

Sunday, March 7, 2010

**Living Hope EFC**

Art Smith

God has Always Retreated to His Sovereignty to Save Israel Rom.9:6-13

---

**Joke:** A group of Aggie Theologians.

A group of Aggie students (theologians) at A&M were discussing predestination and free will. An argument grew so heated that sides were taken and the group broke into two fiercely prejudiced factions.

**One guy**, not really knowing which group he belonged in, stood for a minute trying to decide. Finally, he made up his mind to join the pre-destination group.

When he went to join the group *someone asked him, "Who sent you here?"* "Nobody sent me," he replied, "I came on my own free will."

"FREE WILL!" they shouted. "You can't join us based on your own free will. You belong to that other group."

So...he turned and went to the other group, the "free will" group. But when he came to them, someone asked him **why he decided** to join.

"I was sent here by that other group," was his reply. "SENT HERE!" they shouted with horror! "You can't join us unless you *choose* to do so by your own *free will!*"

And so he was left with no group to join. – Lee Tan 5317

This poor guy probably represents a lot of us, when it comes to figuring out where we belong and what we believe regarding predestination.

QUESTIONS?

Q: If we believe in predestination, doesn't that eliminate man's free will?

Q: If we believe in free will, doesn't that mean God can't predestine?

Q: If God is sovereign and all-powerful, must He not be in control?

Q: Can both of these exist without corrupting the value of the other?

**These questions are raised when people read through Rom.9-11.**

- Here, Paul turns from his discussion of salvation on a **personal level** to **God's redemptive program for Israel & Gentiles on a cosmic level.**
- Having discussed God's inseparable love & promises of eternal salvation for believers in 8:28-39, the question naturally arises: "So what ever happened to Israel? **What of God's promises and expressed love for them? Did God's promises to Israel fail?**

**Secondly, Paul is writing to the church in Rome, undoubtedly to address accusations & reports by Jews about his ministry.**

- To Jews, Paul was a traitor and a false teacher.
- He discredited the Mosaic Law, his emphasis was on *Gentiles*.
- Here Paul shares his genuine love for Israel & explains why Israel is not in the lime light of God's redemptive program at the present time.

**OUTLINE:**

Chap.9 Israel's past election                      God's past dealings with Israel

- God chose Israel as His medium for worldwide redemption.

Chap.10 Israel's present rejection              God's present purpose with Israel

- Salvation for Jew & Gentile through faith in Jesus Christ.

Chap.11 Israel's future restoration              God's future purpose for Israel

- Israel as a nation will experience God's promised blessings.

In Chap.9 Paul is going to point out: God's Word has not failed regarding Israel. Rather, He is fulfilling exactly what He promised.

**9:1-5. God chose Israel to be in Cov't relationship with Him, that He might bless the world through them, through Jesus Christ.**

- Abraham was given promises that would mediate worldwide blessing
- Abraham's promised blessing was passed to his sons & finally to the nation, Israel.
- **God established both an *unconditional* & a *conditional* Cov't with Israel. One gave permanent ownership of land, the other regulated actual possession by any generation of Jews walking in God's Cov't.**
- Israel's unbelief & disobedience to God, and the rejection of His Son, resulted in their current state of blindness & loss of privilege.
- Thus = Paul's sorrow of heart! All of us who have unsaved friends and relatives can understand the implications & his sorrow.

**9:6-13. God's sovereign selection has always guaranteed His plan**

**1. (v.6)** ANSWER: God's Word/ promises never fail: **Num.23:19.** Is.44-48

- **Result: Israel's/ man's failures do not negate the faithfulness of God!**
- IF God's promises were dependent upon man, none could succeed.

**2. "Not all Israel, are true Israelites."** Paul explained this in **2:28-29.**

<sup>28</sup>A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. <sup>29</sup>No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

- There's a difference between physical & spiritual descendants.
- *A true Israelite is one who worships God in spirit & in truth.*

**3. (v.7) "Not all Abram's σπερμα are τέκνα of Abraham." – Jn.8:39-44**

<sup>39</sup>"Abraham is our father," they answered.

"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. <sup>40</sup>As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. <sup>41</sup>You are doing the things your own father does."

- Abraham believed God & was justified by faith. True heirs do same.

**4. (v.8,9) – To be children of God is not merely a matter of natural descendant, but of promise=supernatural birth, like Isaac. **John.1:11-13.****

<sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

- How many sons did Abraham have? 8 in all! Isaac, Ishmael, then 6 sons by Keturah (Gen.25). Only "1" was a "promised, miracle" son.

**ILLUS:** Lutheran's in Sweden & Denmark.

- In 1800's, to be born in Sweden meant you were Lutheran!
- Problem, many didn't believe in Luther's God. =Not really Lutherans
- Today, there are people born in America who are not true *Americans*.
- Because people are born in a "Christian" nation, doesn't mean they are true Christians. Personal faith in Christ is needed to be Christian.

**POINT:** God promised Abraham he would have descendants who would experience His blessing, and who would mediate His blessing to the world. By His own sovereign hand he brings about His purposes.

### **5. (v.10-12) Illustration two: God's promise to Rebekah.**

- God chose Jacob to receive the family blessing over Esau, and to be the son through whom Abraham's Cov't would continue.
- **God's choice/ election is not based on character or conduct but upon grace.** Not upon natural birth order, but upon God's will.— Rom.3:23
- Anyone who reads the story of Jacob knows God didn't choose him for his character! He conned Esau's birthright & stole Isaac's blessing.
- NOTE: God's choice does not condemn Esau spiritually.

### **6. (v.13) What is Paul saying here? Did God hate Esau?**

- Paul's quote is from Mal.1:2-3, who wrote this about 400BC.
- It is **not** a prophetic statement condemning Esau, but a verification that God's promise to Rebekah (Gen.25:23) had come true.
- Esau became the nation of Edom, and Edom did not enjoy God's blessing as Israel did. It all happened as God promised Rebekah.
- **"Hate VS Love"** =not stating absolutes, but **comparison: Lk.14:26.**
- <sup>26</sup>"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.
- Jesus is not teaching us to "hate" our family. That would be contrary to the rest of Scripture's teaching. He is talking about priorities.
- **Hatred** is relative to a higher choice. John 12:25, Matt.6:24.
- God's *love* for Jacob was seen in his choice of him, and God's *hatred* for Esau was seen in his rejection for the line of promise.
- **God loves the world, all sinners, not just some** —Jn.3:16; Rom.5:8.

**Paul's Point:** God's Word has not failed. His purposes all succeed.

God does not wait and depend upon man's abilities or faithfulness to make sure His promises come true. He looks to His own sovereignty & glory & grace, and over the span of history – He brings to pass everything He has said.