

# Romans 9:1-29

1. What leads people (including you) to wonder whether God is faithful and fair to all?

Romans is book about the gospel (1:1-7 & 16:25-27). The apostle writes in preparation for his visit to Rome, and to secure support for his planned mission to Spain (1:8-15 & 15:14-33). The theme of the letter is set out succinctly in 1:16-17, and filled out through the main body of the letter in 5 sections...

1:18-3:20	Why we need the gospel	God's wrath on universal sin
3:21-4:24	The heart of the gospel	Justified by grace through faith on the basis of Christ
5-8	The power of the gospel	Assured salvation now and in the future
9-11	The defence of the gospel	What about Israel?
12-15:13	The Implications of the gospel	Transformed lives

Chapters 9-11 address a big issue for the defence of the gospel. What do we make of the failure of most of the people of Israel (the physical descendents of Abraham/ Isaac/Jacob - God's chosen and precious people with whom he made his covenant) to receive Jesus and seek to be justified by grace through faith in him? And to deepen the issue, how can thousands of gentiles (non-Jews) now turn to Jesus and claim to be "righteous" without even keeping the Law God gave to his people?

2. Read Romans 9:1-6a. As Paul contemplates the failure of the Jews (generally) to accept Jesus Christ...
  - a) What do we learn of his 'heart' and his understanding of "Israel"? (v 1-5)
  - b) What theological issue is raised by Israel's rejection of Christ? (v 6a)
  - c) Given what Paul has just written in chapter 8, why is the question of whether God's word has failed so important for every Christian? (See esp. verses 15-17, 23-25, 28-30 & 38-39).
3. In the rest of the chapter Paul shows why "it is not as though God's word had failed".
  - a. Read v 6-13. Based on the two examples given, what does Paul mean when he says "Not all Israel are Israel"? How would you summarise Paul's main point in these verses?
  - b. Read v 14-23. If God chooses some and not others, someone might say "that's not fair!" How does Paul respond to this objection? Again try and summarize.
  - c. Read v 24-29. How does this list of quotations from the Old Testament support Paul's case that God's word has not failed? What does God's word actually lead us to expect about Israel and the gentiles?
4. Why do you think many people find the teaching of Romans 9 to be difficult / challenging? What does this reveal about their/our knowledge of God and of ourselves?
5. What encouragement/comfort can we derive from knowing that God freely chooses to have mercy on whom he wants to have mercy?
6. How does God lead you to pray in response to this passage? For what can you praise him? What do you need to confess? Are there ways that you need to ask him to help you think or live differently?

## Romans 9:30-10:21

1. Why do you think so many people in our society choose not to rely on Jesus as their saviour and serve him as their Lord?

As we saw in the last study, in Romans 9-11 the apostle Paul is dealing with the issues raised by the fact that most Jews had rejected Jesus, and that Gentiles were now flooding into the church. Paul grieves over his own people's large scale failure to accept Jesus, and also addresses the question this raises for God's faithfulness to his ancient promises to Israel. In chapter 9 Paul points out the faithfulness, justice and freedom of God to choose those on whom he will have mercy. He also shows that what has happened was also spoken of in Scripture itself. It is God's Sovereign plan. However, God's sovereignty is not exercised apart from human responsibility.

Read 9:29-10:21.

2. From 9:30-10:4, why did Israel not "attain righteousness" (a right standing with God)?
3. Can you think of people today who have zeal for God that isn't based on knowledge? How does Paul feel towards these people? Is this how you feel towards these people?
4. According to verses 5-13, how can a person be right with God? Why do you think Paul includes so many quotes from the Old Testament here?
5. Given that we are saved by "calling on the name of the Lord", what needs to happen? (v 14-15) How is faith established in a person's life? (v 17) What does this mean for the priorities and activities of our church? What does it mean for you?
6. Is Israel's failure to accept the good news about Christ due them not hearing the message? (v 16-21) What point(s) does Paul make in the Old Testament passages he quotes at the end of the chapter?
7. Some ideas for prayer
  - a. Give thanks for God's salvation in Christ, and for those who brought the message to you.
  - b. Ask God to give you the same "heart" for the lost that we see here in Paul.
  - c. Pray for those Jewish people who remain "disobedient and obstinate" towards the word of Christ.
  - d. Pray for God's mercy on other people (individuals or groups) who need to be saved.
  - e. Ask God to help you play your part in his worldwide, and local, mission.

# Romans 11

1. What different attitudes do people in our society have towards the Jewish People?

Romans 9-11 deals with the issues raised by the rejection of Jesus by most Jewish people, and the corresponding inclusion of Gentiles (non-Jews) as the majority of people in the church. Has God abandoned his commitments to Israel as his chosen people? Has he now rejected them in favour of the Gentiles? Paul's answer is very clear "By no means!" (v 1). Read the whole chapter together.

2. According to the Scriptures, how should we understand the fact that most (but not all!) of the physical descendents of Israel have rejected Christ? (v 1-10)
3. In verse 11 Paul imagines a questioner asking whether the Israelites have fallen beyond recovery. His answer reveals God's great plan for the salvation of both Jews and gentiles (v 11-27)
  - a. What is God achieving through Jewish "rejection"?
  - b. What does this mean for how Christians should think of the Jewish people?
  - c. What other comforts and/or warnings are here for us?
  - d. What do you think it means the "all Israel will be saved" (v 26)?
4. Read the conclusion to the chapter (and to chapters 9-11) in v 28-36.
  - a. Has God rejected/abandoned/forgotten his ancient people of Israel?
  - b. What is similar about the way God deals with both Jews and Gentiles?
  - c. What response do verses 33-36 encourage us to make to all this?
5. In what ways does this chapter help us to have a right perspective while we wait patiently for the return of Jesus?
6. How does this chapter inform/shape our prayers?