



PART 11: CRUCIFORM FAITH

INTRODUCTION – Asking The Right Questions

Deuteronomy 29:29

QUESTION #1:

If God promised to bless "Israel", but only a minority of Jews have recognized Jesus as their Messiah, can we really trust God to keep his promises? (See 9:6, 14.)

[Exodus 19:6 vs. Matthew 27:1]

To answer this question, Paul must make his point from Scripture that throughout Israel's history God has always considered a remnant within ethnic Israel to be his true people, so if even a minority of Jews now embrace Jesus and thereby are God's true people, this is not very different from how things have always been in God's dealings with Israel.

QUESTION #2:

If all people are invited to become part of the true Israel, God's people of faith, as Paul has claimed (Romans 2:17-29; 4:13-25) and if more Gentiles than Jews are now responding to God's offer, is this a sign that God has turned his back on Israel? (See 11:1.) Has God discarded ethnic Israel and moved on to another people group? Are Jews now unsavable?

Paul must remind the church of the precious value of the Jews, pointing out that even their rejection of the Messiah is still within God's plan and he has not turned his back on them.

Look To The Book

A QUICK SUMMARY...

1. When westerners read this chapter out of the context of Romans as a whole, we read into it the topic of personal predestination, either to salvation or damnation. This is *not* Paul's concern here. Paul is talking about God's sovereign right to invite whoever he wants into his Kingdom, even if that means Gentiles (and to keep out of his kingdom anyone who rejects his mercy, even if that means Jews).
2. **9:1-5...** As he pointed out in **3:2**, Paul reminds us that Israel has been given many blessings and privileges, yet they missed the greatest one – the Messiah. This is not an opportunity for Christ-followers to *gloat*, but to *grieve*. In the spirit of Moses (**Exodus 32**) Paul would be willing to give up his salvation if it could mean salvation for his people.
3. **9:6-13...** God's promise to create a special people from Abraham's "seed" was fulfilled, not through everyone who was related to Abraham by blood, but through a minority of his descendants, those through whom God chose to fulfill his promises. God's covenant with Abraham was fulfilled through Isaac and not Ishmael, through Jacob and not Esau. Blood may be thicker than water, but not thicker than promise.
4. **9:14-18...** Paul drives home the point that Jewish hesitancy to embrace Jesus as Messiah is not unforeseen by God. In fact, God has used it to bring about the world's redemption through Christ's crucifixion, just like Pharaoh's hard heart was used by God to set the stage for a great deliverance.

Romans 9

5. **9:19-24...** As Jewish history shows, out of the same lump of clay God fashions different kinds of vessels – some who rebel and some who reflect his glory. Note that the verb "prepared" in **v. 22** is passive – those who are dishonourable vessels are prepared (by themselves?) for destruction (see **1:24, 26, 28**). Whereas the verb in **v. 23** is active – *God* prepares the more honourable vessels directly for glory. And if God is preparing his people, he as the Potter has the right to invite Gentiles into this same family and we are in no place to argue with his decision.
6. **9:25-26...** Scripture pointed, in principle, to the inclusion of the Gentiles (e.g., **Hosea 2:23; 1:10**).
7. **9:27-29...** God promised a *remnant* of Jews would return to God and trust in him (e.g. **Isaiah 10:22**). Therefore, we should not be surprised that not all Jews embrace Jesus as their Messiah.
8. **9:30-33...** Paul sums up this section by saying that faith and not Law has always been God's way of making us righteous. The Torah (Law) was embedded in the Pentateuch which emphasized righteousness by faith. Therefore Gentiles can be saved without practising Torah laws and Jews who pursue the Law (rather than righteousness by faith) as their goal miss the point. Because Jesus the Messiah called people to back to faith (a la Abraham) and not back to the Law (a la Moses), most religious Jews stumbled over him and his scandalous spirituality. Israel pursued the Law rather than using the Law to help them pursue God. Religion tends to substitute rules in place of relationship.

So What?

TAKE OUT #1:

Our spiritual sense of hope and joy must also make room for sacrificial suffering (**ch. 8**) and compassionate _____. (e.g., **Phil. 2:27**)

TAKE OUT #2:

Jesus teaches and models (**5:8; 8:32**) a "SPIRITUALITY OF SELF-GIVING" (N.T. Wright), which Paul fully embraces (**9:3**). The faith of a Christ-follower should be _____. (**John 15:13**)

TAKE OUT #3:

Our future is determined by our _____ not our _____ (**9:30-32**). You are not God's child because of your heritage, your history, or your morality, but because you have a trust-based relationship with Jesus.

CONCLUSION – Curing Arterial Sclerosis

God did harden Pharaoh's heart as he predicted to Moses he would (**Exodus 4:21; 9:12; etc.**). But this happens only _____ Pharaoh is twice said to harden his own heart (**Exodus 8:15, 32**).

Psalm 95:6-8

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP & REVIEW...

① Use your notes to review this week's message. Take your time, be thorough, and as you go, talk about what challenged, perplexed, or encouraged you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

② Read our key text, **Romans 9**. What verse stands out to you the most? Why?

③ Read Jesus' story of the Gracious Landowner in **Matthew 20:1-16**. Discuss how this parable interacts with our key text, on the themes of: a) God's justice, b) God's grace, and c) God's sovereignty.

SO WHAT?...

④ Take a few minutes to meditate on **Romans 9:1-5**. Who do *you* feel this way about? When done, re-gather and share your thoughts. Pray for each other in light of things shared and for people you want to see come to know Jesus.

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, June 12 / 19, 2005