

Subject: God's Sovereignty Revealed and Defended

Scripture: Romans 9:21-33

The letter of Paul to the church at Rome is all about God's salvation of lost sinners through the gospel. At the beginning Paul states that he is ready to preach the gospel and he is not ashamed of the Gospel.

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

Then in Romans 1-8, Paul develops the gospel theme in all of its glory.

Romans 1-3 All people need salvation

- A. The heathen (Gentiles) need salvation
- B. The religious Jews need salvation

Romans 3-5 God provides salvation (justification)

- A. God justifies sinners by grace alone
- B. God justifies sinners through faith alone
- C. God justifies sinners in Christ alone
- D. God justifies sinners like He always has (Abraham and David)
- E. God's grace in Christ is greater than our sin in Adam

Romans 6-7 Sanctification follows justification

- A. We were servants of sin, but now servants of righteousness
- B. We have a lifelong struggle with indwelling sin

Romans 8 Salvation by grace is eternally secure

- A. No condemnation in Christ
- B. God's purpose ends in glorification
- C. No separation from God's love in Christ

Romans 9 Salvation by grace is perfectly righteous

- A. The problem of Jewish unbelief
- B. The salvation of a Jewish remnant
- C. God's sovereign grace in election
- D. Man's stubborn unbelief in rejection

In chapter 9, Paul is dealing with the issue of Jewish unbelief. Most Jews rejected Christ and the salvation that only comes from Him, but that is no reflection on God. The failure wasn't on God's part, but on their part.

1. Unbelief of the Jews and faith of the Gentiles were both predicted in OT Scripture

In spite of Jewish rejection, some Jews were saved along with some Gentiles, and all of this was predicted in the OT scriptures.

- A. God said that Gentiles would receive salvation and be His people (vs. 25-26)
This was written by the prophet Hosea.
- B. God said that only a remnant of Israel would be saved (vs. 27-29)
Although the nation was great, the number of the saved was small (vs. 27), and if God had not been merciful no Jews would have been saved at all (vs. 29).

2. Unrighteous Gentiles received God's righteousness by faith (vs. 30)

- A. They had not followed after righteousness, but after sin (Rom. 1-3)
- B. They received God's righteousness by faith in Christ

Romans 3:10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.*

Romans 3:28 *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

Philippians 3:9 *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*

3. Self-righteous Jews failed to achieve righteousness by works (vs. 31-33)

- A. The Jews sought to be righteous by keeping God's law

Galatians 2:16 *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

- B. The Jews stumbled over Christ in unbelief

This was also predicted in the OT and mentioned several times in the NT.

Isaiah 28:16 *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*

1 Corinthians 1:23-24²³ *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;*²⁴ *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

This truth that Paul taught and preached to the churches is the same truth that Peter taught and preached:

1 Peter 2:6-10⁶ *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.*⁷ *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,*⁸ *And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*

To believers Christ is the precious cornerstone, but to unbelievers Christ is a stumbling stone and a rock of offense.

How can it be that the Gentiles who had very little knowledge of God and no desire for God would come to believe in Christ and be saved? There's only one answer...the grace of God.

How can it be that the Jews who had much knowledge of God and a desire to strive for righteousness by keeping the law would not believe in Christ and be saved? There's only one answer...their stubborn unbelief.

Here's the point...every person who is saved from sin has no one to thank except God. And every person who is lost in sin has no one to blame but himself.