

## GOD'S SOVEREIGN ELECTION IS EXAMINED

**PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.**

**Background:** In Romans 9:1-11:36, Paul turns his attention to God's plan for Israel because it is fundamentally related to His blessing of all nations. The LORD promised Abraham and Isaac that all the nations and families in the earth would be blessed by their offspring (Gen 12:3; 26:3-5). Jesus said, "Salvation is of the Jews" (Jn 4:22). In Romans 9-11, we will learn about God's, sovereign election of Jews and Gentiles, His gracious salvation for Jews and Gentiles, and His abundant mercy to Jews and Gentiles.

Some Christian leaders teach that God has forsaken Israel for fiercely opposing Jesus as their Messiah and relentlessly demanded that Pilate put Him to a violent death. They teach that God replaced Israel with the Church and gave the Church all the promises that He had originally given to Israel. This is called Replacement Theology. Paul will prove that Replacement Theology is unbiblical in Romans 11. Among his proofs, he will show that God has set Israel aside temporarily to save the Gentiles, but He has not revoked His promises to Israel. He will save them when the fullness of the Gentiles has come. God will keep His promises to Israel.

Paul relates God's past, present and future plan for Israel, and shows how it fits His sovereign plan for the whole world. God has used Israel's unbelief to save many Gentiles in His present program, but He has not forgotten Israel. God will save Israel when Israel receives Jesus as their Messiah. He will make Israel a blessing to the whole world to the praise of His name (11:26-32).

In the past, we learn of God's sovereign election of Israel (9:6-16), but many in Israel were not being saved because they depended on the Law to make them righteous (9:31-33). In the present, since the coming of Christ, the Jews have refused God's righteousness by faith in Christ. They have attempted to establish their own righteousness (10:1-4). However, God's righteousness is still available to any of them who **confess** that Jesus is God, **believe** that He rose from the dead, and **ask** Him for salvation with faith in His name (10:9-13). In the future, God will save His people, Israel, that He foreknew (11:2). When the full number of Gentiles is saved, all Israel will be saved (11:26). God is merciful to all sinners (11:32). He will save all who call on His name (10:13). Believers from all nations will be in Christ's Kingdom (Rev 7:9; Zech 14:9, 16).

The following general outline should give aid in grasping the overall subject matter of chapters 9-11:

### I. God's Sovereignty Was Revealed in Israel's Past (9:1-33)

- A. Paul Voiced His Sorrow for Israel (9:1-5)
- B. Paul Vindicated God's Selection of Israel (9:6-29)
- C. Paul Verified the Stumbling of Israel (9:30-33)

### II. God's Salvation Is Being Rejected in Israel's Present (10:1-21)

- A. Righteousness Is Disallowed by Works of the Law (10:1-5)
- B. Righteousness Is Dispensed by Faith in the Gospel (10:6-17)
- C. Righteousness Is Disdained by Disobedience of Israel (10:18-21)

### III. God's Solution Will Be Received in Israel's Future (11:1-36)

- A. Rejection of Israel Is Not Final (11:1-10)
- B. Rebellion by Israel Will Be Forgiven (11:11-24)
- C. Restoration of Israel Will Be Full (11:25-32)
- D. Reverence for God Will Be Fulfilled (11:33-36)

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Several factors should be considered as to what prompted Paul to write Romans 9-11. First, Paul was burdened for Israel because they were his countrymen, even though he was basically commissioned to minister to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15-16). He loved the Jews and yearned for their salvation, even though they blasphemed his message and tried to kill him (Acts 13:45; 14:19). Second, he assured them that God had not forgotten them, but Israel would be saved. Third, he revealed that God's sovereign plan was not destroyed by the Jew's present unbelief. Fourth, Paul challenged the Jews to receive God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. Fifth, the Jews needed to know that Jesus is their Messiah. Sixth, the Jews needed to know why their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah disallowed them from receiving the blessings that God had promised them.

Even though all these factors may have been in Paul's mind, the last two were most important. The promises of God to Israel were linked to Jesus as their Messiah. They needed to receive Jesus as their Messiah-King. When the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah, the promises of God could not be given to them. Paul wanted them to know this fact lest they would say, "God does not keep His promises." Paul assured them that God would keep His promises to Israel when they would repent and receive Jesus as their Messiah.

### **God's Sovereignty Was Revealed in Israel's Past (9:1-33)**

**Introduction:** Paul revealed God's sovereignty in His election of sinners for salvation in this chapter. He told Abraham that He elected Isaac, not Ishmael. He told Rebekah that He elected Jacob, not Esau. He told Moses that He will have mercy on those whom He chooses. He is like the potter that makes whatever vessels he desires from his clay. So why has God, up to this time, taken His "clay" and elected to make so many Gentile vessels and so few Jewish vessels? After all, the Jews are His chosen people. Paul gave us the answer in chapter 8.

#### **I. Paul Voiced His Sorrow for Israel — 9:1-5**

##### **A. The Nature of that Sorrow — 9:1-3**

9:1 — Paul verified what he was about to say with three strong statements: he spoke the truth in Christ (1 Tim 2:7; Jn 1:14, 17); he did not lie (cp. 1 Jn 2:21); and he appealed to his own conscience as a witness in the Holy Spirit (cf Acts 23:1; 2 Cor 1:12; see notes on Rom 2:14-15 for conscience).

9:2 — He described his concern for his unsaved Jewish people as a great and unceasing sorrow in his heart. He deeply cared for their spiritual welfare.

9:3 — Paul proved his sincere concern and love for the Jewish people by wishing he could be accursed for them, that is, be separated from Christ for their sake. In its clearest language, this meant that he was willing to go to Hell, at least for a season, so that his fellow Jews might be saved. But he did not ask God to do it, because he knew this was impossible (8:38-39). The Greek construction of the words in this verse indicates the impossibility of such a wish. This reminds us of Moses' willingness to suffer the loss of his physical life for the sake of his fellow Israelites (Ex 32:31-32).

##### **B. The Reason for that Sorrow — 9:4-5**

9:4 — Paul's sorrow was based upon Israel's present spiritual condition in light of the promises that God gave to its patriarchs. They were Israelites (cp. Gen 32:27-28; 48:16; Isa 48:1) who had been promised the adoption. This was God's gracious desire to make them His own nation (Isa 43:20-21; Deut 14:1-2). This adoption does not seem to have the exact same implications as it does for the individual believer in this age (cp. Study Notes 8:15; also see Gal 3:23; 4:1-3). The glory most likely refers to the Law as well as the Shekinah glory in the tabernacle (Ex 24:16, 17; 40:34-38; 1 Kgs 8:10, 11). This was a sign of God's presence and unique relationship with Israel. The covenants, no doubt,

referred to the covenants with Abraham (Gen 12, 15) and David (2 Sam 7:16). The giving of the Law refers to Moses' reception of it on Mt. Sinai (Ex 19, 20). The services have reference to Israel's unique possession of a prescribed worship of God. The promises refer to those associated with the covenants and would include a posterity, a land, prosperity, a new heart, and the blessing of the Messiah Who would rule all nations from Jerusalem. Paul's sorrow for Israel was caused by its lack of faith in God (9:31-32). Only Israel had all of these unique privileges and promises, but they continually rejected God's plan and subsequent blessings.

9:5 — All of these privileges and promises were given to the patriarchs because they had faith in God (Gen 12:1-3; 15:5-6, 18; 26:1-6; 28:13-15, 20-21; 32:24-30). Notice, Jacob placed his faith in God's promises 20 years after God offered them to him (see Gen 28 and 32). When God made His plan for the earth, He knew when and how Jacob would receive His offer by faith. Moses believed God and he led Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground, but that Sea drowned the Egyptian army that pursued after them (Ex 14:26-31). But greater than these miracles was the miracle that brought God's Son into the world, "Who is God over all." He came down from Heaven to be born of a young Jewish maiden. Paul had sorrow over Israel's unbelief because it caused God to set aside His offer to Israel and centuries have passed but Israel has still not accepted God's offer.

This introduction to the sovereignty of God in the life of Israel reveals that Israel could reject His authority, refuse to believe His promises, and lose His blessings. How can God allow Israel do this and still be sovereign? His sovereignty is misunderstood by many fine Christians, so it will be discussed later in these Study Notes.

## II. Paul Vindicated God's Selection of Israel — 9:6-29

### A. Israel's Rejection as It Relates to God's Promises — 9:6-13

#### 1. The principle of faith — 9:6-9

9:6a — "Not as though the Word of God had taken none effect." Even though the promises of God were not enjoyed by the whole nation of Israel, His promises were a blessing to individual Israelites who had faith in Him. Paul clearly vindicated God's faithfulness regarding His promises (cf. 11:1-7). The purpose of God to bless all Israel was not thwarted by Israel's present rebellion. God's promises to Israel were still valid. His sovereign plan to elect Israel was not changed by their refusal to believe it.

Paul had sincere sorrow for Israel because it had been specifically selected by God to receive His promises (9:1-5), but now God has set aside Israel for their unbelief (9:31-32). Israel's unbelief caused them to temporarily forfeit the benefits from the promises of God, but Paul showed that it did not mean God had failed to keep His promises to the believers in Israel (9:6a). God kept His promises to individuals that had faith in Him. The problem was with Israel as a nation; the Jewish nation failed to believe God's promises. However, Paul indicates that God will perform His promises to the whole nation in the future. He proves this fact by the remnant of spiritual Israelites in every age (9:29).

The important elements of God's plan are given in chapters 9-11. It was written to the Israelites, but the Gentiles received it before they did. First, God is the sovereign King of His creation with a pure purpose and plan for nations and individuals (Rom 9). Second, God's sovereign plan does not eliminate or reduce the responsibility of sinners to receive His plan to be saved (Rom 10). Third, God's sovereign gift of mercy and the decision of individuals to receive His mercy must work together to accomplish God's pure purpose and plan for both Gentiles and Israelites (Rom 11). With this overview in mind, let us examine the text.

9:6b-9 — Having vindicated God's faithfulness to keep His promises, Paul proceeded to show the problem was with Israel. All Israelites are not true Israelites; that is, genetics are not involved in obtaining the promises of God (Gal 3:28-29). Paul distinguished between Abraham's two kinds of children: "children of the flesh" and "children of God" (9:8). The "children of God" are the "children of promise." The "seed" (Christ) would come through the children of promise, that is, through Isaac, the son promised to Abraham and Sarah, and through his family (9:7-9; Gal 3:16). This serves to reveal two important truths. First, true Israelites have faith in God and this makes them children of God, while the other Israelites are children of the devil and will remain such if they do not receive God's Son as their Savior (Jn 8:37-47). Second, God promised Sarah a son in her old age. Isaac was that son of promise. Ishmael was not the son of promise. He was the son of the flesh. God planned to have Sarah's son be the one whose family would produce a godly virgin (Mary) to give birth to His Son.

## 2. The principle of election — 9:10-13

9:10-12 — The principle of election accomplishes God's purpose (see Study Notes on 8:30 for God's purpose). This is seen in the previous verses where God elected Isaac over Ishmael, even though Ishmael was Abraham's older son. What principle was God using to elect the younger son over the older son? Some might say that Ishmael was inferior to Isaac, because he was the son of Sarah's maidservant and Isaac was the son of his wife. No, God elected Isaac by a better principle. He had Isaac in mind when He promised to make him Abraham's heir before Ishmael was conceived. Isaac would be the son whose seed would be as the stars of heaven (Gen 15:5; cf. 17:18-19). God's principle for election is not based on a person's mother. This is proved later by His election of Jacob instead of Esau. Both men had Rebekah for their mother. In fact, they were twins; Esau was born first. God told Rebekah before they were born that the older son (who would be Esau) would serve the younger son (who would be Jacob). Why did God choose Jacob to rule over Esau? Usually in the patriarchal age, the younger son would serve the older son.

"Not of works, but of Him that calls" – The fact that they were not yet born when this prophecy was made, reveals that their works had no effect on God's election of Jacob. So, what principle did God use to elect Jacob? All true Christians will agree that election is not of works, but some might say election is by God's call. However, just the opposite is true. God's call is dependent on God's election or predestination (Rom 8:29-30). So, we still need to find the principle that God uses to elect some sinners and not others? The answer can be found in Romans 9-11, so let us rightly divide the word beginning in 9:12.

9:12 — God elected Jacob instead of Esau, not on the basis of their good works. That is true of every person. God does not choose sinners to be in His family on the basis of their good works. God chose the sinners to be in His family before He created the world. He did this on the basis of His foreknowledge of them. His election of Jacob and not Esau was due to His future knowledge of these two men. The knowledge of all things is the amazing attribute of God revealed in this story. Many Christians overlook this attribute in God's election of some sinners to live with Him forever, but what did He say to Rebekah before her twins were born? He said, "The elder shall serve the younger." That sentence is loaded with truth. This not only was God's prophecy for Jacob's physical rule over Esau, who obtained this position in the family by buying Esau's birthright for a bowl of stew and by stealing his patriarchal blessing by deception, but more importantly, it was God's statement of Jacob's spiritual rule over Esau as a result of his faith in the promises of God, which he obtained in wrestling with the preincarnate Son of God.

Let us remember that God foreknew when Jacob would place his faith in Him to determine His election of Jacob. Twenty years before Jacob wrestled with the Son of God, he fled from Esau, who planned to kill him. He fled to Laban's house, who was the brother of his mother. On his way, he stopped at Bethel where he had a dream of a staircase to Heaven and God spoke to him above the staircase and promised to be with him and bless him greatly (Gen 28:13-15). When Jacob awoke, he was afraid but made a vow to God that he would accept the LORD (Yahweh) as his God, if He blessed him and brought him back to his father's house in peace (Gen 28:20-21). That means he was not yet saved.

On his return home 20 years later, he was forced to wrestle alone with God (Christ) and keep his promise that he made at Bethel. He had to make a firm decision about his relationship with God. This happened the night before his meeting with Esau (Gen 32:24-32). After much wrestling and with daylight approaching, God put his hip out of joint (a physical wrestling match, not a dream). It was time for Jacob to make a firm decision. He had refused to make God his God for twenty years, so what should he do? Jacob could wrestle no longer with his hip out of joint, He decided to hang on to God until He blessed him. This decision by faith in God's promise was foreknown by God and it enabled God to bless him with his election, with his protection from Esau, with his separation from the uncircumcised Canaanites and Perizzites, and with his distinction as a patriarch of Israel.

His strong desire to be blessed by God showed his faith in God. He believed that God would fulfill all of His promises that He had made twenty years earlier. God changed Jacob at that time and gave him a new name, Israel, to remind him of his encounter with Him. Allen Ross said that "Israel" probably means "God fights." He said that God fought against Jacob's sin and He will fight for Israel's success (Bible Knowledge Commentary, Genesis, p. 81). Jacob was about 97 years old when he made this decision. It was a beautiful blending together of Jacob's will with God's will. God knew Jacob would have faith in Him before he was born, but when we think about it, God knew the decisions of all believers before they were born. They were all elected in God's plan before He laid the foundation of the earth (Eph 1:4).

9:13 — "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated" – God foreknew both Jacob and Esau. God knew Jacob would trust in Him and be his God, but He knew that Esau would never do that, so He could elect Jacob, but not Esau. Paul took this quotation from Malachi 1:2-3 to remind the Jews that God has a special love for them. Why? Because Jacob, their forefather, wrestled with Him and would not let Him go until He would bless him and his seed (Gen 32:24-30; 28:13-14). Jacob left a godly heritage for the nation named after him.

What did God know about Esau? He showed no concern for God's curse on the Canaanites and married two Canaanite women, a marriage that Abraham would not allow for his father, Isaac (Gen 9:25; 24:3; 26:34-35; 28:1). Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of his red stew when he was very hungry. His birthright would have allowed him to be a forefather of Messiah. Esau lived for himself and there is no indication in the Scriptures that he ever surrendered to God. God has a righteous hatred for those who love their sin (Ps 5:5) and could not elect him. He left an ungodly heritage for his people.

## **B. Israel's Rejection as it Relates to God's Justice — 9:14-29**

### **1. God's election of Israel in the past — 9:14-18**

9:14 — Some might say that God was unjust in loving Jacob and hating Esau, since God loves everyone. But does love everyone (Ps 5:5; 11:5; Prov 6:16-19)? God hated Esau because he held onto his sin, and refused to repent. God foreknew this about Esau.

9:15 — "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" – Paul took this quotation of God from Exodus 33:19. A little background for these words about God's mercy is helpful. 3000 men were killed in the golden calf incident (Ex 32). Then God threatened to destroy all the Israelites, but Moses pled with God not to do it. God said He would blot out of His book those that had sinned against Him, so He sent a severe plague upon those people. Then He told Moses to take the people to Canaan, but He would not go with them lest He destroy all of them on the way. Moses appealed to God to go with them to Canaan, or not send them at all, so God said He would go with Moses. Also, God was gracious and merciful to those in the camp that worshipped Him (Ex 33:7-10). So, God said, "I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Ex 33:19). We must keep God's statement in its context. God is not saying He will make a sovereign decision to show mercy to some and not to others. God is gracious and shows mercy to all that worship Him. When sinners respond with repentance and faith in Him, God will be gracious and show mercy to them.

9:16 — Paul concludes that God's mercy is not obtained by the sinner who "wills" or "runs." What does Paul mean? The one who "wills" in this verse has nothing to do with the will to receive Christ by faith. It is speaking of the will of the flesh or the will of an unsaved man to devise other ways of salvation apart from Christ (Jn 1:13). The person who "runs" is a figure of speech for one who is working for his salvation. He is doing works of righteousness without trusting in Christ for righteousness (Mt 7:21-23; Tit 3:5; Gal 2:16). But God's mercy is freely given to all those who have faith in Christ's sacrifice for their sins (cf. 9:30-10:4). Sinners cannot charge God with injustice for not choosing them. He has made a sovereign requirement that sinners must trust in Christ to be elected. When God seeks sinners to save them, they must respond by faith in His Son's death and resurrection for them to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor 5:18-21). God will make those sinners His children when they reverently call on His name for salvation (Rom 10:13; Jn 1:12).

Some Christians believe they can seek God at any time with a free will to call on Christ to save them from their sins and later they can freely return to their sins and lose their salvation. Other Christians believe sinners are dead in sins and cannot do anything to obtain God's mercy. They believe God is sovereign and it is totally His decision as to whom He will be gracious and show His mercy. Then there are Christians that believe they are spiritually dead, that is, separated from God by their sins. They cannot approach God in their sinful condition because He is holy. But God in mercy sent His Son "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk 19:10). When the LORD seeks them, they are commanded to seek Him: "Seek the LORD, while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near." Yes, "the wicked [can] forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts" when the LORD is seeking them (Isa 55:6-7; cf. Deut 4:29; Amos 5:4, 6; Act 17:27). When should sinners seek the Lord? When He can be found! When should sinners call on Him? While He is near! They can find Him and can call on Him when they hear the Gospel message. That is when the Lord is near. The concept that sinners are dead and cannot respond to God is not in the Bible. Christ sent the Spirit to reprove, convict people of their sin and of their need to receive Christ to save them from destruction (Jn 16:7-11). Sinners can respond to the Spirit's work in their lives or there would be no reason to send Him to reprove sinners of their sins.

Here are couple of examples of those that sought the Lord and found Him. The Ethiopian was convicted to seek the Lord by reading Isaiah 53. The Spirit directed Philip to find him on the road to Gaza. Philip found him and told him about Christ Who could save him from his sins (Act 8:26-39). When Philip came to the Ethiopian to explain Isaiah 53 to him, the Lord was near the Ethiopian and he called on the Lord to be saved.

Cornelius, the Roman centurion, heard something about God and he was convicted to seek Him by his prayers and by giving alms to the poor. God saw that Cornelius feared Him but without knowledge on how to be saved, so He sent an angel to tell him to find Peter who would show him how to be saved (Act 10:1-48; 11:14). When Cornelius and those with him heard Peter's message, they received Christ as their God and Savior.

What is the principle that God uses to elect sinners? It is by their faith that God will give them His gift of salvation through the death and resurrection of His Son. How do sinners get this faith that saves them? Faith comes by hearing (receiving is implied) the Word of God (Rom 10:17). But how can people who are spiritually dead, separated from God, hear and receive His Word? The Spirit of God helps them understand the Gospel and invites them to come to Christ. If they accept His invitation by faith, they will be saved from the penalty of their sins (Mt 11:28-30). Faith comes by hearing and receiving the incorruptible Word of God so they can be born again (1 Pet 1:23).

9:17 — The hardening of Pharaoh's heart causes some people to argue with God's justice, but they argue without the facts. God knew in advance that Pharaoh was a proud unbeliever who refused to repent of his sins and to believe God was the only One to be worshipped. He believed he was a god with many other false gods in Egypt. God did not make him an unbeliever and He did not make him a believer, but He did raise him up to be a powerful ruler in Egypt and a world leader. That is the privilege of our Creator and the work of our sovereign God. He allowed Pharaoh to be unjust with His people by making them his slaves. Then God hardened his heart in his unbelief. God destroyed the power of Pharaoh with ten plagues because he refused to repent. God used him to demonstrate His sovereign power over Egypt and over all nations (cp. Josh 2:9-10). He loves sinners, but He can harden the hearts of sinners that refuse to believe so they cannot repent. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31).

9:18 — Do not miss the point of God's mercy and His hardening of people's hearts. God showed mercy to Moses when he yielded to His call to free His people from slavery in Egypt and led them to Canaan, a land He had promised them. God raised up Moses to be a mighty leader in Israel. He also raised up Pharaoh to be great leader in the world, but he refused to recognize God's authority and let His people leave Egypt. So, God hardened his heart, brought him low with ten plagues, and drowned his elite military in the Red Sea. These two men serve to show us how God incorporated opposite men in His sovereign plan to magnify Himself. God is able to do this by His foreknowledge and sovereign power so that His perfect plan accomplishes His will.

## 2. God's election as the sovereign Creator — 9:19-24

9:19 — God has the sovereign right to make laws for showing mercy or judgment to the people that He created. Paul expected two questions: Why does God find fault? And, who can resist His will?

9:20 — Instead of answering the two questions, Paul rebukes any person who would ask such questions and asks, "Who are you to reply like this to God?" We must remember that God is just, but His thoughts are higher than our thoughts and His ways are higher than our ways (Isa 55:8-9). We have no right to question God's decisions or actions. Should we be so bold to ask God, "Why have you made me this way?" It is presumptuous to ask such a question of God. He is sovereign. Instead we should ask, "What will you have me to do" (Act 9:6)? We can submit to God's will as Saul did (later known as Paul) and be redeemed or we can disobey God's will as King Saul did and be rejected (1 Sam 16:22-23). God foreknew who would submit to His will, so He predestined them to be conformed to the likeness of His dear Son (8:29).

9:21-22 — As our Creator, God's sovereign will in our lives is likened to the potter and his clay. A potter can make one vessel for common use, another for decorative use, and a third kind for both decorative and special use. The same material is used for all three, but they are made for different functions (Isa 64:7-9). These vessels represent various persons who are saved and serve God. He has abundant mercy for them (11:32). They are the vessels of honor.

Many persons that God created become vessels of wrath, but He did not make them vessels of wrath. How they became vessels of wrath is found in Romans 1:18ff, but God is longsuffering with the vessels of wrath. As a result, some will escape His wrath when they turn to God from their sin and receive His mercy by accepting His Son as their Savior (1 Thess 1:9-10). But many will refuse to repent, even while God waits a long time for them to receive His mercy, so they will suffer His wrath. These have fitted themselves for destruction (middle voice of the Greek verb),

and not God. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9). He wants all sinners to be saved (1 Tim 2:4), but He respects their decision to refuse His mercy (cf. Jer 18:1-10). These are the vessels of dishonor.

9:23-24 — All of us are sinners and have come short of the glory of God, but He makes known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy. It is a marvelous turn of events for those that receive His Son. He has already prepared ~~this~~ glory for them by predestinating them to be like His Son (8:29). The Holy Spirit prepares them to live holy and productive lives (Jn 14:17, 26; 15: 5, 16; Rom 8:26; Gal 5:22-23; Phil 2:13). God's sovereign plan will not be changed. He foreknew how each person would treat His offer of salvation so He could fit them into His plan. He calls those that He knows will believe on His Son, whether Jew or Gentile, so His purpose will be fulfilled.

9:25-26 — "Hosea" – He was the last prophet to Israel (ten northern tribes) and saw when God made a sovereign decision to have Assyria remove Israel from their land in 722 B.C. It was punishment for the rebellion of the Israelites against Him. God told Hosea that these Israelites were not His people, but someday the Israelites would be converted and once more be called the people of God, the sons of the living God (cf. Hos 1:10; 2:23). Paul used this historical disaster to give Israel hope that God's mercy and sovereign power would restore Israel to the family of God when its people would repent.

9:27-29 — "Isaiah" – He was a prophet to Judah (the two southern tribes) during the time when Hosea prophesied to Israel. Isaiah saw Israel taken into captivity in 722 B.C. and foretold that Judah someday would be taken into captivity by Babylon (Isa 39:6-7). Babylon did not begin its conquest of Judah until 120 years later in 605 B.C. (Dan 1). God told Isaiah 180 years before it happened, that a man named Cyrus would free all tribes of Israel in righteousness (Isa 10:22-23; 44:28-45:13). This was done quickly and completely by Cyrus, the Persian king, when he conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. (Dan 5). Shortly after this, Cyrus made a decree that all Israelites of the northern and southern kingdoms could go back to live in their homeland and rebuild the temple of God. Even though Israel would multiply greatly while in captivity, God told Isaiah that only a remnant of them would return (Isa 1:9). However, those that did return kept Israel from extinction for over 500 years, so they would not be like Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa 1:9). Israelites remained in the land of Canaan until Jesus was born, lived, died, and was raised again for our salvation. Paul used these historical events to encourage the Jews that God would rescue Israel again from its enemies by His sovereign power as He had done in the past. However, God will not rescue Israel until it receives Jesus as its Messiah. This will not happen until Jesus Christ returns to earth to finish the Tribulation (Zech 12:10-13:1; 14:1-4).

From these verses (9:25-29) we see God's sovereignty raise up Assyria and Babylon to take Israel and Judah into captivity for their sin against Him and then He would choose Cyrus, king of Persia, to release them from captivity. We also see God's foreknowledge in telling Judah about their captivity to Babylon, which began 120 years later. He also foretold that Cyrus would deliver Judah and Israel from captivity, calling him by name 180 years before he made this decree.

9:30-33 — What is the basis for God's election of sinners? It cannot be the works of the Law for righteousness. Is it not the sinner's faith in the righteousness of God without the Law (9:30-31; 3:21-22, 28)? Yes, it is by faith in the death of Christ, Who paid the ransom for all sinners (1 Tim 2:6) and it is by faith in the resurrection of Christ, Who shares His eternal life with them (6:23; cf. Gal 2:20).

Jacob finally put his faith in God after wrestling alone with a Man (God's Son) one night (Gen 32:24-30). The Man put Jacob's hip bone out of joint while wrestling with Jacob to make him to come to a decision about His faith in God (32:25). Jacob clung to the Man by faith until He would bless him (32:26, 29). When God blessed him, he was a changed man with a changed name (32:27-28).

In New Testament times, Peter told Cornelius, his family and friends, "Whoever believes in Him (Christ) shall receive the remission of sins" (Act 10:43). Paul told the Philippian jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved" (Act 16:31). Acts of self-righteousness by sinners (Mt 7:21-23) should not be equated with acts of faith by

## STUDY NOTES

## ROMANS 9

sinners seeking God's forgiveness by confessing with their mouth that Jesus is Lord, receiving the Lord, or calling on the Lord, or believing on the Lord (cf. Jn 6:28-29). These acts of faith please God and He gives them salvation.