

Romans 9

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 18:33

Regularly, I receive complaints about my statements on election and predestination, as if I were teaching error. It is not error, but God-given truth, plainly shown in scripture. Very often, too, demands are made that I 'explain myself'. If I have passed on what God plainly says, I refuse to do so. The critics can either accept what God says, or they must bear the consequences of their unbelief. I will not continue their unbelief by giving credence to their falsity.

In this chapter we find further reference to election and predestination. The part about Pharaoh is particularly hated by Arminians and other unbelievers, who claim that God would not send any man to hell if he had not been given the 'chance' to repent. I beg to differ, because God differs! He chose Pharaoh to be an example of wicked rejection of God, so that He could punish him. God did not allow him to repent! He had higher reasons for this.

We also see how privileged the Jews were, to have been chosen as a nation and given the law of God. Yet, we also see how few Hebrews were accepted by God for heaven. This again underlines the facts of election and predestination. It cannot be escaped, even if it is ignored!

This fact of the Hebrews has an application in our own lives. That is, if we claim to be saved, then we have a marvellous and divine advantage. We know the righteousness of God and have possession of His word. The unsaved do not have this. Therefore, as holders of these wonders, we must pass them on, so that God's elect will suddenly be brought face-to-face with the Gospel. We must live every day in God's glory, as a witness to the world and to ourselves. Do not fail!

Verses 1 - 5

1.

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2.

That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3.

For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according

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to the flesh:

4.

Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

5.

Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

The import of these verses is simple: Paul was deeply grieved for his kinsmen, those who heard the Gospel but refused it. It is the same grief we feel for family or friends who live as though eternity is irrelevant. It is the same grief I feel for all who believe a lie, false religions whose only end is hell. A very closely-linked grief comes for those who know salvation, but whose hearts and minds insist on returning to their old ways, to sin, or to unbiblical beliefs that kick against God, or even blaspheme Him. But, the main point here is that Paul wished with all his heart that his fellow Jews would repent and turn to Christ.

Paul knew that few would come to know Christ, because few are elect, but it did not stop him from feeling the grief. It is our humanity pushing through reality. We all feel the same grief for those we love, because we know the result of not being saved, and we know the joy of being Christ's. Paul would even be willing to be unsaved if it meant the nation were saved. Of course, this is rhetoric, because Paul knew it to be an impossible wish. Even so, it expressed his deep sadness, a sadness that helped him to speak the Gospel to the Jews, though his major task was to preach to the Gentiles.

His sadness was especially poignant because the Jews were the special people of God (adopted). They received the glory and the promises, and through them came life and salvation for the Gentiles. It was the Jews who were given the glorious law of God, and everything known about Him. In a real sense they were the fathers of all God's people, yet they turned aside from God, though Christ the Son came to them in particular. It was their intransigence that enabled Gentiles to be given the same adoption. Obviously, this was all in God's plan from the beginning, yet it was still a grief to Paul.

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We feel grief for those we love who are yet unsaved. But, God has chosen whom He will, and it is my belief that when He places a burden upon us to pray for them, it is because those we have a burden for will eventually know salvation. This appears to be the case, and yet it is my personal view. All I know is that God does not give us a burden of prayer for people to be saved for no reason. I am not talking about emotionalism, but about a genuine call to pray by the Holy Spirit.

Verses 6 - 8

1.

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

2.

Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

3.

That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Paul says it was not as if God's word had fallen on deaf ears, for many did come to know salvation. Even so, many more did not. Christians are often confused about this. They wonder how it can be that Jews are not accepted by God, when He chose them in the first place. Their confusion rests on their inadequate understanding of what God did.

God chose a man, Abraham, and his family. Before this, He chose individuals, such as Enoch, Noah, etc. Abraham's family knew God, and so did his descendants. This special family relationship lasted a long time, until the Hebrews were taken out of Egypt and became a large group of people with the same God. In essence, they were a nation without a land. The land was promised to them, but they took a long time to get there, because of their sin.

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This happens in our own day, when Christians, because of their refusal to give up sins, tarry a long while on the very edge of God's blessings. They know the truth but insist on sinning and so have no joy. Often, they blame God for this lack of joy, or say God never listens to their prayers. This is only a smoke-screen hiding their continued attitude of sin. To know the depth of God and His blessings one has to jump into the deepest sea of His grace, and swim! If we insist on paddling on the shore, with water rarely reaching our ankles, we will not know the depth. We also need to shake a fist at Satan and reject the sins he encourages us to pursue.

It is the deep joy that gives us human happiness. If we are not happy, it is because we have no inner joy. We have a folk saying – 'a square peg in a round hole'. This is when a person tries his best to fit in, but his basic 'shape' prevents it. A Christian wants to keep his sin and yet experience deep joy. But both are incompatible. If he wants joy he must shed his sin. God's province is without taint of sin; He hates sin. To try to bring Him your sin in a Christian relationship, as something to be kept, is like kicking Him in the teeth and expecting Him to smile! It will not happen.

I come across many like this, whose life ends in nothing from God. This is because their every move is based on themselves and their humanity, and not on God's commands and requirements. They complain bitterly, or sadly, that God never answers their prayers, yet they refuse to sort out their lives to be in-line with God's mercy. He promises His instant attention if we obey.

This means repenting of our human efforts and throwing ourselves upon Him. If a 'Christian' is always a square peg no matter what he does, it is usually a sign that he is not a Christian at all. The only other option is that he has always lived according to his own rules and desires, preferring sin to holiness. He is in very bad condition, and must repent fully, starting again in truth and love for all that is God's.

Not all Israel are of Israel. This is a warning to all Jews who think their national inheritance is also their holy inheritance. To think they are automatically accepted by God because they are born Jews, is a fallacy. A similar fallacy occurs amongst Gentiles, who think that if they are born into a Christian family then they are automatically Christians themselves. As Matthew Henry the commentator said "Grace does not run in the blood"!

Of this Jewish notion that merely being born into Jewry assures their salvation, he said "It does not follow that, because they are the seed of Abraham, therefore they must needs be the

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children of God, though they themselves fancied so, boasted much of, and base much upon their relation to Abraham.”

This must be remembered by zealous Christians, often referred to as ‘Zionists’, who somehow think every Jew is deserving of their help, and every Jew must be given large sums to live in Israel. Not all Jews are accepted by God. Indeed, today, very few Jews are accepted by Him, because of their unbelief. The only Jews accepted by God now are those who have been saved by Jesus Christ. The fact that I advise all Christians to be careful of their attitude towards Israel is nothing to do with the current spiritual condition of Jews, but because of what God says in His word regarding the Jews in the future. Do not be misled!

Even in the days of Moses, not all who called themselves ‘Israel’ were of Israel. Just as nowadays we get many fakes in the churches, who pretend to be saved, so there were many Jews who thought they were safe as Jews because they were born as Israelites.

Look at ordinary clubs. Clubs have membership rules and members are expected to obey them. If they do not, their membership is cancelled. In the case of being accepted by God, there are ‘rules’ – those who claim to be accepted must obey God. Jews who did not do this were not accepted by God, and yet they deluded themselves by thinking their national status was also their spiritual status. This is why the enemies of Jesus fought their battles against Him; they were convinced that merely being born a Jew was sufficient to give them access to God and to heaven.

Note that I use the past tense. This is because the spiritual stature of the Jews ended when they crucified Jesus. That was when the new era of salvation by grace began. Then, Jewish status reverted to humanistic religion. Since that time only Jews saved by Jesus Christ are given ‘accepted’ status by God.

Today, attending church, listening avidly to sermons, reading the Bible, doing good works, ‘deciding for Christ’ – all are offered by people who do them as reasons to be accepted by God. They are just as deluded as the Jews. Salvation is only through Jesus Christ, and is given only to those elected and predestinated before time began.

“Grace does not run in the blood”. People do not become Christians by being born in a Christian

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home, or by being amongst others who are genuinely saved by grace. Though brothers, Cain and Abel were not automatically accepted by God, Who chose only one of them. Grace does not run in the blood, but sin does. That is why God said that we are sinners from conception, even before we are able to make a rational decision or repent. It shows that our age has nothing to do with acceptance, even if we are too young to commit our first knowing sin.

Abraham was the root of a mighty nation, Israel. All born from his loins, through his descendants, are of the same nation, but only physically. It is "in Isaac" that they received acceptance by God. That is, by spiritual bond through obedience to His demands.

The Jews who were not accepted were "children of the flesh", born Jews but not obeying God spiritually. They were strict in their observances, but only outwardly. In their hearts they were cold and dead. These were "not the children of God". Only the "children of the promise are counted for the seed". That is, Jews who observed the usual rituals and rites, but also loved God in their hearts. These were elect, predestinated.

The same goes for Christians today. Many claim to be followers of Christ but few truly are. Mostly, they can be identified by their continually being 'square pegs in round holes', never quite fitting in because their whole heart and mind are far from God. Sadly, most of those in our churches today are false; they deceive themselves and, after maybe years of church attendance, will finally hear Jesus say "I never knew you".

Verses 9 - 13

1.

For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.

2.

And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

3.

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

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4.

It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

5.

As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

This is the word of promise: Sara will have a son. Modern madness, using unnatural means, can now make older women pregnant. But, Sara beat them all! Sara, whose name means 'princess', was of noble lineage, perhaps the daughter of a king, and extremely beautiful. Yet, even she was unable to procure a baby. She was close to 100 when God promised her a baby. 'Promise' in this text, *epaggelia*, means an announcement; a promised blessing.

The word for 'promise' is a legal term meaning 'a summons'. It is only used to refer to the promises of God, and often refers to a gift from God, given by grace. Thus, spiritual gifts given to Christians are 'promises'.

With God, His promises are always followed up. There is never a promise that does not come about. Rebecca also had a child by promise from God, with husband Isaac; all children are by promise. That is, by His benevolence. So, whatever promises are made to us in scripture *will* come about; rely on them and expect them! The only stumblingblock will be your own sin and refusal to obey fully.

Verse 11 may seem like an odd text, yet it has its own meaning. It says that the children of these women, in the womb, had done neither good nor evil. Some take this to mean that babies are 'covered' by God's mercy and grace. This is not what the text is saying. We can only say that they had done neither good nor evil. What does this mean? Does it mean they are pure? No, it does not.

Neither doing "good nor evil" is a reference to daily sins. Babies are incapable of committing daily sins. Yet, they are conceived in sin. That is, as soon as they are conceived in the womb they are sinful creatures by nature. They have 'the Sin of Adam' or 'Original Sin' within. A

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character of Sin, our inborn and basic state, begets daily sins, those things we do against God when we disobey.

So, the text does not tell us the babies of these women were free of sin, or that they did not need God's grace. It says that though they were conceived in sin and were born with 'Original Sin', they were not yet old enough to commit sin deliberately.

This observation by Paul is secondary to the main point: "the purpose of God according to election might stand." I must say that I do not understand how any Christian can dismiss election and predestination, when they are so clearly written in scripture! Why is this phrase added to the previous one, about the babies not having sinned? The reason is that God gave children to the women not just so that they could be mothers, but so that His election of the babies would have an effect on the world.

God brought about His plan through the babies who grew up to their various destinies. The children were given not because they were conceived or born by created means, the ordinary way of life designed by God, but because God had a plan for the babies. John the Baptist is another excellent example of a baby born to a special destiny.

Paul reminds the Jews that God predestinated one son of Isaac to be loved by Him, and the other to be hated. Jacob was loved, Esau was hated. The love for Jacob, *agapaō*, means God was 'well pleased' with him; he was 'loved dearly'. Esau, however, was 'hated', *miseō*. Many Christians try to gloss this over. But 'hated' is a correct word. It means to be hated or detested.

What we see here is that God deliberately chose one over the other. In an absolute sense it is what happens when some are saved and the rest are not. Like it or not, God predestinates some to salvation... only a few. These are the elect. Likewise, the elect amongst the Jews were only a few, 'a remnant'; these obeyed God not just in rites but also in their hearts.

Verses 14 - 18

1.

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

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2.

For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

3.

So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

4.

For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

5.

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Paul asks 'If God loves some but hates others, does that make Him unrighteous, in fact, just nasty?' The answer to this kind of absurdity is "God forbid". It is impossible for God to be unrighteous or nasty. What seems nasty or unloving to us is just a matter of proper judgment and justice to God. God can accept or reject whomever He wishes. Everything He does is perfect. But, as humans, we try to force God to fit into our own idea of what is good and bad.

God told Moses He would have mercy on those He wished to have mercy on; He would show compassion on whomever He wished to. It means God is in control; He is King of kings and answers to no-one! No human being may question what God does, or His reasons. God alone can do whatever He wishes to do. If that means sending people to hell, then so be it. He has His reasons, which are always perfect, and they are not known to us. Would a great king have to explain himself to lower servants? Of course not. Nor should we think He must answer our bitter queries.

As verse 16 reminds us, it is to do with God, not with our miserable human desires or thoughts. What *we* think is irrelevant. God will act as He wishes whether or not we accept it or like it. The idea that God 'must' save everyone in the end is wrought not of scripture but of our own meagre

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emotions and wilful desires. Once again we come across the stark fact of predestination, not Arminian wishes (which are rooted in the heretical Romanist theology of Thomas Aquinas). God will show mercy on anyone He wishes, and such mercy has been decided in eternity, so cannot be changed.

Paul then gives us perhaps the most apparent example of God's choices: Pharaoh at the time of the exodus. I cannot understand how anyone can mistake what happened to this king, or how anyone can say God does not predestinate anyone to hell. This is precisely what God does to Pharaoh! "The scripture saith"!

Pharaoh was told, point blank, that he was born just to fulfil God's commands, and for God to show His power and authority through his fate. This is very plain. Pharaoh was born to be punished by God. Ultimately this is what happens to all who are unsaved, and we have no warrant for asking why. God is the Potter, and He can make us for destruction or for use. It is up to Him. I repeat - what *we* think is irrelevant. Trying to explain to others what *God* does not explain to us, is also irrelevant. He does what He does and that is that.

God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy (verse 18). There is no point in arguing against it. I have found that those who claim to be Christians and yet refuse predestination as a fact, are living in sin. Their attitude towards God is rotten and needs drastic amendment, before God judges them. The latter phrase is significant "and whom he will he hardeneth." Again, that is very plain. To reject it is folly.

That is, God deliberately 'hardeneth' people; He makes them obstinate so that they reject His word. They stubbornly refuse what He says. Disobedient people say "But God is a God of love; He won't make it impossible for people to respond to Him!" This is only human emotion speaking. God, the creator of everything, says otherwise. He does not just choose who will enter heaven, He also chooses who will enter hell. Even many who call themselves Calvinists are afraid to accept that fact.

The next objection leading from this is: "If God already decides who will enter heaven or enter hell, what's the point of preaching?" this is not a sound argument. We preach because, as saved human beings, we do not know who else will be saved. Also, God demands that we preach, so that those who are elect will hear and respond. Once again, then, the question is irrelevant. Why seek answers to a query that is already given an answer in scripture? The same rebellious attitude is shown in the next text.

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Verses 19 - 21

1.

Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

2.

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

3.

Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

In an effort to wriggle out of condemnation, those who are at fault dare to find fault with God! They say "Why do you find fault in me? Who has gone against your will?" This is a questioning of God and His judgments, which is, in itself, a sin. God is perfect in everything He does, so to question His motives and judgments is wicked, the sign of a guilty person... or a simple lack of understanding.

To demand why God finds fault, is to be rebellious. If God says we are judged then that is final, for He makes no mistakes. God blames us because we are to be blamed! To ask 'who has resisted his will?' when we have been judged is not just irrelevant, but obnoxious, for it implies that we know better than God and imply that *He* is to blame for our shortcomings by making false accusations against us!

To 'resist' is to oppose God's will. His 'will' is whatever His purpose is. With God His purpose is wrapped in everything He says and does. No one part can be removed from the overall will. Thus, an attack on just a small part is an attack on the whole. It is a tainting of His character. To put it simply, *anything* that is not in accordance with His will is sin, whether it is 'small' or 'great'. All sins are equal before God.

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If we are judged, then, we should never ask “What have I done wrong?” Instead, we should repent and seek to grow in Christ. It is irrelevant to ask the question because, if God makes no errors, the mere fact that we are judged is sufficient proof of our guilt!

Paul asks the right question: ‘Who do you think you are, questioning God?’ Paul then makes a statement we should all take seriously, and impress upon our hearts and minds: ‘Can the created being demand to know “why have you made me this way”?’

This statement is more profound than it may at first appear. It puts us in our place! The plain fact is this: God is supreme. He is creator and ruler of all things. He can do whatever He wishes with us and the universe. He chooses who will be saved and who will not be saved. The teaching of the Potter tells us this very clearly. If a potter makes a pot and decides to throw it into the pile of unwanted pots, breaking it into many shards, it is up to him. If he decides another pot is to be kept and used, it is up to Him. A pot, being a created object, has no say in the matter. Likewise, we, as created human beings, have no say in what happens to us. That is why our questions, designed to make us appear better than we are, are all irrelevant.

Pharaoh was born specifically in order to rebel against God. Cries of ‘unfair’ from liberals and unbelievers are, again, irrelevant. We need not even answer their demand for an answer, because they do not believe anyway. *God* tells us why He made Pharaoh for destruction: so that He could show His superiority and rulership over all men. Unfair? In whose eyes? It is not unfair in God’s eyes. He cannot be accused of denying a man the opportunity to be saved, when His sole intent for that person was to be condemned! He is perfectly entitled to condemn or save at will. We have no right whatever to demand answers or to demand ‘fairness’, when our concept of fairness is based on human emotion and warped thinking.

This explains why Christ told His disciples to shake the dust off their feet after only once preaching to a community that rejects the Gospel. He tells them never to return to that place. He knew that the saved come from a ‘pool’ of people chosen before the world began. Those who reject Him and His message do so because they are cast away by the Potter... and those who are rejected have no possible way to become accepted. Instead of arguing the case for the lost, thank God for your salvation!

Verses 22 - 26

1.

What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much

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longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

2.

And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

3.

Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

4.

As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

5.

And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

Paul says 'So what, if God wants to show His anger against "vessels fitted to destruction"?' So what, if He wishes to show His might by destroying them? Many Christians try to appease accusers by saying that God knew in advance ('foreknowledge') who would reject His Gospel and so He rejected them in return. It might appease accusers, but it is not scriptural.

Scripture tells us that the Potter deliberately chose who would be saved or unsaved. Yes, He knew in advance who would not accept Him. But, the reality is more hard-hitting: He chose who would be cast aside *regardless* of His foreknowledge. Thus, they are rejected because they were rejected in eternity. I cannot explain why this is. No man can explain it! It is one of those facts of God we cannot answer. But, we must accept it, because it is true.

We must accept what scripture says, that they are "fitted to destruction". To be 'fitted' is to prepare. For what? For 'destruction'... to utterly destroy a vessel. Thus, to 'fit for destruction'

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means to prepare one for hell. My concern is not for the reader's sensibilities, but for speaking the truth of God. To do so brings ridicule and anger, but it does not matter; what God says is more important. And this also includes NOT explaining why these things ought to be so, because, I do not have the answers. Nobody has them. We can only teach what God says, not what He does *not* say. It is pointless to imply what *could* be.

Some are 'fitted to destruction' and others are fitted to be "vessels of mercy" (verse 23). These are the saved who will prove God's glory in all its richness. Just as people are 'fitted to destruction' by predestination, so the saved are "afore prepared unto glory". The phrase "afore prepared" is equal to "fitted unto"... elected and predestinated. Prepared means to 'make ready beforehand'. Despite the wails of unbelievers, particularly true Arminians, predestination exists. As Paul says, "even us"; people saved from both Jews and Gentiles. He points the Jews back to Osee (the prophet Hosea, who lived in the time of Isaiah), who said God called the Hebrews to be His special people even when they were nobodies and unloved.

Those who the world rejected will come to see that they are the "children of the living God", Who chose them not because of their innate worth, but because He elected them before time began, based on His undeclared criteria. This is a very important lesson to learn, because it is the basis for what we know about salvation.

Verses 27 - 29

1.

Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

2.

For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

3.

And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

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Isaiah also prophesied that though there would be countless Israelites who belonged to the chosen nation, only “a remnant will be saved”. In the book of Isaiah, the word ‘remnant’ does not just mean a small number; it means a small number out of a small number. ‘Remnant’ means to bid one to remain, to reserve.

The saving of the remnant will be completed (‘finish’) and God will “cut it short”. That is, He will finish the work quickly, as prophesied, because He is righteous and good. Paul again reminds the Jews that they would have gone the same way as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, unless God chose the nation of Israelites to be His people.

This is a lesson we must bear in mind; that except Christ saved us, we would be just like those we now try to avoid, the unsaved whose wickedness ruins the world. Do not pretend you cannot sin as greatly as the worst offender, for you can! Only God’s hand keeps you from sinning as they do. We sometimes fall into sin, and sometimes greatly, but, as Paul explains in earlier chapters, it is not because we are slaves to sin as the unsaved are. We sin because we take our eyes off Jesus and stumble willingly into doing what the ‘old man’ wants us to do. Literally, by the grace and mercy of God, we do not do far worse.

So, whilst we are entitled to speak out against sin, and identify what it is, we may not think ourselves better than those who are unsaved or who sin. We have no worth of our own and can easily become as they are. What stops us is the Holy Spirit and our saved condition. Our ‘worth’ is only in Christ, not in us.

Verses 30 - 33

1.

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

2.

But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

3.

Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they

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stumbled at that stumblingstone;

4.

As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

'What can we say, then?' asks Paul. Can we say that the Gentiles, who had no previous favour from God and did not even try to live according to God's will, got to the same favoured position through salvation by their faith alone? Yes.

Yet, the Jews (who Paul was now speaking to in his letter), who had all the advantage of being chosen as a nation by God and knew all about righteousness, should fail in being righteous? Yes.

How could this come about? ('wherefore'). They failed because they slowly degenerated from faith to works. They did not try to please God by faith but by "works of the law". The law became their stumblingblock. A stumblingblock is something that will cause one to fall. It is not a random object that one somehow trips over. It is put there by God as a test. Thus, Christ was the "stumblingblock (in Sion) and a rock of offence" to the Jews.

Note a very small but highly significant fact here. Jesus is called a "rock". The word 'petra' is used, and not 'petros', which is used for the name of Peter. This is of vital importance in the matter of the 'keys', etc., so often claimed by Rome. The 'rock' on which the Church is built is not Peter (petros) but Christ (petra). Look at Matthew 16:18 where this truth is given. Note that "this rock" refers to 'petra' (Christ) and not 'petros' (Peter)!

This truth is further drawn out by saying "whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed (disappointed)". Only Christ is to be believed... not Peter. Case closed!

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