

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

I invite you once again to take your Bibles and turn to Paul's epistle to the Romans chapter nine.

This morning we will be examining the issue of Israel's unbelief and the Old Testament prophecies. Let me read our text this morning. It begins in verse 25 of Romans nine.

As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'" "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD." And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD UPON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY." And just as Isaiah foretold, "EXCEPT THE LORD OF SABAOOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME AS SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."¹

Frederick the Great once asked his chaplain to give him commanding evidence of the existence of God to which his chaplain replied, quote, "The amazing Jew, your majesty," end quote.

Despite being the most hated and persecuted people on the planet, they not only survive to this day, but they thrive. Four thousand years ago Abraham purchased burial property in Hebron and the Jews are still there.

David Larson said this. Quote, "The Hittites and the Canaanites are all gone. But the Jews are like Jonah the stubborn prophet, tossed out into the swirling and stormy seas, ostensibly consumed by the great fish but undigested, then vomited up on the land once again," end quote.

¹ Romans 9:25-33.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

Yesterday, I had a remarkable privilege. I met a man who was with the 42nd infantry in World War II. He had me sit down on a porch swing with him and with eyes filled with tears he told me the story of what happened to him 67 years ago today. Sixty seven years ago today he and his fellow soldiers came up upon the concentration camp of Dachau. He said it took him 40 years before he could talk about that experience. And for the next hour he told me their stories. He told me of the Jews that he helped save and how a number of them are still his friends to this very day.

Why have they experienced such enormous persecution and why do they still survive? How is it that like virtually no other people on the planet they have avoided genetic regression of IQ? Why is it that they have achieved so much, more than any other ethnic group?

Well, my friends, the eye of faith knows the answer to that question. And the answer is found in Scripture. The answer is that they are a people whom God has chosen to demonstrate both his mercy and his wrath and ultimately his unfailing love for a chosen remnant that because they rejected God's plan of salvation by grace through faith and chose instead to try to earn their own righteousness and because they were unfaithful to the God that called them and that loved them, God has judged them severely, but not without hope.

This brings us to our text this morning. Paul now a Jewish apostle of Christ has been commissioned to preach the gospel to the Jew, especially to the Gentile world. And in his epistle to the Romans he addresses the Jewish errors in theology that have caused them to forfeit such divine blessing. The inspired apostle has proven thus far in our study that salvation is always initiated by God, by God's sovereign, uninfluenced grace, that he sets upon those that he has chosen in eternity past. And, of course, this was a hard pill for the Jews to swallow. They were convinced that because they were the physical descendants of Abraham, that because they kept the law as best they could and the traditions of the rabbis, that their salvation was guaranteed. But Paul uses God's dealings with Isaac and Ishmael and Jacob and Esau to prove that not all ethnic Israelites are spiritual heirs of the promises of God. He said in verse six:

“For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel.”²

He has also proven by way of review that God is not unjust to show mercy on some and not upon all, nor is he unfair to hold a man responsible for those things that he has determined. In verse 18 he says:

“He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.”³

² Romans 9:6.

³ Romans 9:18.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

And in verse 19 he goes on to say:

“You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?’”⁴

By using an analogy of a potter and a lump of clay he then demonstrates the utter absurdity of fallen finite man demanding an explanation from an infinitely holy, sovereign God, a lump of clay representing a mass of fallen humanity that has prepared itself for condemnation cannot contend with the almighty. He argues that it is utterly ludicrous for this mass of wickedness to contend with the holy potter by demanding an explanation as to why would you save some, but not all and why would you hold a man responsible for those things which you have determined?

Verse 20. He says:

“The thing molded will not say to the molder, ‘Why did you make me like this,’ will it?”⁵

They answer is, well, obviously not. How ridiculous. That is preposterous.

Verse 21.

“Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?”⁶

And the answer is of course he has that right to choose from the lump of fallen humanity some to everlasting life and to allow others to remain in the condition of their wretchedness which they have chosen for themselves. And he has ordained all of these things to dramatically display his glory through his holiness, through his wrath, through his grace, mercy, his love and power.

So what we see is the apostle now systematically and logically building his case to prove to his countrymen that all of these things in the gospel that are being preached have been revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures. This isn't something that he was making up here.

Now we come to this fascinating subsection of Paul's argument that I have just read to you. Now typically these are the types of passages that we read and we pass over very quickly, all those Old Testament quotes. They don't really seem to have any relevance. They don't seem to make a whole lot of sense.

⁴ Romans 9:19.

⁵ Romans 9:20.

⁶ Romans 9:21.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

I would argue that probably very few of you have ever heard a sermon preached on this text. And I will confess that some texts preach better than others. This one is a bit technical, but when understood it will yield some glorious fruit of divine truth and blessing in our lives.

You know, when I was a young man I remember I used to grow so weary of what I later called the one, two, three method of preaching. One verse, two jokes and three stories. And then God in his mercy introduced me to some great expositors and my life was never the same.

So we come to this text that must be accurately explained and then believed and then applied to our lives. And here Paul discloses some great theological truths, especially the principle concerning God's sovereign grace and his election. He described it in verse 11 as God's purpose according to his choice.

You see, Paul wants his readers to understand that these astounding truths are woven through the entire tapestry of Scripture, even in the Old Testament. So, once again, in verses 25 through 33 we see him carefully marshalling more evidence from the Old Testament to support this principle of divine election. And he goes to great lengths to use Scripture to interpret Scripture. He wants to make sure that the Jews understand that these are not merely his opinions, but rather they are consistent with God's covenant of redemption to them and it in no way compromises God's integrity.

So let's examine this passage. I want to do it under two headings. The first heading in verses 25 through 29 Paul is going to be proving how God predicted Israel's unbelief. We see this in the Old Testament. God predicted it. He predicted that only a remnant is going to be saved. He even predicted that Gentiles are going to be included in God's redemptive plan.

And then, secondly, in verse 30 through 33 he is going to prove that God's demand of faith for salvation has always been the central requirement to his plan of redemption. This is nothing new. These truths, I believe, will help us better understand the plight that the Jews today and what God has in store for them in the future. Plus, they will provide great insight into God's saving grace towards us, Gentiles, fellow heirs of the promises that God has given to his covenant people.

So first of all let's look at verses 25 through 29 where Paul proves that God predicted Israel's unbelief all the way along, that only a remnant will be saved and even Gentiles are going to be included in his plan of redemption.

Now notice what he has just said in verse 24. And here he is speaking of:

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

“... vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.”⁷

He says:

“...even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.”⁸

And, my friends, with that statement he just threw the cat in among the pigeons for the Jews. The Gentiles? Are you kidding me? So now he must prove his case.

So he goes in verse 25.

“As He says also in Hosea, ‘I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, ‘MY PEOPLE,’ AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, ‘BELOVED.’”⁹

Which is a paraphrase of Hosea 2:23. And in verse 26 he goes on. He says:

“AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, ‘YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,’ THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD.”¹⁰

A paraphrase of Hosea 1:10.

Now what is he saying here? And in order to answer that we must understand the context of Hosea’s prophecy. And, my friends, the theme of Hosea’s prophesy is such a magnificent one. The theme is God’s loyal love for his covenant people Israel in spite of their idolatry.

Now you will recall that God commanded Hosea in Hosea 1:2.

“Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry, and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the LORD.”¹¹

And as the story goes, Hosea goes and takes a wife and her name was Gomer. That is one name you don’t want to give to your infant daughters. This woman was habitually unfaithful. Yet Hosea is commanded to keep her as his wife despite her harlotry. And this story is a stunning analogy that portrays God’s faithfulness to unfaithful and spiritually adulteress Israel.

⁷ Romans 9:23.

⁸ Romans 9:24.

⁹ Romans 9:25.

¹⁰ Romans 9:26.

¹¹ Hosea 1:2.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

Now we must keep in mind that Hosea wrote specifically to the 10 tribes of the north, of the northern kingdom. They are the ones that had rebelled under Jeroboam and formed their own kingdom. They were cut off from the commonwealth of Israel and forsaken Yahweh. They turned to idols. They even established their own worship center in the region of Dan up in the north. And they had basically become thoroughly pagan.

So Gomer was the perfect analogy of the kind of spiritual harlotry that was going on in Israel. She became a rich metaphor which clarifies the themes of Hosea's prophesy, themes of sin and judgment and forgiving love.

Gomer conceived, according to the story, and bore a son. Hosea was probably not even the father. In Hosea one verse four we read:

“ And the LORD said to him, ‘Name him Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel.’”¹²

And that is referring to the story of the time when Jehu murdered Ahab's sons.

He goes on to say:

“...and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. And it will come about on that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.”¹³

And, of course, this actually happened later on when the Assyrian hordes came in and brutally destroyed the northern kingdom in 722 BC.

Now the name Jezreel is significant. It means God will scatter. And, of course, this name was therefore a harbinger of divine judgment upon Israel. Yet it is also interesting, as we read in Scripture the valley of Jezreel will one day become an avenue of blessing to the Jews when Christ returns in triumph.

Now in Hosea one and verse six we read:

“Then she conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. And the LORD said to him, ‘Name her Lo-ruhamah.’”¹⁴

Which means not pitied.

¹² Hosea 1:4.

¹³ Hosea 1:4-5.

¹⁴ Hosea 1:6.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

“...for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel, that I should ever forgive them.”¹⁵

So God is no longer going to extend his favor towards them because of their sin.

And then Gomer bears another son in verse nine.

“ And the LORD said, ‘Name him Lo-ammi.’”¹⁶

Which means not my people.

“...for you are not My people and I am not your God.”¹⁷

So the three names that were given to the children were given for the purpose of summarizing God’s attitude towards unfaithful Israel and it also pictured the temporary judgment that he would bring upon them. They would be scattered all around the world. They would not be pitied by the peoples of the world. They would no longer be God’s people in the sense of enjoying God’s blessing upon them. Instead he would give them over to the consequences of their iniquities. And, of course, this is precisely what happened to Israel.

We look at them today. They are still scattered. They are still a people treated without pity and forsaken by God, at least temporarily so. In fact, later in 605 BC the same fate befell the southern kingdom of Judah when the Babylonians came in and took them away. And this as certainly their status in the first century when Paul wrote this epistle to the Romans. And it was made exceedingly worse in AD 70 when the Romans utterly destroyed Jerusalem and the temple under Titus. He brings in 50,000 elite Roman soldiers and they destroyed them. They scattered the people that were surviving all over the ancient world.

It is interesting. History tells us that immediately when the Romans took them over, 500 Jewish leaders were crucified. And this was followed by a mass slaughter of the people. Josephus says that there was an estimated 1.1 million people that were massacred. And, of course, this was far greater than what happened with Antiochus Epiphanies in 170 BC.

An estimated 100,000 captives were taken to Egypt to be slaves which literally gutted the slave market of that day. Then in 132 AD Jews they were forcefully expelled even from Rome.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Hosea 1:9.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

Oh, dear friends, the consequences of sin. It is easy for us to forget it, to think that somehow God winks at sin, but he doesn't. And history records the atrocities that have been committed against the Jews down through the corridors of time. You could see it in the history of northern Europe during the crusades. You can read about it with the brutality that was poured out upon them during the medieval period of the Church, the ruthless persecution in England during the days of Richard the Lionhearted. Even the Magna Charta of 1215 that basically legalized injustice towards the Jews. In fact they were banished from the land for 350 years. That ended when Oliver Cromwell came to their rescue in the 17th century.

And as time went on, we see that the hand of divine abandonment upon them and their treatment in Spain and France, the pogroms of Russia to Poland, of Nazi Germany where six million killed in the Holocaust. Talk about divine judgment.

Dear friends, keep in mind. God is serious about his holiness. Russians tell us—this is coming out more and more—that they are convinced that Stalin killed even more than Hitler. The anti Semitism continued in Great Britain. It has been in all of the Muslim countries for years and years. And we are seeing it even growing today in the United States.

Virtually every country in the world hates the Jews. And now here in Romans nine this former rabbi who continues to yearn for the conversion of his countrymen, who longs to see them come to Christ points them to the Old Testament prophet Hosea that warned of these horrors. Divine judgment that continues to this very day.

Now a very important note here. Throughout chapters nine through 11 we see Paul speaking of Israel as a nation. Likewise Hosea's prophecies are given to Israel nationally. In fact, if you look at Hosea, you will see how he describes the national increases of Israel, their national conversion, their national reunion, their national leadership, their national restoration. And I would also add that never once in Scripture, not one time do we ever read that Israel has been permanently replaced by the Church, although many want to argue definitely. Never once do you see Israel being used as a synonym for the Church. There is never a suggestion that God is finished with them forever and for good reason, because such a notion would be contrary to the unilateral, irreversible, unconditional covenants that God made to Abraham and God made to David.

Paul will later say in chapter 11 verse one.

“I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!”¹⁸

And in verse two he says:

¹⁸ Romans 11:1.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

“God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.”¹⁹

Literally the idea of whom he fore loved.

Verse 11.

“I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be!”²⁰

Of course not. You see, the whole purpose of God’s sovereign grace in choosing Israel is to demonstrate to the world a vivid picture of his mercy towards an unfaithful, adulterous people and how his redeeming grace would eventually bring a remnant back to himself.

In fact, both Jews and Gentiles are described as, quote. “The objects of his mercy,” in chapter nine verse 22. And later in chapter 11 he will go on to explain in verse 25 that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until... there its he word of hope, until the fullness of the Gentiles is come in. Then he says that all Israel will be saved when the deliverer will come from Zion and remove ungodliness from Jacob.

Now we see this same great promise or restoration in Hosea’s prophecy. It is interesting if you were to study that first chapter after you have the description of the three names of Gomer’s children in Hosea one, he goes on in verse 10 and following to reaffirm the Abrahamic covenant that would eventually be fulfilled when the Lord returns and establishes his millennial kingdom. This will be a time of national conversion, a time of national reunion and restoration according to Ezekiel 37. It will be a time when the Messiah will reign according to Hosea 3:5.

So despite Israel’s unfaithfulness and her spiritual adultery, God will not permanent forsake his chosen ones. A remnant will be saved.

In fact, in Hosea chapter two verse 14 we read:

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Bring her into the wilderness, And speak kindly to her.”²¹

And in verse 16 he says:

“‘And it will come about in that day,’ declares the LORD, ‘That you will call Me Ishi.’”²²

¹⁹ Romans 11:2.

²⁰ Romans 11:11.

²¹ Hosea 2:14.

²² Hosea 2:16.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

Which, by the way, literally means husband, a term of intimate endearment. And he says:

“And you will no longer call Me Baali.”²³

Meaning master, denoting one who rules. Indeed, the nation is going to be restored.

In chapter two and verse 23 he says:

“I will sow her for Myself in the land.”²⁴

Isn't it interesting? The Jews have been scattered all over the world all of these many years, yet in 1948 out of the ashes of the Holocaust you see a nation emerge. The modern state of Israel was formed. They are continuing to return, dear friends, even to this day in unbelief, but God has promised that one day they will return in their belief.

Back in Hosea 2:23 he goes on to say:

“I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, And I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they will say, ‘Thou art my God!’”²⁵

My friends, this is what Paul quotes in chapter nine verse 25. All of this was pictured in the life of Hosea. A husband who loved an unfaithful wife, who protected and preserved her despite her harlotries and eventually Gomer ended up in the slave market, on that slave block. Can you imagine the scene? They would take people, they would strip them absolutely naked and there she would be naked in public, filthy, dirty, despised, humiliated. Like so many people we know today she had sown the wind and now she has reaped the whirlwind. And yet we read that her husband comes and buys her back for 15 shekels or silver and an omer and a half of barley, Hosea 3:2.

The money was the price to purchase a common slave in those days and the barley was the required offering of one accused of adultery.

My friends, what a marvelous picture of redemption. I hope you can see this. What a graphic reminder of God's promise to some day purchase Israel and redeem her back unto himself and also take in Gentiles, we who were not his people and consider us to be his people. I mean, that is us, dear friends.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Hosea 2:23.

²⁵ Ibid.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

So Romans nine verse 25:

As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'" "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."²⁶

So even as Hosea redeemed Gomer, so, too, God will redeem Israel. And even Gentiles who were not his people.

Peter speaks of this same thing in 1 Peter 2:10 where he also quotes Hosea. Here he is referring to both Jews and Gentiles in the church. He says:

"...for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY."²⁷

Oh, what a marvelous truth. Dear Christian, don't miss this. Historical Israel is God's model of mercy to demonstrate to the world that no one deserves mercy, that no one can achieve it on their own. And also that God will save some, but not all. He has mercy on whom he desires, verse 18. What a humbling truth. We must never forget this. It is the love of God and the call of God that gathers the people of God whether Jew or Gentile.

Paul continues his argument by citing Isaiah. Isaiah was a contemporary of Hosea whom God called to prophesy to Judah, the southern kingdom. And he is going to reveal to them that they, too, are going to be conquered. They are going to be scattered. They are going to be temporarily abandoned by God. So he cites Isaiah 10 verse 22 in Romans 9:27. Here is what he says.

And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD UPON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY."²⁸

When it says that Isaiah cries out, it is the idea that with intense sorrow and mourning he is revealing these truths that God has revealed to him. Can't you just feel his pain here?

²⁶ Romans 9:25-26.

²⁷ 1 Peter 2:10.

²⁸ Romans 9:27-28.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

Can't you feel what has gripped Isaiah's heart as God has revealed this truth to him? And now he has to tell his people.

I mean, think about it. Millions and millions of descendants that have come from the loins of Abraham numbers like the sands of the sea and yet only a remnant is going to be saved. Think of all of those people that deceived themselves.

In verse 28 he says:

“FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD UPON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY.”²⁹

And certainly this great judgment fell upon them in 605 BC when God moved upon wicked Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian hordes to come in to destroy Judah and only a remnant of believing Israelites were saved. And, of course, this was a foretaste of the greater destruction that would later happen in AD 70 at the hands of the Romans after the Jews had rejected their Messiah.

The prophet Amos also predicted this great judgment upon the northern kingdom of Israel. Here is what he said in Amos three verse one.

Hear this word which the LORD has spoken against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family which He brought up from the land of Egypt, "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities."³⁰

And he goes on in verse 11 and he says:

Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "An enemy, even one surrounding the land, Will pull down your strength from you And your citadels will be looted." Thus says the LORD, "Just as the shepherd snatches from the lion's mouth a couple of legs or a piece of an ear, So will the sons of Israel dwelling in Samaria be snatched away — With the corner of a bed and the cover of a couch!"³¹

Let me explain that to you. The analogy here is that of a shepherd who, according to the Mosaic law was required to retrieve the remains of an animal that had been killed by a predator while on his watch and, therefore, take those remains back to the owner to prove that the shepherd had not stolen the animal. So the analogy here is that of God retrieving

²⁹ Romans 9:28.

³⁰ Amos 3:1-2

³¹ Amos 3:11-12.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

the remains of his remnant that had not been devoured by the Babylonian lion and first the Assyrian lion along with the small pieces of their belongings, the corner of a bed, the cover of a couch. What a pathetic testimony to the devastation that they would suffer.

Now, remember, again, Paul is making his case here, that God predicted all of this. This shouldn't be something as a surprise to you. God has predicted that only a remnant of Jews are going to be preserved and none of what he has been saying about him saving some but not all is in any way inconsistent with God's plan of redemption for his chosen people. This is his whole argument. And to drive home his point even further, he cites Isaiah again in Isaiah 1:9.

Notice what he says in chapter nine verse 29 of Romans.

“And just as Isaiah foretold, ‘EXCEPT THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME AS SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH.’”³²

Lord of Sabaoth, sabaoth means armies, the Lord of hosts who has overwhelming power over his enemies.

Can't you just see the mercy here? The mercy of God. Had the Lord not intervened they would have been totally destroyed as a nation like the homosexuals in the garden of paradise, Sodom and Gomorrah that were buried in the fiery brimstone.

So, once again, Paul has argued or as Paul has argued earlier, it is the sinner who prepares himself as a vessel of wrath prepared for destruction. And such was the case with unfaithful, with rebellious Israel and all mankind. And yet from that lump of fallen humanity the sovereign potter mercifully prepares some vessels to be saved. And at that we read that he prepared them beforehand for glory from among both the Jews and the Gentiles.

So in Romans nine verses 25 through 29, again, Paul proves that God predicted Israel's unbelief. Only a remnant of Jews are going to be preserved and even the Gentiles will become fellow heirs.

Indeed, all of this is consistent with God's plan. This is what he has revealed. And to think, dear friends, that we are a part of this. Never lose sight of that. We are a part of this by God's grace.

³² Romans 9:29.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

Now, secondly, in verses 30 through 33 he is going not prove that God's demand of faith for salvation has always been the central requirement to his plan of redemption. Verse 30.

“What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith.”³³

That is what he is saying. They did not pursue it, but they attained it and they attained it by faith. He wants to make it clear that the Gentiles are saved on the same basis as the Jews. Every man must have a righteousness which is by faith. That is the point.

Now, I can hear it. Some will say, “Whoa, wait a minute. I thought he said earlier in verse 16 that it does not depend upon the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. Now he is contradicting... contradicting himself. He is saying that righteous is attained by faith.”

Ah, yes. Here we see yet again the Holy Spirit revealing to us the divine tension between man's responsibility and salvation and God's sovereign grace that chooses a man to be saved and then initiates that salvation.

It is interesting. God has made it clear in Scripture that no man can save himself by an act of his will. Yet, we also see that God will not save a man unless he exercises his will and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. What an amazing mystery that only God can fully understand and reconcile. And yet they are perfectly compatible at this time.

Bear in mind. Paul has been explaining the marvels of sovereign election. We have seen that in our studies in chapter eight, chapter nine. It is very clear. And now he addresses the human side of salvation, namely faith. And as we look at faith in Scripture we see that faith requires the whole of our being. Faith requires knowledge. We have to have a conscious knowledge of the object of our faith which is the Lord Jesus Christ. There also has to be emotion with faith.

2 Thessalonians 2:10 we read that when a man receives the love of the truth he must receive, I should say, the love of the truth so as to be saved.

Faith also requires volition. It requires an act of the will. John one verse 12.

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”³⁴

³³ Romans 9:30.

³⁴ John 1:12.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

So, indeed, we see this all through Scripture. Paul has said that man is justified by grace through faith and our faith is supplied through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 5:1-2.

You see, our response to the gospel is faith, but even that, even our faith is a gift of God.

Ephesians chapter two verses eight and nine.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.³⁵

Now, some will object to this interpretation. Some will insist that man makes at least some contribution to his salvation, that it is not all of God. And in order to do this what some will do is enlist what I would humbly argue is a very tortured exegetical argument to say that the word that in Ephesians 2:8-9 refers to being saved by grace. In other words, that is what is not of ourselves. Therefore the word that does not correspond to the gender of the noun faith. So, to put it real simply, they would argue that grace is God's part, but faith is man's part. Beloved, I would argue that that is false, that both are God's part. And I believe that this can be proven exegetically and certainly contextually; exegetically, if we had time and this isn't the proper place. Certainly if you want to know, I will take you there. But we can demonstrate that exegetically that is false to say what I have just argued from the other side based upon a well established and by no means rare exception to a grammatical rule. But setting that aside, contextually it is so obvious. I mean the whole context of this passage is that the credit for the entire process of salvation belongs to God. Why? So that man has no reason to boast.

The word that in the phrase "that not of yourself" refers to the whole of Paul's statement, by grace you have been saved through faith. Otherwise, the phrase "and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," that phrase would be totally redundant, because grace is, by definition, exactly that. It is something not of ourselves. It is the gift of God. That is why we have no reason to boast.

Dr. Kuyper said it best in his very vigorous and detailed exegesis of this text. Here is what he said. Quote, "Paul's words may be paraphrased thus." By the way, he wrote back in the turn of the century. "I had the right to speak about the surpassing riches of his grace, for it is, indeed, by grace that you were saved through faith. And lest you should now begin to say, 'But then we deserve credit at least for believing,' I will immediately add that even this faith or even this exercise of faith is not of yourselves, but it is God's gift," end quote.

³⁵ Ephesians 2:8-9.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

So, beloved, I would humbly submit to you that you would want to be very careful here. I believe that on the basis of Scripture, we owe the entirety of our salvation to the undeserved favor of God. Our contribution is zero. It is God that even energizes our faith. It, indeed, is a gift from God supplied by the grace of God.

Now if that is true, you would say, “Well, can’t we see that from other passages of Scripture?”

Yes and in a few minutes I will give you at least three. If we had time I would give you more. Acts chapter three verse 16 we read:

“And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.”³⁶

Where does the faith come from? From man? No. It comes from him. It comes from Jesus.

How about 2 Peter one verse one? And there Peter is writing to believers and he describes us as:

“...those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”³⁷

The verb received, have received a faith means literally to gain by divine will, to be given by an allotment. Clearly this is not something attained by human effort or based on personal worthiness, but rather this is a gift from the hand of a severing God.

How about Philippians 1:29? There we read:

“For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him.”³⁸

I realize this is hard to fathom. Certainly it is impossible to understand. But as we look at Scripture, you must know that nowhere in Scripture do we see that a human choice ordained by God is not really a choice at all. You don’t see that. Rather, in ways beyond our understanding we see that our choices are always voluntary, always having real result, yet ultimately ordained by God. And even when we exercise our faith, even when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that voluntary act on our part was initiated by the

³⁶ Acts 3:16.

³⁷ 2 Peter 1:1.

³⁸ Philippians 1:29.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

very God who ordained it before the foundation of the world. My friends, that is the teaching of the Word of God, whether you like it or not, whether you understand it or not.

So, again, in order to prove that God's demand of faith for salvation has always been central to God's plan of redemption he says in verse 30:

“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.”³⁹

Again, every man is saved on the same basis, by the righteousness which is by faith.

Then verse 31. He says:

“... but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.”⁴⁰

Think about this. Think of the myriad upon myriad of legalistic hoops and traditions that the Jews have jumped through to make themselves righteous before God. And it is all to no avail. It is all worthless. They could never arrive at the law. They could never be righteous enough.

Verse 32 he says:

Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."⁴¹

You see, this is what the Jews stumbled over all the time. They tripped over their own self righteousness. And don't we see that today? You may be listening to me today and think, you know, all of this religious stuff, all of this believing in Jesus? Come on. I am not that bad. I am a good man. I am a good woman.

Yes, my friend, you may be, but you are not good enough. You must trust in the righteousness of Christ to save you. You must plead with God for undeserved mercy admitting that your very best is woefully inadequate to be reconciled to a holy God. Salvation has always been and will always be by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

³⁹ Romans 9:30.

⁴⁰ Romans 9:31.

⁴¹ Romans 9:32-33.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

Well, of course, this infuriated the Jews. They were convinced that their own righteousness was sufficient. And so Paul was simply saying, “Yes and God predicted that that would be your reaction. He saw it all along.”

And so he quotes Isaiah 28 verse 16 in verse 33.

“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”⁴²

Sinful man is like the Jews who said to Christ, “We will not have this man reign over us.”

I would ask you. Does this describe you today? Do you stumble over Christ? Do you resent the truth of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone? Let me put it even a little more bluntly. Do you resent the truth whereby God says that all that you are and all that you do is fundamentally offensive to him and that unless you place your faith in the righteousness of Christ you will perish in your sin? Do you resent that? My friend, if you do, the wrath of God abides upon you and unless you humble yourself, you will one day experience the full force of that wrath for eternity.

I plead with you this day to repent and to believe on him. And as the text says, you will not be disappointed. A lot of you today are disappointed, aren't you? I know you are. Those of you without Christ, you have got to be. You know what it is like in the middle of the night when you wake up and everything is quiet and there is nothing to distract you from the reality that you are guilty before a holy God. You know it. But you suppress it. you know that your life is going nowhere fast. You have no real joy. It is tied to your circumstances. If you have a good day, you are happy. If you have a bad day, you are sad. And you are constantly running after the fleeting pleasures of life to somehow anesthetize the pain. My friend, you are disappointed and the disappointment is only going to grow unless you trust in Christ, because only in him will we find forgiveness, peace with God and hope.

So won't you come to Jesus today and trust in him and he will save you.

Let's pray together.

Father, we rejoice in your grace that is so undeserved. Thank you for the great truths of your Word that cause us to see what you are up to. Oh, God, it is so overwhelming. It is so humbling. And I would just cry out to you on behalf of those that are doing battle with you in their heart. Oh, God, would that you break them today. Cause them by you grace to see their need to repent and believe in the Savior. For it is in his name that we pray. Amen.

⁴² Romans 9:33.

Israel's Unbelief and Old Testament Prophecy

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 9:25-33

Preached on: Sunday, April 29, 2012

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to pastor, Bible teacher and author David Harrell. For more information or to order additional tapes or CDs of pastor Harrell's messages, please visit OliveTreeResources.org.

Transcript Explanation: Each transcript is a rough approximation of the message preached and may occasionally misstate certain portions of the sermon and even misspell certain words. It should in no way be considered an edited document ready for print. Moreover, as in any transcription of the spoken word, the full intention and passion of the speaker cannot be fully captured and will in no way reflect the same style of a written document.

Permissions: You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that you do not alter the wording in any way and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Olive Tree Resources.

Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: By Dr. David Harrell. © Olive Tree Resources.
Website: olivetreesources.org