse 29** and what does that indicate? What is Paul emphasizing here when he writes "foreknew"? **look at the note in the ESV Study Bible.* Read **Acts 26:5, Romans 11:12, 1 Peter 1:20, 2 Peter 3:17** to see how this Greek word *proginosko* is used elsewhere in the New Testament.

10. What is Paul emphasizing here when he writes "predestined"? **look at the note in the ESV Study Bible.* Read **Acts 4:28, 1 Corinthians 2:7, Ephesians 1:5, Ephesians 1:11** to see how this Greek word *proorizo* is used elsewhere in the New Testament. What does Paul write that God predestines his foreknown people *to* at the end of **verse 29**? How does **1 John 3:2** help clarify?

11. What does Paul mean by the word "called" in **verse 30—**who is the "he" that is doing the calling? According to this verse, why does God *call* someone? Read **Acts 2:39, Romans 4:17**, **Romans 9:11, 24, 1 Corinthians 1:9, Galatians 1:6, 15** to see how this Greek word *Kaleo* is used elsewhere in the New Testament. **search the amount of times the word* kaleo *is used in the NT Epistles on blueletterBible.org to see more.*

12. What does Paul mean by the word "justified" in **verse 30**? According to this verse, why does God *justify* someone? Read **Acts 2:39, Romans 4:17**, **Romans 9:11, 24, 1 Corinthians 1:9, Galatians 1:6, 15** to see how this Greek word *Dikaioō* is used elsewhere in the New Testament. **search the amount of times the word* kaleo *is used in the NT Epistles on blueletterBible.org if you'd like to see more*?

13. What does Paul mean by the word "glorified" in **verse 30**? According to this verse, why does God *glorify* someone? Read **Luke 7:29, Acts 13:39, Romans 3:20-26, Romans 4:5, 1 Corinthians 6:10, Galatians 2:16-17, Titus 3:7** to see how this Greek word *Doxazō* is used elsewhere in the New Testament.

14. How does Paul link all these together? Is there someone God predestined that may not be justified? Or someone that will be glorified that God did not previously call, etc? Why do you think Paul writes about Christians' glorification in the past tense, even though it is something that had not happened to these Romans (as of yet) and has not yet happened to anyone reading it today?

## GOD KEEPS HIS PEOPLE SAFE BY J.I. PACKER

Let it first be said that in declaring the eternal security of God's people it is clearer to speak of their preservation than, as is commonly done, of their perseverance. Perseverance means persistence under discouragement and contrary pressure. The assertion that believers persevere in faith and obedience despite everything is true, but the reason is that Jesus Christ through the Spirit persists in preserving them.

Scripture emphasizes this. John tells us that Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, is under promise to his Father (John 6:37-40) and to his sheep directly (John 10:28-29) to keep them so that they never perish. In his high-priestly prayer before his passion Jesus asked that those whom the Father had given him (John 17:2, 6, 9, 24) would be preserved to glory, and it is inconceivable that his prayer, which still continues (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25), will go unanswered.

Paul sees the sovereign plan of God for the salvation of his elect as a unitary whole, of which the glorifying of the justified is part (Rom. 8:29-30). On this basis he builds the triumphant peroration of Romans 8:31-39, in which he celebrates the present and future security of the saints in the almighty love of God. Elsewhere he rejoices in the certainty that God will complete the "good work" that he began in the lives of those Paul addresses (Phil. 1:6; cf. 1 Cor. 1:8-9; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 2 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:18).

Reformed theology echoes this emphasis. The Westminster Confession declares,
They, whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved. (XVII.1)
The doctrine declares that the regenerate are saved through persevering in faith and Christian living to the end (Heb. 3:6; 6:11; 10:35-39), and that it is God who keeps them persevering. That does not mean that all who ever professed conversion will be saved. False professions are made; short-term enthusiasts fall away (Matt. 13:20-22); many who say to Jesus, "Lord, Lord," will not be acknowledged (Matt. 7:21-23). Only those who show themselves to be regenerate by pursuing heart-holiness and true neighbor-love as they pass through this world are entitled to believe themselves secure in Christ. Persevering in faith and penitence, not just in Christian formalism, is the path to glory. To suppose that believing in perseverance leads to careless living and arrogant presumption is a total misconception.

Sometimes the regenerate backslide and fall into gross sin. But in this they act out of character, do violence to their own new nature, and make themselves deeply miserable, so that eventually they seek and find restoration to righteousness. In retrospect, their lapse seems to them to have been madness. When regenerate believers act in character, they manifest a humble, grateful desire to please the God who saved them; and the knowledge that he is pledged to keep them safe forever simply increases this desire.

**– J.I. Packer, Concise Theology: A Guide To Historic Christian Belief**

Study 20

# THE INTERCESSION

**Romans 8:31-39**

## CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE HAPPY BY JONATHAN EDWARDS

How joyful and gladsome must the thoughts of Jesus Christ be to [the Christian], to think with how great a love Christ has loved him, even to lay down His life and suffer the most bitter torments for his sake, Who also now continually intercedes for him at the throne of grace; to consider that so great a person as the eternal Son of God, who also made the worlds, is his lord and master, and is not ashamed to call us brethren, Who will come in and sup with him, and He with him, and to see His arms expanded to embrace him and offering Himself to be embraced by him.

**– Jonathan Edwards, from his first sermon titled *Christian Happiness*, https://www.justinbuzzard.net/2010/01/04/christian-happiness/**

NOTES:

1. How would you summarize what Paul means by "these things" in **verse 31**? ***Hint: read verses 29-30***

2. In light of **verses 29-30**, what is Paul getting at in the second half of **verse 31**?

3. What is Paul referring to in the first half of **verse 32**? What does Paul *not* mean in the second half of **verse 32**? What *does* he mean?

4. Concerning **verse 33**, what does it mean to be "God's elect"? What does Paul mean by "it is God who justifies"?

5. Concerning **verse 34**, what does it mean to be "condemn(ed)"? How does **Romans 8:3** help clarify?

6. Concerning **verse 34**, how does Paul's outlining of what Jesus *has done* help us understand why he has the right to be "interceding for us"?

7. What do you think Paul is getting at in **verses 35-36**?

8. At the beginning of **verse 37**, what is Paul's answer to his multiple questions about being separated from the love of Christ? What do you think Paul means by writing "we are *more* than conquerors" and how does that connect to "in all these things"?

9. Meditate on the promises in **verses 38-39** for a few minutes. What does this do to you?

10. What does this passage tell us about the length of Jesus' love for his church? Strength? How is the love of Jesus most clearly displayed to you in this passage?

## THE LOVE OF GOD BY J.I. PACKER

God's love is an exercise of his goodness toward sinners. As such it has the nature of grace and mercy. It is an outgoing of God in kindness which is not merely undeserved but is actually contrary to desert; for the objects of God's love are rational creatures who have broken God's law, whose nature is corrupt in God's sight, and who merit only condemnation and final banishment from his presence.

It is staggering that God should love sinners; yet it is true. God loves creatures who have become unlovely and (one would have thought) unlovable. There was nothing whatever in the object of his love to call it forth; nothing in us could attract or prompt it. Love among persons is awakened by something in the beloved, but the love of God is free, spontaneous, unevoked, uncaused. God loves people because he has chosen to love them . . . no reason for his love can be given except his own sovereign pleasure.

**– Packer, J. I.. Knowing God (p. 139). InterVarsity Press.**

Study 21

# THE WORD

**Romans 9:1-13**

## FIVE REASONS TO EMBRACE UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

**BY JOHN PIPER**

I use the word *embrace* because unconditional election is not just true, but precious. Of course, it can't be precious if it's not true. So that's the biggest reason we embrace it. But let's start with a definition:

> *Unconditional election is God's free choice before creation, not based on foreseen faith, to which traitors he will grant faith and repentance, pardoning them and adopting them into his everlasting family of joy.*

**1. We embrace unconditional election because it is true.**

All my objections to unconditional election collapsed when I could no longer explain away Romans 9. The chapter begins with Paul's readiness to be cursed and cut off from Christ for his unbelieving Jewish kinsmen (Romans 9:3). This implies that some Jews are perishing. And that raises the question of God's promise to the Jews. Had it failed? Paul answers, "It is not as though the word of God has failed" (Romans 9:6). Why not?

Because "not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel" (Romans 9:6). In other words, God's purpose was not to acquit every individual person in Israel. It was instead a purpose of election.

So to illustrate the point of God's unconditional election, Paul uses the analogy of Jacob and Esau: "Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad — in order that God's *purpose of election* might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls — [Rebekah] was told, 'The older will serve the younger'" (Romans 9:11–12).

In other words, God's original purpose in choosing individuals for himself out of Israel — and all the nations! (Revelation 5:9) — was not based on any conditions that they would meet. It was an unconditional election. And thus he says, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion" (Romans 9:15; see Romans 9:16–18; 11:5–7).

Jesus confirms this teaching: "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:37). Coming to Jesus is not a condition we meet to qualify for election. It is the result of election. The Father has chosen his sheep. They are his. And he gives them to the Son. That is why they come. "No one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father" (John 6:65). "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (John 15:16; see John 17:2, 6, 9; Galatians 1:15).

In the book of Acts, why did some believe and not others? Luke's answer is election: "As many as were appointed to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). This "appointment" — this election — was not *based on* foreseen faith; it was the *cause* of faith.

The Father has chosen his sheep. They are his. And he gives them to the Son. That is why they come.

In Ephesians 1, Paul says, "[God] chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world. . . . In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will" (Ephesians 1:4, 11). It is the "counsel of God's will" that is eternally decisive in this affair.

What will *you* say to God at the judgment if he asks, "Why did you believe on my Son while others didn't?" You will not say, "Because I was smarter." No. Surely you will say, "Because of your grace. Had you not chosen me, I would have been left spiritually dead, unresponsive, guilty."

**2. We embrace unconditional election because God designed it to make us fearless in our proclamation of his grace in a hostile world.**

"If God is for us, who can be against us? . . . Who shall bring any charge against *God's elect*?" (Romans 8:31, 33).

**3. We embrace unconditional election because God designed it to make us humble.**

"God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise . . . so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. . . . 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord'" (1 Corinthians 1:27, 29, 31).

**4. We embrace unconditional election because God made it a powerful moral impetus for compassion, kindness, and forgiveness.**

"Put on then, as God's *chosen ones*, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness . . . forgiving each other" (Colossians 3:12–13). No one has seen or savored his election truly who is not moved by it to become kind and patient and forgiving.

**5. We embrace unconditional election because it is a powerful incentive in our evangelism to help unbelievers, who are great sinners, not despair.**

"What will you say to God at the judgment if he asks, 'Why did you believe in my Son while others didn't?'"

When you offer Christ freely to all unbelievers, suppose one says, "I have sinned too terribly. God could never choose to save me." The most ultimate despair-destroying thing you can say is this: Do you realize that God chose before the foundation of the world whom he will save? And he did it based on absolutely nothing in you. Before you were born or had done anything good or bad, God chose whether to save you or not.

Therefore, you dare not get in God's face and tell him what qualifications you lack in order to be chosen. There were no qualifications for being chosen. "What then should I do?" he asks. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). That's how you begin to "confirm your calling and election" (2 Peter 1:10). If you will embrace the Savior, you will confirm that you are elect, and you will be saved.

**– John Piper, www.DesiringGod.org**

NOTES:

1. Read **verses 1-3**. Why would Paul, after just writing about the unending love of God for His people, "have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in [his] heart"? Who are Paul's "brothers, [his] kinsman according to the flesh"? Have you ever felt this way concerning the lost, and the fact that not all people will be saved?

2. Read **verses 4-5**. What do all these things mean, and why do you think Paul brings them up?

3. Read **verses 6-9**. What is Paul's point in **verse 6** and how does he argue it? How does he argue it in **verse 7**? Concerning **verses 8-9,** what does it mean to be "the children of the promise"?

4. How does **Galatians 3:7-9** help clarify what Paul means in **Romans 9:6**?

5. Read **verses 10-13**. What is Paul's point here and how does he argue it? Why did God choose Jacob? How does **verse 11** especially help clarify what he's really getting at?

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## THREE GENERATIONS OF ELECTION BY JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

In the verses that follow [the apostle Paul] demonstrates that the three fathers of [the nation of Israel]—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—became what they were by election, and that others were not given this privilege.

1. *Abraham*. Election is obvious in the case of Abraham, which is one reason why Paul does not discuss his case in detail, though he does mention him. Abraham had a pagan ancestry, having been born in the ancient city of Ur in Mesopotamia. He had no knowledge of the true God, because no one in Ur had knowledge of the true God. In fact, Abraham's family worshiped idols. Joshua said this explicitly in the sermon recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of the book that bears his name: "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods'" (Josh. 24:2). Years later, even after God had called Abraham out of this pagan environment and had instructed his son and grandson about himself as the true God, idols were still possessed and cherished in this family, for Rachel, the wife of Jacob, hid them from her father (see Genesis 31). Since God's call of Abraham is recorded clearly in Genesis 12, every knowledgeable Jew would have to confess that Jewish history began with that election.

2. *Isaac*. "But that is beside the point," some might have answered. "God had to start somewhere." They would have argued that the important matter is not whether God had elected the nation of Israel to some specific destiny apart

from other nations. That was conceded. Paul had already written of "the adoption as sons, . . . the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law" and other privileges that were granted only to Israel (Rom. 9:4-5). No one disputed the election of the nation. The real issue was whether all the descendants of Abraham (that is, all Jews) were saved by reason of their having come from him, or whether the principle of choice and rejection also applies after the initial choice of Abraham. In other words, does God continue to choose some but not all for salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, but not all from either category? Since this is the issue, Paul begins his actual argument in verse 7 with the case of Abraham's son Isaac. The point is that Abraham had another son, Ishmael, begotten of Hagar thirteen years before Isaac was born. Ishmael was Abraham's son, but Ishmael was not chosen. Ishmael was Abraham's physical descendant, but he was not a child of promise as Isaac was. There is something else in this example: the contrast between natural in the phrase "natural children" and promise in the phrase "children of the promise" (v. 8). The contrast shows that the difference between Isaac and Ishmael was not merely that God elected Isaac and passed over Ishmael, though that was an obvious truth, but also that God's choice of Isaac involved a supernatural intervention in the case of his conception. Ishmael was born of Abraham's natural sexual powers. But Isaac was conceived when Abraham was past the normal age for engendering children and when Sarah was past the age of conceiving and giving birth. It is the same with our spiritual conception and new birth. Our spiritual conception, which is the outworking of God's electing choice, is likewise supernatural. We cannot engender spiritual life in ourselves, since according to Ephesians 2:1 we are spiritually dead in sins. We studied that in the last chapter. A dead person cannot do anything. In order for us to become spiritually alive God must do a miracle, which is exactly what he does. It is called the new birth, or regeneration.

3. *Jacob*. Yet there is still another objection. Paul's opponents could have argued that Ishmael was not a pure-blooded Jew. "It is true," they might have said, "that Ishmael was the son of Abraham. Yet he was not the son of Sarah. He was the son of Hagar, and Hagar was only an Egyptian and Sarah's servant. That is why Ishmael was not chosen." In order to answer this point, Paul proceeds to the third generation of election, to the case of Rebekah's twin children, the sons Jacob and Esau. The words "not only that" show that he is continuing the argument: "Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls—she was told, 'The older will serve the younger'" (vv. 10-12). This is a remarkably effective example, since it proves everything that Paul needed to make his point. First, Jacob and Esau were born of the same Jewish parents. That is, each was "a Hebrew of Hebrews," the phrase Paul used to describe his own pure-blooded Jewish ancestry in Philippians 3:5. So this was not a case of one having been chosen on the basis

of a better ancestry and the other having been rejected because of a lesser one. The possible explanation of Paul's opponents for the choice of Isaac over Ishmael was invalidated by this case. Second, the choice of Jacob rather than Esau went against the normal standards of primogeniture, according to which the elder should have received the greater blessing. True, the boys were twins, but Esau actually emerged from Rebekah's womb first. In spite of that, however, Jacob was chosen. There is nothing to explain this except God's right to dispose of the destinies of human beings as he pleases. Third, the choice of Jacob was made before either child had opportunity to do either good or evil. The choice was made while the children were still in the womb. This means—we cannot miss it—that election cannot be on the basis of anything done by us. Moreover, Paul argues, the choice of Jacob rather than Esau was made specifically to teach election. This is what verses 11 and 12 say: "Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand . . ." (emphasis added). This means that God made his choice before the birth of Rebekah's sons to show that his election is apart from anything a human being might or might not do. It is a proof of what Paul says later, namely: "God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy" (v. 18).

**– Boice, James Montgomery. The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Evangelical Gospel (pp. 95-98).**

Study 22

# THE MERCY

**Romans 9:14-29**

## DON'T ANSWER BACK BY DR. TIMOTHY KELLER

Paul makes a further case for why God is not unfair to have mercy on some and to pass over others, particularly now that he has established that God hardens whom he wants to harden. In a sense, Paul has already answered the question through the example of self-hardening, God-hardened Pharaoh. But here are three more points. First, in verses 20-21, he says that God made us, and that therefore he has rights of ownership. All by itself, this would be a sufficient answer to the question of "fairness," of why "God still blame[s] us" ( v 19 ). "Who are you, O man, to talk back to God?" ( v 20 ).

We are so far below God that we have neither the wisdom nor the right to question our Creator. This is God's own approach to Job when Job questions why God has put him through such suffering. As readers, we know the answer —Satan wants to prove Job only loves God for what he receives from him, not for who he is himself, and so God has allowed Satan to test Job (1:8-12). God could choose to let Job in on this spiritual dimension—instead, he challenges Job's right even to ask (Job 38 – 41).

Who is Job, a man, to question or to answer back to his Creator? We must beware of standing in judgment over God, rather than remembering he is judge over us; and must most of all beware re-creating God in a way that is more pleasant or palatable, rather than acknowledging that he is our Creator. He is the divine Potter; we are human clay (Romans 9:21 ).

**– Keller, Timothy. Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You) (p. 57). The Good Book Company.**

NOTES:

1. Read **verse 14**. Note the brilliance of Paul's argument in assuming the very questions that are most typically asked after reading **verse 13**. *God the Holy Spirit is the ultimate author of this book!* What is Paul's point in **verses 14-15** and how does he argue it?

2. In **verses 16-18**, what do we learn about how anyone is saved from sin, death, and the wrath of God?

3. Read **verse 19**. Note, again how Paul asks the question that is most frequently asked after reading **verses 16-18**. What is his answer to the question in **verses 20-21**?

4. How does **Isaiah 55:8-9** help put us in our proper place? Are you smarter than the one who breathed you into existence? Are you wiser than the one who intricately fine-tuned this universe to inhabit life? Are you able to sit in judgement over God in why he does what he does? If you don't understand why exactly God would do something, does that mean there must not be a good reason?

5. Read **verses 22-23**. What is Paul saying God's ultimate purpose is in election?

6. According to **verses 24-26**, what are the blessings God gives His elect through the gospel? How should this give us great hope in evangelism, missions, and for our lives as Christians in the world? How does verse 24 help us understand that Paul is not talking simply about ethnic Israel in **Romans 9**?

7. What passage does Paul quote in **verse 27**? What does Isaiah mean by "only a remnant will be saved"? How does this further articulate the point Paul is making in **Romans 9**?

8. What is Paul getting at in **verse 28** and how does this further reveal God's sovereign providence?

9. What passage does Paul quote in **verse 29**? What would happen if the LORD did not elect anyone? How should this make us marvel that He *does* elect some to salvation?

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## WE ARE THE AUTHORS OF OUR DAMNATION, GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF OUR SALVATION BY DR. TIMOTHY KELLER

In [Romans 9:22] Paul says that while God is the author of our salvation, we are the authors of our damnation. Notice that Paul says here that God "bore with great patience the objects of his wrath." This shows that evil people are not made evil by God. He bears with them. He never gives anyone quite what they deserve. He is unjust to no one. And then Paul adds that these objects of wrath are "prepared for destruction"—but he doesn't say by whom. Contrast this with verse 23 , where it says clearly of the objects of God's mercy that "he prepared [them] in advance for glory." By implication, it appears that the vessels of wrath are prepared for destruction by themselves (remember 1:24, where God hands people over to the life and death they have chosen).

. . . in [Romans 9:23] Paul says that God is showing "the riches of his glory" by having mercy on some and passing over others. This is the heart of the mystery. Somehow, if God had mercy on all or condemned all, we would not see his glory. I don't think Paul is giving us much more than a hint here, but it is a very suggestive hint. For the biggest question is: If God could save everyone, why doesn't he? And here Paul seems to say that God's chosen course (to save some and leave others) will in the end be more fit to show forth God's glory than any other scheme we can imagine. This may seem strange to us, but that is the point

—we are not God, and cannot know everything or decide what is best ( v 20 Paul will return to this idea in 11:33-36).

In summary, in election God comes in, softens our hearts and makes us good. In hardening, God simply passes over and lets people have the way they have chosen. In John Stott's words:

> "If … anybody is lost, the blame is theirs, but if anybody is saved, the credit is God's. This antinomy contains a mystery which our present knowledge cannot solve; but it is consistent with Scripture, history, and experience." (The Message of Romans, page 270)

D. James Kennedy offers a very helpful illustration here:

> "Here are five people who are planning to hold up a bank. They are friends of mine. I find out about it and I plead with them. I beg them not to do it. Finally they push me out of the way and they start out. I tackle one of the men and wrestle him to the ground. The others go ahead, rob the bank, a guard is killed, they are captured, convicted, sentenced … The one man who was not involved in the robbery goes free. Now I ask you this question: Whose fault was it that the other men died? … Now this other man who is walking around free—can he say, "Because my heart is so good, I am a free man"? The only reason that he is free is because of me; because I restrained him. So those who go to hell have no one to blame but themselves. Those who go to heaven have no one to praise but Jesus Christ. Thus we see that salvation is all of grace from its beginning to its end." (Truths That Transform, pages 39-40)

**– Keller, Timothy. Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You) (pp. 57-59). The Good Book Company.**

Study 23

# THE SALVATION

**Romans 9:30–10:13**

## CHRIST, THE GOAL OF THE LAW BY LIGONIER MINISTRIES

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." Rom.10:4

Why did so many first-century Jews not receive Jesus as their Messiah? From a divine perspective, it was because God has chosen only some Jews for salvation, just as He has chosen to redeem only some Gentiles (Rom. 9:1-29). On the human level, which is established by the divine decree and does not operate apart from the Lord's sovereign ordination, the Jews rejected Christ because they followed the Mosaic law as if it were based on works, not faith (9:30-10:13). These Jews had God's inscripturated law as the clear revelation of His righteousness, and from the law's sacrificial system and Moses' prophecy, they should have known that they could not keep the commandments with the perfection required for justification (Lev. 16; Deut. 31:16-18). But they missed that truth and turned God's law into a system of works-righteousness. Dr. R.C. Sproul writes in his commentary *Romans*: "God did not give the law as a way for us to attain status in his family. The law was given to show us the righteousness of God. It was given so that we can see the perfect righteousness of God and by comparison see ourselves, warts and all, and despair of our own righteousness. The law sends us rushing to the cross and running for grace."

Comparatively speaking, the Gentiles did not fail so miserably. While not all of them believed, many did, and this was remarkable because the Gentiles did not pursue righteousness (Rom. 9:30-33). The Apostle does not mean that the Gentiles did not strive to live ethically based on God's law in nature; rather, Paul is indicating that the Gentiles did not have the clear standards of righteousness revealed in the Mosaic law. Therefore, no matter how hard they tried, they could never truly pursue the kind of righteousness the Lord requires. Although they were not even looking for it, they found it. When the Apostles preached the righteousness of God to the Gentiles from the Mosaic law, they saw that they could not meet His standard and by faith they rested only in Christ (Acts 28:23-28).

By God's grace, the Gentiles saw what Paul teaches in today's passage, namely, that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom. 10:4). The word *end* is better translated as *goal*, for the Apostle does not mean that Jesus makes the Mosaic law irrelevant but that the law points beyond itself to Christ. God's law is not an end in itself, but is designed to lead us to the One who can give us the righteousness demanded in the law—Christ Jesus our Lord (1 Cor. 1:30).

Coram Deo

The early church father Irenaeus writes: “How is Christ the end of the law if he is not also the cause of it? For he who has brought in the end also created the beginning.” The Son of God gave us the Mosaic law, through His Holy Spirit, so to search for Jesus in the law is to fulfill the purpose for which He gave it. As we read the law and see our need for the righteousness only God can provide in Christ, we are using His law rightly and being brought to its true goal.

**– Ligonier Ministries, in a devotional titled *Christ, The Goal of the Law*, https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/christ-goal-law/**

NOTES:

1. In **verse 30**, by "What shall we say then" Paul is essentially saying "How then should we think?" or "What conclusion should we draw?". What conclusion *does* Paul draw in **verses 30-31**?

2. According to **verse 32**, why did Israel not obtain righteousness before God? What passage does he quote in **verse 33** and how is this imagery helpful?

3. According to **verse 1** in **chapter 10**, what is Paul's "heart's desire and prayer to God"? Do you have the same desire and offer up the same prayers for the lost—both religious and irreligious? Why or why not? What does Paul mean by "they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge"? Why is it not enough to be zealous, if you are not zealous for the truth of the gospel? How does Paul explain their misguided zeal, according to **verses 3-4?**

4. What passage does Paul quote in **verse 5**? But what has Paul already made clear in **Romans 3:9** and **Romans 3:23**? How does **Galatians 3:10** help clarify?

5. Read **verses 6-8**. What passages does Paul quote? What is he getting at?

6. Read **verses 9-10**. Is Paul saying all you have to do is believe in the facts of the resurrection and speak that Jesus is Lord with your mouth to be saved? If not, what is he getting at and how is **verse 10** helpful? What is the difference between "saved" and "justified" in Paul's mind? Why are belief (trust in Jesus) and confessing Him as Lord (obeying Jesus) both necessary?

7. What passage does Paul quote in **verse 11**? What does he mean "will not be put to shame"? What is Paul getting at in **verses 12-13**, culminating in "everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved"?

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## EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME

**BY MATTHEW HENRY**

Two things are required as conditions of salvation:—(*a*.) *Confessing the Lord Jesus*—openly professing relation to him and dependence on him, as our prince and Saviour, owning Christianity in the face of all the allurements and affrightments of this world, standing by him in all weathers. Our Lord Jesus lays a great stress upon this confessing of him before men; see Matt. 10:32, 33. It is the product of many graces, evinces a great deal of self-denial, love to Christ, contempt of the world, a mighty courage and resolution. It was a very great thing, especially, when the profession of Christ or Christianity hazarded estate, honour, preferment, liberty, life, and all that is dear in this world, which was the case in the primitive times. (*b*.) *Believing in the heart that God raised him from the dead*. The profession of faith with the mouth, if there be not the power of it in the heart, is but a mockery; the root of it must be laid in an unfeigned assent to the revelation of the gospel concerning Christ, especially concerning his resurrection, which is the fundamental article of the Christian faith, for thereby he was declared to be the Son of God with power, and full evidence was given that God accepted his satisfaction.

This is further illustrated (Rom. 10:10), and the order inverted, because there must first be faith in the heart before there can be an acceptable confession with the mouth. (*a*.) Concerning faith: It is *with the heart that man believeth*, which

implies more than an assent of the understanding, and takes in the consent of the will, an inward, hearty, sincere, and strong consent. It is not believing (not to be reckoned so) if it be not with the heart. This is *unto righteousness*. There is the righteousness of justification and the righteousness of sanctification. Faith is to both; it is the condition of our justification (Rom. 5:1), and it is the root and spring of our sanctification; in it it is begun; by it it is carried on, Acts 15:9. (*b*.) Concerning profession: It is with *the mouth that confession is made*—confession to God in prayer and praise (Rom. 15:6), confession to men by owning the ways of God before others, especially when we are called to it in a day of persecution. It is fit that God should be honoured with the mouth, for he made man's mouth (Exod. 4:11), and at such a time has promised to give his faithful people a *mouth and wisdom*, Luke 21:15. It is part of the honour of Christ that every tongue shall confess, Phil. 2:11. And this is said to be *unto salvation*, because it is the performance of the condition of that promise, Matt. 10:32.

Justification by faith lays the foundation of our title to salvation; but by confession we build upon that foundation, and come at last to the full possession of that to which we were entitled. So that we have here a brief summary of the terms of salvation, and they are very reasonable; in short this, that we must devote, dedicate, and give up, to God, our souls and our bodies—our souls in believing with the heart, and our bodies in confessing with the mouth. This do, and thou shalt live. For this (Rom. 10:11) he quotes Isa. 28:16; *Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed*; ***ou kataischynthesetai.*** That is, [*a*.] He will not be ashamed to own that Christ in whom he trusts; he that believes in the heart will not be ashamed to confess with the mouth. It is sinful shame that makes people deny Christ, Mark 8:38. He that believeth will not make haste (so the prophet has it)--will not make haste to run away from the sufferings he meets with in the way of his duty, will not be ashamed of a despised religion. [*b*.] He shall not be ashamed of his hope in Christ; he shall not be disappointed of his end. It is our duty that we must not, it is our privilege that we shall not, be ashamed of our faith in Christ. He shall never have cause to repent his confidence in reposing such a trust in the Lord Jesus.

**– Matthew Henry, in his *Complete Bible Commentary - Romans 10:1-11*, https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/matthew-henry/Rom.10.1-Rom.10.11**

Study 24

# THE GOOD NEWS

**Romans 10:14-21**

## OUR JOB IS TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL BY J.I. PACKER

The belief that God is sovereign in grace does not affect the necessity of evangelism. Whatever we may believe about election, the fact remains that evangelism is necessary, because no man can be saved without the gospel. "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek," proclaims Paul, "for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [Jesus Christ] will be saved"' Yes; but nobody will be saved who does not call on the name of the Lord, and certain things must happen before anyone can do this. So Paul continues: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom 10:14 KJV). They must be told of Christ before they can trust him, and they must trust him before they can be saved by him. Salvation depends on faith, and faith on knowing the gospel. God's way of saving sinners is to bring them to faith through bringing them into contact with the gospel. In God's ordering of things, therefore, evangelism is a necessity if anyone one is to be saved at all.

We must realize, therefore, that when God sends us to evangelize, he sends us to act as vital links in the chain of his purpose for the salvation of his elect. The fact that he has such a purpose, and that it is (so we believe) a sovereign purpose that cannot be thwarted, does not imply that, after all, our evangelizing is not needed for its fulfillment. In our Lord's parable, the way in which the wedding was furnished with guests was through the action of the king's servants, who went out as they were bidden into the highways and invited in all whom they found there. Hearing the invitation, the passersby came (Mt 22:1-14). It is in the same way, and through similar action by the servants of God, that the elect come into the salvation that the Redeemer has won for them.

**– J. I. Packer. Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God (Kindle Locations 851-863).**

NOTES:

1. According to **verse 13** what is the context of this passage? What is Paul writing about in **verse 14**? Why is evangelism necessary? How does **1 Peter 1:22-25** help clarify?

2. What is Paul getting at in **verse 15**—Jesus sending people or the church sending people or both? What passage does he quote? Is your church actively sending people to proclaim the gospel among the whole world? Are you actively working to send people to preach the gospel to the whole creation?

3. What does it mean to “obey the gospel”? How does **Romans 1:5** help clarify? Therefore what does Paul mean in **verse 16** when he writes “they have not all obeyed the gospel”? What is his explanation of that proposition; which passage does he quote and why?

4. How does **verse 17** help us further understand why we need to proclaim the gospel? How does **verse 17** help us understand just how someone is given the gift of faith, enabling them to trust in Jesus? How does **Ephesians 2:8-9** help clarify?

5. What passage does Paul quote in **verse 18** and what is his point?

6. What passage does Paul quote in **verse 19** and what is his point?

7. What passage does Paul quote in **verse 20** and what is his point?

8. What passage does Paul quote in **verse 21** and what is his point?

## BEAUTY UNRECOGNIZED BY DR. TIMOTHY KELLER

"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" ( v 15 )… but the beauty is often not recognized. This is what has happened in Israel, Paul says: "Not all the Israelites accepted the good news" ( v 16 ). "Accepted" is better translated "obeyed" (as in the ESV). To reject the beautiful gospel message is to disobey God. Ironically, the Jews, in insisting that they could gain righteousness through obeying God, were disobeying God by rejecting the gospel of salvation through faith!

In fact, as Paul has alluded to before (9:27-29), Jewish rejection of God's plan of salvation is nothing new. 700 years before Jesus' birth, Isaiah was reporting: "Lord, who has believed our message?" ( 10:16 ). What was lacking in the Jews was faith—faith in "the word of Christ" ( v 17 ). If the Jews had heard and understood the gospel message, then the only thing lacking in the chain of salvation (God sent… Christians preached… people heard… people believed and called on Jesus) is the last link.

But perhaps there is still room for excuses. Perhaps they did not hear the gospel ( v 18 ). Paul answers: "Of course they did" ( v 18 ). He quotes Psalm 19, which is a little surprising, for it speaks of how God's creation (the mountains, the heavens) declares the glory of God all over the world. Paul probably meant that the spread of the gospel was as widespread as that. Before anyone objects that the gospel even now has not reached every part of the world, realize that Paul is thinking of the Jews. Wherever a Jewish community existed, the gospel had been preached. They had heard.

But perhaps Israel did not understand (Romans 10:19 )? By asking this question, Paul is showing that it is possible to be exposed to the gospel and not really understand it intellectually. But he answers that they did understand. He quotes Deuteronomy 32:21 to show that only the Gentiles had "no understanding." They did not know the nature of God (his holiness), the need for righteousness, the promises of forgiveness by substitution implicit in the tabernacle and temple worship, all the promises about a Messiah, or (especially) the fact that the Lord could become our righteousness for us (Jeremiah 23:5-6). Thus the Gentiles, not the Jews, did not understand the ways of God. Deuteronomy 32:21 shows that God in a sense shows the Jews up with the Gentiles, making the Jews "envious" of them.

So why did Israel not believe? It could not have been because they did not understand, because God can work to overcome that, as he had for the Gentiles (Romans 10:19 ). It cannot be because they were not searching for God, because God works to reveal himself to those who have not asked for him ( v 20 ). And to Israel, God "all day long" has "held out my hands" ( v 21 ). But they did not respond because they are disobedient and obstinate. This is an amazing indictment. God didn't "hold out [his] hands" to the Gentiles as he did to the Jews. He did not give the Gentiles anything approaching what he gave to the Jews. Yet they have responded better than the Jews. Thus Israel is not to be excused for their refusal.

God is sovereign. But this does not mean that there is any excuse for disobeying his summons to believe the gospel, to call out in trust to his Son and enjoy salvation. We are, in our sin and in our rejection of the gospel, “without excuse” (Romans 1:20). This passage leaves us with two stark truths: that every human is responsible for how they treat the “word of Christ”; and that every Christian is responsible for communicating that “word of Christ.” Everyone will answer to God for whether they supplied the last “link in the chain”: whether they believed. We must ensure that, wherever it is that God has placed us, no one around us can say they have not heard or understood.

**– Keller, Timothy. Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series Book 2) (pp. 75-77)**

Study 25

# THE ELECT

## Romans 11:1-10

### THE QUESTION OF ISRAEL BY LIGONIER MINISTRIES

*"I ask then, Did God reject His people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin."- Romans 11:1–10*

At the end of Romans 10 we found Paul explaining that Israel had refused to pay heed to the Word of God that they heard. Because of their sin in the face of God's repeated offers of salvation, God had made good on His threat to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. But this brings Paul to the question of whether or not God has absolutely rejected the Jews.

Clearly not, says Paul. The proof is in Paul himself. Paul is a Jew, and Paul has not been rejected. Thus, God has not absolutely rejected all Jews. What we see here is the "remnant concept" coming up again. Remember from the earlier chapters of Romans that not all who are in Israel are truly of Israel. Even though the nation at large had rejected the Gospel, there was still a remnant of true, believing Israelites.

Paul was an example of this. Paul had been persecuting the church. The last thing Paul was seeking was salvation in Jesus Christ. Yet, God had seen fit to invade Paul's life and call him to Himself.

Farther on in Romans 11, Paul indicates that the present remnant of Israel is not the last word on Israel either. There will come a future conversion of the Jews. One of the great controversies among Christians is how we are to understand biblical prophecies of the future, with specific reference to the Jews. Does God have in His plan another chapter to be written for Israel as a people?

Many Christians believe that the promises to Israel are completely fulfilled in the New Testament church. This position, held by many Reformed scholars, believes that Romans 11 is not speaking of any special event to take place in the future concerning the Jews as a people, but more generally speaks of individual Jews who come into the kingdom of God during the gospel age.

Others, also including many Reformed scholars, think differently. They hold that Romans 11 predicts a future conversion of Jews. A few see that future conversion as happening before the events of A.D. 70 (but future to Paul), but most see it as not yet fulfilled. The great future conversion of Israel may be something that happens just before the Lord's return, or it may be the last link in the chain of events ushering in a time of prosperity before the Lord's return.

**Coram Deo**

Often Christians get more upset with one another over prophecy than anything else. Ask God to give you a spirit of charity and a true, sober-minded interest in what His Word has to say on the subject. If disagreement on such matters hinders fellowship with believers, focus on those beliefs you hold in common. Preserve unity in your church.

**– Ligonier Ministries, in a devotional titled *The Question of Israel*, https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/question-israel/**

NOTES:

1. Read **verses 1-4**. What is the main point Paul is making? How does he argue his point in **verse 1**?

2. How does he argue his point in the first half of **verse 2**? What does "foreknew" mean and how does **Romans 8:29-30** help clarify?

3. How does he argue his point in the first half of **verses 2-4**? What passages does he quote? Who are the "they" in **verse 3**? What does God mean by "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal"?

4. Read **verse 5**. What does the word "remnant" mean? How does **2 Kings 19:14** help clarify? What does does the word "chosen" mean? Check out **Romans 9:11**, **1 Thessalonians 1:4**, and **2 Peter 1:10** for other places in the New Testament this word *chosen* (gk. *eklogē*) is used. What does Paul mean "chosen *by grace*"and what is the significance of him adding the words "by grace"?

5. The "it" in **verse 6** is referring to the antecedent *elected* or *chosen*. Therefore, what is election based on according to **verse 6**? How does Paul argue his point in the second half of the verse?

6. When Paul says "What then?" He is essentially saying, "If what I have just said is true, what conclusion should we draw?" What conclusion does he in fact draw in **verse 7**? Who did receive salvation and why? Who did not obtain salvation and why? How does **2 Corinthians 3:14** help clarify?

7. What two passages does he quote in verses **8-10** and how do each confirm his argument?

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## GRACE WOULD NO LONGER BE GRACE BY CHARLES HODGE

And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. This verse is an exegetical comment on the last clause of the preceding one. If the election spoken of be of grace, it is not founded on works, for the two things are incompatible. It evidently was, in the apostle's view, a matter of importance that the entire freeness of the election of men to the enjoyment of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, should be steadily kept in view. He would not otherwise have stopped in the midst of his discourse to insist so much on this idea. This verse serves to illustrate several declarations of the apostle in the preceding chapter. For example, ver. 11, in which, as here, men are said to be chosen in a sovereign manner, and not according to their works. It is obvious that foreseen works are as much excluded as any other. For a choice founded upon the foresight of good works, is as really made on account of works as any choice can be, and, consequently, is not of grace, in the sense asserted by the apostle. In the second place, the choice which is here declared to be so entirely gratuitous, is a choice to the kingdom of Christ. This is evident from the whole context, and especially from ver. 7. It was from this kingdom and all its spiritual and eternal blessings that the Jews, as a body, were rejected, and to which "the remnant according to the election of grace" was admitted. The election, therefore, spoken of in the ninth chapter, is not to external privileges merely.

The latter part of this verse is simply the converse of the former. But if of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. If founded on any thing in us, it is not founded on the mere good pleasure of God. If the one be affirmed, the other is denied. This clause is omitted in the uncial MSS. A. C. D. E F. G., and in several of the ancient versions, and by all the Latin fathers. On these grounds it is rejected as a gloss by Erasmus, Grotius, Wetstein, Griesbach, and the later editors. It is found, however, in the MS. B., and in the Syriac version, both of which are important authorities, and is retained by Beza and Bengel, and defended by Fritzsche, Tholuck, and others. The internal evidence, and a comparison with similar passages, as Romans 4:4; Ephesians 2:8, 9, are in its favor.

**– Charles Hodge, in his *Commentary on Romans,* http://librex.us/commentaries/hodge/45011.html**

Study 26

# THE KINDNESS

**Romans 11:11-24**

## BRANCHES AND SHOOTS BY R.C. SPROUL

The broken-off branches are the disobedient, apostate Jews, the ones who stumbled and were cut off from the promises of God and thrown into the fire, just as Jesus said. The metaphor focuses on the olive tree, which was very important to the economy of Old Testament Israel. Olive oil was one of the most important, if not the most important, agrarian products in the land. The precious olive oil came from olives that grew on olive trees, which were very valuable in the land of Palestine. The olive tree is the most durable of all trees. The roots go deep, and the trees can live for three or four hundred years.

The Mount of Olives separates the village of Bethany from the city of Jerusalem. When Jesus went to Gethsemane, when he agonized in prayer the night before he was executed, the slope of the mountain between Bethany and Jerusalem was covered with olive trees. One of the tragedies of Jewish history is the felling of those trees. During the Roman siege of Jerusalem in ad 70 the Romans encamped on the Mount of Olives and waited for the resources of food and water to dry up within the city. They kept warm by cutting down those olive trees, using the tree branches to build fires. The Mount of Olives was completely denuded of olive trees by the Roman soldiers. Nevertheless, the symbol of strength and durability to the Jew was the olive tree.

Other olive trees grew wild; they were not cultivated so they bore no fruit. They were worthless, giant weeds, which is how Paul describes us: “Some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them.” God cut off the branches of the precious, durable, valuable olive tree and made a graft. The graft he put on the tree was taken from wild, worthless olive trees that could not be commended to God. “You . . . became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree.” These spindly, worthless, wild olive branches were plugged into the root from which they get the sap, the nutrients. The grafted branches draw everything valuable from the root of the cultivated olive tree. Salvation is of the Jews, and we must never forget that.

**– Sproul, R. C.. Romans (St. Andrew's Expositional Commentary) (p. 378). Crossway.**

NOTES:

1. Read **verses 11-12**. According to these verses has ethnic Israel totally fallen—meaning there's no hope of them being saved? What is Paul's answer? What does Paul say trespass and failure resulted in for the world and for the Gentiles? What does he mean?

2. Read **verses 13-14**. What does Paul mean by, "I am an apostle to the Gentiles" in **verse 13**? How does **Galatians 2:9-10** help clarify? Why does Paul say he magnifies his ministry? Why would Israel be jealous of Gentiles being saved?

3. What is Paul getting at in **verse 15**? How does **Ezekiel 37** help clarify?

4. Read **verses 16-18**. What is Paul's main point in these verses? Who is the olive tree? Who are the branches? Who are the wild olive shoots? What are the olive shoots forbidden from doing?

5. Read **verses 19-21**. According to **verse 19**, why were the branches broken off? According to **verse 20**, why were the branches broken off? Why do the wild olive shoots stand firm? What is Paul's conclusion in **verse 20**? How does he explain his conclusion in **verse 21**?

6. Read **verse 22**. What have the natural branches done in order to have "fallen"? What have the olive shoots done in order to be standing firm? What does it look like for us to "continue in His kindness"? What happens to us if we do not continue in His kindness?

7. Read **verses 23-24**. What will happen to those who are natural branches—*ethnic Israel*—if they repent and embrace Jesus through faith? Who has the power to graft them back into Jesus, even though they have by and large rejected Him and fallen away?

## THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD BY J.I. PACKER

From [examining Romans 11:11-24] we can learn at least three lessons.

**1.** Appreciate the goodness of God.

Count your blessings. Learn not to take natural benefits, endowments and pleasures for granted, learn to thank God for them all. Do not slight the Bible, or the gospel of Jesus Christ, by an attitude of casualness toward either. The Bible shows you a Savior who suffered and died in order that we sinners might be reconciled to God; Calvary is the measure of the goodness of God; lay it to heart. Ask yourself the psalmist's question—"How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me?" Seek grace to give his answer-"I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. . . O LORD, truly I am your servant;. . . I will fulfill my vows to the LORD" (Ps 116:12-18).

**2.** Appreciate the patience of God.

Think how he has borne with you, and still bears with you, when so much in your life is unworthy of him and you have so richly deserved his rejection. Learn to marvel at his patience, and seek grace to imitate it in your dealings with others; and try not to try his patience any more.

**3.** Appreciate the discipline of God.

He is both your upholder and, in the last analysis, your environment. All things come of him, and you have tasted his goodness every day of your life. Has this experience led you to repentance and faith in Christ? If not, you are trifling with God and stand under the threat of his severity. But if, now, he (in Whitefield's phrase) puts thorns in your bed, it is only to awaken you from the sleep of spiritual death—and to make you rise up to seek his mercy. Or if you are a true believer, and he still puts thorns in your bed, it is only to keep you from falling into the somnolence of complacency and to ensure that you "continue in his goodness" by letting your sense of need bring you back constantly in self-abasement and faith to seek his face. This kindly discipline, in which God's severity touches us for a moment in the context of his goodness, is meant to keep us from having to bear the full brunt of that severity apart from that context. It is a discipline of love, and it must be received accordingly. "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline" (Heb 12:5). "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees" (Ps 119:71).

**– Packer, J. I.. Knowing God (pp. 187-188). InterVarsity Press.**

Study 27

# THE CALLING

**Romans 11:25-36**

## ISRAEL SAVED BY R.C. SPROUL

I do not hold to the view of preterists. They say all the prophecies about the return of Jesus and the fulfillment of the kingdom of God took place in ad 70. I do not believe that for a minute. I think something of dramatic significance took place in ad 70—the end of the Jewish age as they knew it. It was the end of the temple and of Jerusalem but not the end of God's economy of redemption for his people. I believe Paul is saying here and throughout Romans 11 that God is not finished with the Jews.

I have been concerned since 1967. It may be in the economy of redemption that God is going to bring Gentiles into his house for another five thousand years, but when I see what is happening in Jerusalem, I do not think so. We may be on the very cusp of the last roundup of Gentiles. We may be very close to the next step of redemptive history—God's work with ethnic Israel. No time since ad 70 has seen such a concentration of evangelism to ethnic Jews as that taking place in our day, nor has any time in church his-tory mirrored the vast number of converts to Christianity from Judaism. I do not believe that God has two agendas, one for the Jew and one for the Gentile. He has one agenda that incorporates both the Jew and the Gentile in his kingdom.

> *So all Israel will be saved (v. 26a).*

If Paul is referring to spiritual Israel, he is departing from the way he uses the term Israel here and in the preceding three chapters. Since chapter 8 Paul has been talking about ethnic Israel. Does he mean each and every Jew? The word all in Scripture does not function the way we characteristically use it to indicate each and every. I believe Paul to be saying that the full complement of God's elect from Israel will be saved and that this will come in a new redemptive-historical visitation by the Holy Spirit when the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled.

I am much interested in Luke's use of the phrase "the times of the Gen-tiles being fulfilled" and its parallel here in Romans 11 concerning "the fullness of the Gentiles." The apostle tells us he does not want us to grope in the darkness; he wants to take away the mystery. He is telling us about the future of the kingdom of God, which we must take with great earnestness, joy, and consolation. I don't mean to suggest that God's work was finished in ad 70, but when he said, "This generation will not pass away," he meant exactly what he said. That generation did not pass away until the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed and our Lord visited his people in the time of their wrath.

**– Sproul, R. C.. Romans (St. Andrew's Expositional Commentary) (p. 388). Crossway.**

NOTES:

1. What does Paul say is currently happening to Israel according to **verse 25**? When will this hardening be lifted? What do you think he means by all of this? How does the ESV Study Bible shed light on Paul's use of the word "mystery"?

2. How does Paul argue his point in **verses 26-27**? Which passage does he quote? Do you think this means that every single person who has descended from Abraham will be saved in Christ? Why or why not? How is the ESV Study Bible helpful here?

3. In **verse 28**, what does Paul mean by "As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake"? What does he mean by "as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers"? In verse 28, Paul says Israel "is beloved." How does he argue this point in **verse 29**? How should this verse comfort all Christians?

4. Read verses **30-32**. What does Paul mean by "God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all"?

5. What do we learn about God in **verses 33-36**? What do we learn about ourselves and the posture we should have toward God?

## FIVE REASONS I BELIEVE ROMANS 11:26 MEANS A FUTURE CONVERSION OF ISRAEL BY JOHN PIPER

Romans 11:26 says, "And in this way all Israel will be saved." I take this to mean that someday the nation as a whole (not necessarily every individual; see 1 Kings 12:1; 2 Chronicles 12:1) will be converted to Christ and join the Christian church and be saved.

This was J. C. Ryle's view published in 1867:

> *[The Jews] are kept separate that they may finally be saved, converted and restored to their own land. They are reserved and preserved, in order that God may show in them as on a platform, to angels and men, how greatly he hates sin, and yet how greatly he can forgive, and how greatly he can convert. Never will that be realized as it will in that day when "all Israel shall be saved." (Are You Ready for the End of Time? [Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2001], 137–138)*

One reason this matters is that Paul made this claim "lest you [Gentiles] be wise in our own sight" (Romans 11:25). Rightly understanding the historical process of how God saves Gentiles and Jews undercuts Jewish and Gentile pride.

So here are five of the reasons I commend this view to you. You can read other arguments for the same position in the commentaries of John Murray, John Stott, Douglas Moo, and Thomas Schreiner.

**1. The term "Israel" in verses 25 and 26 most naturally refers to the same thing.**

Verse 25: "Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon *Israel*. . . ." That must refer to the nation as a whole from generation to generation. He continues, ". . . until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. (26) And in this way all *Israel* will be saved." I don't think the meaning of Israel changes between verses 25 and 26. The hardened Israel (the nation as a whole) will be the saved Israel (the nation as a whole).

**2. The reference in verse 26 to banishing ungodliness from Jacob fits with the national view of "all Israel."**

Verse 26: "And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness *from Jacob*.'" This seems most naturally to be a picture of the second coming. Christ's banishing ungodliness from Jacob refers most naturally to the removal of the hardening referred to in verse 25. "Jacob" is not a natural or typical reference to the elect remnant of Israel. The hardening lasts until the full number of the Gentiles comes in (the climax of world missions), and then Christ lifts the veil and removes the hardening — he banishes ungodliness from *Jacob*, from "all Israel."

**3. The parallel between the two halves of verse 28 point to all Israel as the nation as a whole.**

Verse 28: “As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake.” Now this half of the verse surely refers to the nation as a whole — they are enemies of God. So the second half of the verse surely refers to the nation as a whole as well: “But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.” The point of this verse is to show that even though Israel now is a covenant-breaking, unbelieving nation, it is going to change. The nation that are enemies now will be converted later because of election and love.

**4. The parallels in verse 12 point in the same direction.**

Verse 12: “Now if their [the Jewish nation’s] trespass means riches for the world [salvation for the Gentiles], and if their [the Jewish nation’s] failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion!” Here “*their* full inclusion” most naturally refers to the same nation as “*their* trespass” and “*their* failure.” So “their full inclusion” refers to the salvation of “all Israel” and is national.

**5. The same thing is true about the parallels in verse 15.**

“For if their [Jewish nation’s] rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their [Jewish nation’s] acceptance mean but life from the dead?” The nation now rejected will be accepted. So the “acceptance” of the Jewish nation most naturally refers to the salvation of “all Israel” — the salvation of the nation as a whole some day.

**Implications**

How is this going to happen? I don't know the details, but it seems to me that Paul does mean that in connection with the second coming of Christ there will be a great turning of Israel to Christ. Just how it works, I don't know. But I find certain prophecies very suggestive.

For example, Zechariah 12:10, “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.” And Isaiah 66:8, “Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her children.” And Matthew 23:39, where Jesus says to the hardened nation: “I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

I don't want to speculate about details we are not given. I am not sure about the precise "when and how" of Israel's conversion. But that it is coming and that it will be given by Jesus Christ, the deliverer who banishes ungodliness and forgives sins — I feel sure.

We should pray for it — that the full number of the Gentiles comes in and that the hardening be lifted from Israel. We should work for it with missions to the nations and witness to Israel. We should put away all conceit and presumption over Jewish unbelievers but realize that God is aiming to save them through our salvation.

For now, then, let us give ourselves to prayer and to the great work of gathering the fullness of the Gentiles, if by any means we might make Israel jealous of her treasures in Christ so that they believe and be saved.

**– John Piper, in an article titled *Five Reasons I Believe Romans 11:26 Means a Future Conversion for Israel*, https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/five-reasons-i-believe-romans-11-26-means-a-future-conversion-for-israel**

FINAL QUESTIONS: Look back through the entire study and all of your answers. What was new? What was convicting? What was encouraging?

NEW:

CONVICTING:

ENCOURAGING:

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PART 3 - HOW DEEP IS THE GOSPEL? - ROMANS 8:1–11:36