

ROMANS -- LESSON #18  
THE MOST TROUBLING TEXT IN THE BIBLE  
Romans 9

Isa. 55:8:

~~XXXX~~ For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord'.

Often when we read Scrip. it is so contrary to our thoughts, until we seek to explain it away, or actually deny it. The Scrip. we're gonna study tonight is certainly not what you and I would think. It shows that Gods ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts, but we dare not question what God does. We cannot understand much He does. In your own life, there are things you cannot understnd and in the choice of some people, that's gonna be mentioned in Rom. 9, we cannot fully understand it, but it is so definitely stated, that we dare not deny it.

We're glad you're here. Romans 9: 10 - 11 deals with the question of the Jews. Look at the over head. Rom. 9 deals with the election of certain Jews. Not all the Jews, just to be a descendant of Abraham does not mean that one will be saved or chosen, as we're gonna see. But we're gonna see Gods election of the Jews and then Rom. 10, we have the Jewish rejection of the Jews.

Then, in the great 11th chapter, we have the reception - that's the future restoration of the Jewish nation and people. Today, the Gospel is going forth through the Gentile church, but one day, that will be changed. We'll see this in Rom. 11.

God will restore Israel and the witness to the world will not be through the Gentiles but will be through the Jews, as it was at one time. So for the next month or six weeks, we're gonna be studying this question of the Jews. Now there are those who say that God is through with the Jews. He came and offered them the Messiah, they rejected the Messiah and the promises made to Israel, unfulfilled, are now the promises to the church. And they're being fulfilled in the church. Well, if that's true, Paul was mistaken. In the 11th chapter of Romans, he simply is mistaken, if that's true.

Because he sees a future restoration of Israel, when they will be witness to the world again. There's no way in the world to read it any other way! And yet, there are those who teach that. If you read the public forum within the last ninety days, you have read some pretty strong statements that God is through with Israel. Now we want to look at this Scrip. Paul, of course, has been teaching salvation by grace, through faith, in Jesus alone. The Jews thought he was their

greatest enemy. Yet, he was their greatest friend. Paul was a Roman citizen. Paul was very learned in Greek culture. He was a world citizen. He had tremendous honors but he was prouder of being a Jew than anything in the world! And, in my opinion, he wanted to preach to the Jews, not the Gentiles, but in the mystery of God, God sent him to the Gentiles, basically.

The call of God is mysterious. When we answer the call of God, we do not say where we will preach; we do not say where we will serve. We follow God. And God called Paul to the Gentiles. But he had a bleeding heart for his people and he expresses it in the strongest language in V. 1, 2 & 3 - let's look at these.

V. 1 (read) 'I say the Truth in Christ' (in union with Jes. or 'I speak the Truth in union with Jes.). Holy Ghost is same as Holy Spirit. He's saying 'my conscience bears witness that I'm telling the Truth and it's confirmed by the H. S. in my life.' What truth? 'That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart (V.2).' The language could not be stronger. It describes someone who is never without pain and never without sorrow. Dr. A. T. Roberson, the greatest Greek scholar who ever lived, says that the Greek words here, describes the pain of someone who is mourning for the dead. Or what he calls 'angina pectoris' - a continual pain in the heart.

Sorrow, hurting for his people. Where did this love come from? It could come from only one source and it is from Jes. Himself and from Calvary. Here's Calvary love. When I read this, it makes me ashamed of myself! Because I do not have this pain toward the lost. Oh, that we could have the compassion of Paul. Oh, that we, today, could have it. I've never seen this. I've seen compassion; I've felt it at times in my life, but I've never seen this in any person in my life. It's the greatest picture of compassion. We don't care enough about souls today, most of us to spend much time even in visiting! Much less, in suffering - in SUFFERING - like he did!

He says in V. 3 (read) the language here is to be banned from Christ, literally or to be separated from Christ forever. That is, to go to hell. He said 'I would be willing to swap places

with my people in hell! Just to see them saved! Now you think about such a statement as this: I look at so many out there who obviously love your wives. I love my wife. I believe I would die for Doris; would give my earthly life. But I really am not sure I would go to hell for Doris. Would you be willing to go to hell for anybody? And spend Eternity in hell? There's never been anything like this that's ever been spoken and yet, it is the word of Truth. Now we get some idea of Paul's greatness. It's in his heart; it's in his concern.

But of course, Paul could not save the Jews. This reminds us of the prayer of Moses. Neither Moses nor Paul could be a savior. It's very interesting: Moses was a murderer. What a sinner he was. He was saved, but what a sinner he was. Paul was a murderer. They can't be the savior of anybody! Only Jes. could be the Savior. But here he's expressing his deep compassion for his people.

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This brother told another brother that his church dismissed their pastor. He said 'why would your church do such a thing?' He said 'because he kept telling us that we were ~~g~~ going to hell.' He said 'well, you have another pastor?' Said 'yes, we have a new pastor'. He said 'what does he preach?' He said 'he tells us we're going to hell also.' And the man said 'well, why hasn't the church dismissed him?' He said 'there's all the difference in the world. The first man told us we were going to hell, and he just seemed to rejoice in it and wanted us to go to hell.' He says 'the second man told us we were going to hell, but it breaks his heart!' There's all the difference in the world!

Here's a man who sees the value of a soul and the lesson we see here today, as Xtns, is to be compassionate; to be concerned for the lost. Oh, that God would give us a baptism of compassion and concern for the lost in our city! Most of Ft. Smith is lost! Most ~~xxx~~ people that you meet are lost and going to hell. And there are so few who really care, even enough, to keep a prayer list and to consistently follow up. It's a shame - there's very little compassion! But Paul had it!

Now he says in latter part of V. 3 (read) 'my kinsmen according to the flesh; and in V. 4 & 5,

he gives the eight great advantages of the Jews. Remember in Chap. 3: V. 1 he raises the question 'what are the advantage does the Jew have?' and he mentions one advantage in Chap. 3 and he stops. That advantage was: that they had been given the oracles or the Word of God. Here he lists eight great advantages of the Jews. He says:

FIRST: THEY ARE ISRAELITES (V.4). That's their Covenant name. That was the name given to Jacob. It means 'the one who prevails with God'. That's the name they bear today. But what a noble word that is: Israel!

SECOND: TO WHOM PERTAINETH THE ADOPTION (V.4). That's the word 'the placing of sons'. In other words, the - Israel is the Son of God. No other people are called that at all! But God, in the O. T., in the book of Exodus, calls Israel His Son.

THIRD: AND THE GLORY (V.4). What's the glory? That's the bright cloud which guided Israel through the wilderness. If you want a rich study - you know I preached on it one time, some years ago. God may lead me to preach some more on the glory. You remember that the glory went to the Tabernacle ~~MM~~ and then to the Temple but in the days of Ezekiel, there was such sin in Israel that Ezek. saw the Glory depart and it went to the Mount of Olives and into Heaven and it didn't come back until Bethlehem. Then you can appreciate Luke 2: 9 (read) they saw the Glory! It came back in Jesus of Nazareth.

And you and I have the glory in Jes. today. But this Glory was given to Israel and to no other people. The Israelites called it the 'Shekinah' which is the Hebrew word for 'the presence of God'. The Glory and then

FOURTH: THE COVENANTS (V.4). God made the Covenants with His people. With no ~~XXXX~~ other people did He EVER make Covenants except the Jews. ~~AND THE GIVING OF THE LAW~~ And next

FIFTH: THE GIVING OF THE LAW (V.4). The Law was given to Israel. That's the only people that ever received the Law. Do you realize that there have been great systems of law, like the

Code of Hamarobbie (?) which ~~XXXXX~~ scholars date about 1700 B. C. We would date the law of Moses about 1400. The Law of Hamarobbie was three hundred years older than the Law of Moses. But that was not the Law given by God. And all great systems of Law are based upon this. The Roman Law, the Napoleonic Code, Anglo-Saxon Law - they are all based upon this, but they came - really was given to a murderer, Moses. The murderer redeemed by the Grace of God! No one who knows his Bible will ever despair of being saved. The worst people in history have been saved by the Grace of God!

God saves murderers all the time. That's not an unpardonable sin at all. Not at all! Moses was a murderer. Paul was a murderer! The great man of the O. T. and the greatest man of the N. T.

SIXTH: THE SERVICE OF GOD (V.4). That means the worship or the ritual of the Tabernacle and the Temple.

SEVENTH: THE PROMISES (V. 4). And they were galore. Many of them are still unfulfilled That Israel would be the center of the world. That the Law of God will flow forth from Israel. Do you realize that's in the Bible and that Israel will control all the land from the Nile river to the Euphrates. Has that been fulfilled in the church? Why, of course it's not, but it WILL be. It will be.

EIGHTH: WHOSE ARE THE FATHERS (V. 5). Who are the fathers? Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and not only that David, Moses and the whole crowd! We think of our fathers in this country. We think of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Lincoln and we're proud of these men. But these men were political figures, basically. No one was ever given a Abraham, except the Jews. No one was ever given a Moses, except the Jews. Somebody called Geo. Washington - or called Moses the Geo. Washington of the O. T., and there's a little similarity, but not really a parallel. Different. Israel was given the fathers.

The climax of all of it is



NINETH: OF WHOM (that is, of Israel) AS CONCERNING THE FLESH, CHRIST, CHRISTOS, THE MESSIAH KING (V. 5). He says the climax of all of it was that out of these wonderful; this wonderful nation came the Messiah, the anointed One. After the flesh - that's His humanity. Now it does not say that the Messiah belongs to Israel, but it says that he came out of Israel. And He did. Jes. said to the Samaritan woman in John 4: 22 'salvation is of the Jews'. Out of the Jews. Salvation came through a Jewish mother. Mary was a Jew and the foster father of Jes. was a Jew. Jes. was educated in a Jewish Synagogue and learned the Jewish Law. He WAS a Jew, according to the flesh.

TENTH: WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOREVER (V.5). Not only is he man and a Jew, but He is over all - God blessed forever. Sometimes liberal scholars put a comma after all - look in your Bible. After all, I mean they put a period rather than a comma. Because they do not want the text to say that Jesus is God. The revised Standard Version puts a period right after 'over all'. But PTL, The NASV and the NIV and these lat~~ter~~ translations - they just put a comma Which says that Jes. Christ is GOD, as well as man.

Now we come to V. 6 and there is an imaginary questioner that's questioning Paul. Someone has asked the question 'all right, now the Jews rejected the Messiah and yet these promises of God to the Jews have not been fulfilled. Does that mean that the Word or the promise of God has failed?' Look at

V. 6 (read) not as though (or it is not as though) the Word of God hath taken none effect (or failed). For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. That is to say: that all the nation of Israel is not the true Israel.

V. 7 (read) you see, the Jews had the teaching that if you were a physical descendent of Abraham that made you a Son of God and you were taken care of. But they overlooked something: the word of Jes. to Nicodemus 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit' and there was one line of the Jews to whom the Promise came and it did not include all the physical descendents of Abraham. God shows a line through which the Messiah

came and to whom the promises were given. Notice 'but in Isaac shall thy seed be called'.

Isaac - here's an amazing thing. Now Isaac had a brother. The brother's name was Ishmael. Ishmael was thirteen years older than Isaac and yet, he was not the one that the Lord chose for the line to pass down and the Promises to be realized!

By common practice, the elder was to be the one that would receive the Promise and the birthright but not here. It's the younger, Isaac. God had to choose one and He chose Isaac, in His Sovereign and Grace. In Isaac shall thy seed be called. Not Ishmael. Now you go to the Middle East today and you'll run across a lot of people who will say 'Abraham is our father'. Arabs. Well, he IS their father - through Ishmael but not in the sense of Isaac. The Promise did not come to the Arabs. It came through Isaac. We don't fully understand this. There's no Scrip. that God hated Ishmael. There's no Scrip. that says that God predestined him to hell, at all.

The Bible does not teach that. The Bible does not teach double pre-destination. We'll say more about that when we come to Esau and Jacob.

V. 9 (read) not Agar, but Sarah - and that's Gen. 18: 10. So he gives this case of God choosing Isaac and not Ishmael through his own Sovereign Grace, though Isaac was the younger. And not only this (it says in V. 10 (read) ) but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children not being yet born (v. 11 (read) ) 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;)

V. 12 (read) now here is an account of the birth of the twins to Rebecca. Jacob and Esau. They were twins, but one of them was born first and is, therefore, called the elder. Esau was born first. You read this in Genesis. But God did not choose Esau. God chose Jacob and chose him ~~xxx~~ before he was even born. He was a mystery. He was a big mystery, but it shows that God chooses, not because we are good or not because we deserve it, but according to His own Grace and His purpose.



Now he picks up a Text from Malachi 1: 2 & 3 (read). V. 13 of our Text for today repeats this. (read). Now you look at that Scrip. and not relate it to Scrip. at large and it seems to say that God hated Esau. And God loved Jacob. I grew up with a group of people who taught this literally and said 'there are certain people that God hates and there are certain people that God loves!! And if He loves you - fine. But if He hates you - you're going to hell and there is no hope for you'. Now listen, we must not read the Scrip. that way!

There is not one line in the Bible in Gen. where this account is given, (Gen. 25: 23) - that says 'God hated Esau'. Indeed there is not a Scrip. that says 'God predestined Esau to hell'. I'm aware of Heb. 12: 17 (read) he offered his birthright; he never could reclaim it. John Calvin read this and said 'here's double predestination'. That God predestined certain people to Heaven and certain people to hell. He was a lawyer of great intelligence and he was - maybe he was being logical but that is not stated here. There is no Scrip. that says God ever predestined anyone to hell! Now what does this Scrip. mean?

When it says 'Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated'? God did not hate Esau emotionally. This matter, or idea, of hating and loving only denotes choice. Not emotional love or emotional hatred. We would really translate the Text correctly if we said 'Jacob have I chosen in My Sovereign wisdom and Grace and Esau, I did not choose. I chose Jacob'. You see, the Bible often is expressed in language like this. Turn to Luke 14, if you want a good example from the Scrip. from the words of Jes. In Luke 14: 26, Jes. makes this amazing statement 'if any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife, etc., he cannot be My disciple'. Is there anybody who knows the Bible who would say that JC teaches us to hate our mother and our wife?

He tells me to love my wife as Christ loved the church. He tells me to honor my father and mother. And yet, you take Luke 14: 26, He says 'if any man come to me and hate NOT his father and mother and wife, he cannot be My disciple'. What is He teaching here? It's a comparison. He is saying that my love for any person on this earth should look like hatred compared to my love for Jesus. Now there's a tremendous teaching here. For us, today. We are to love Jes. more than anything in the world, until our love for anyone else would look like hatred and that's



a contrast and what you have here is: that God chose Jacob to carry out His purpose and to carry on the line. And He did not choose Esau. Now, if you will notice, this is a quote from Malachi 1: 2 & 3. Actually, when it was written, it was written one thousand years after the birth of Esau and Jacob and really, ~~XXXXXX~~ in Malachi, where it was first given, it was a word to the descendents of Jacob and Esau.

And the descendents of Esau had had nothing but hatred in their heart for Gods chosen people for a thousand years and God says 'I don't like it'. Now Paul picks up the quote to refer to the choice of God, in carrying through His promise and the Messianic line. So He says 'Jacob have I loved; Jacob have I chosen to carry this on and Esau, I have not chosen'. There is no word in Scrip., though, that says he condemned Esau to hell. Now if you follow the history of Jacob and Esau, you will discover in later years, that Jacob, indeed, became open to the things of God and you see the Grace of God in his heart, in a way you did not Esau.

But when God chose Jacob, he was quite a rascal! You know what the lesson is? That often God saves and chooses the most ungodly people to carry out His work. Some of the most effective people in the world have been Jacobs. You know what the word 'Jacob' means? Deceiver; surplanter. Jer. 7 - is it Jer. 19: 7 or 17: 9? - 'the heart is deceitful - that's the word 'Jacob' The heart has a Jacob in it. 'The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked'. But you see, the glorious thing is that Gods Grace touched this mans life and God used him and he became Israel! ISRAEL!

Do you realize that in the lineage of JC, is a harlot? Read Matt. That woman who hid the spies? She is listed in the ancestry of Jes. Here is pure Grace. Grace that God poured out on Jacob for reasons He does not tell us. He just says 'I chose Jacob'.

V. 14 (read) is there unrighteousness (or injustice) with God? Here's the imaginary questioner who comes back: 'Well, this means that God is unjust!' Paul says 'God forbid'. Perish the thought, he says.

V. 15 (read) he's referring to the incident in Ex. 32. The Israelites dance around the golden calf and three thousand of them are destroyed. But the rest are not destroyed. Why? We don't know. Why is there an accident over here and you may have a car full of Xtns and half of them will be killed and the others will not even be touched? We don't know. The plane that crashed in Dallas - people walked off that plane unscathed, but 130 people died. Let me tell you - you and I don't know. We simply - we know so little. All we know is what the Word teaches us and what the H. S. teaches us and we are so limited.

You know, when God called me to preach, I knew one verse of Scrip. and I began to study the Bible and in the early years of my ministry, I thought maybe I knew a few things, but oh, how little I know and how little you know! Dare we question God? Because we don't understand? There are things that happen in your life tonight that you can't understand to save your life, and you never will understand it. People were questioning God in that day and they still are questioning God and they often come to the Bible and they try to say 'well, the Bible doesn't teach this at all'. Yet, you cannot say that it does not teach what we're looking at here, tonight.

V.16 (read) it does not depend upon mans desire or his efforts but on God to show His mercy. You remember John 1: 12 (read) but we should never quote that without V. 13 (read) there's NOTHING we can do to save ourselves except come to Christ and we can't even take credit for that because the Bible says that no man cometh ~~UNLESS~~ except the Father draw him, in Rom 6: 44. People who take credit for their salvation are on dangerous grounds. They may never have been saved. We love Him, but only because He first loved us(1 John 4: 19). He is the One that is Always seeking us and that's what election means: He chose us before the foundation of the world or we would NEVER have chosen Him!

He found us. We didn't find Him. He found us! Salvation begins with Him and it climaxes in Him. Now this does not rule out our response and our free will. The Bible teaches both. I want to pause by saying that in the Scrip. you have the Sovereignty of God on one side of the railroad track and you have the free will of man and that's the other side and they just GO

and they never meet and you can never fully understand. Have you ever been on a railroad? And you're standing here and you look down and looks way down yonder that they're coming together, but they're not. If you were down there, you'd see they were NOT coming together! And we're dealing with a mystery that theologians have debated for two thousand years. We simply cannot understand this but we have to accept it!

The Scrip. teaches Gods Sovereignty complete; it teaches mans responsibility as a free will agent. Eph. 1: 4 (read) He chose us - IN CHRIST - before the foundation of the world! Then we read right on down in that same chapter, in V. 13 & 14 (read) this shows that man had to hear and had to receive and yet, he was chosen, in Christ, before the foundation of the world! Now you just cannot completely understand this but yet, the Bible teaches it. Three thousand people were killed; the rest preserved. I've often thought of the three thousand who were saved on the day of Pentecost, that God gave these back to the church on that day. But three thousand were killed because of that idolatry.

V. 17 (read) why did he raise him up? 'That I might show My power in thee; that My Name might be declared throughout all the earth'. Who was Pharoah? The most powerful ruler in the world, corresponding to the Pres. of the U. S. today. What happened to him the whole world knew. God said 'I raised him up to show my greatness'. To show my greatness. He goes on in

V. 18 (read) now we're gonna come back to this in just a few moments. Did He harden the heart of Pharoah? Yes, He did. But not until after the 8th plague. A great expositor, by the name of John Phillips, who has more time than I, has studied the hardening and he's discovered that Pharoah hardened his heart ten times and God hardened it ten times. And God showed him His great power, the great miracles were done before Pharoah and he hardened his heart. He resisted God until God hardened Pharoah's heart and he showed to the whole world that pride and arrogance and power in defiance of God, would NOT be tolerated!

V. 19 (read) see the imaginary questioner coming again? He's asking 'why does God yet find



fault or why would He still blame us?' For who hath (or who can resist) His will? Now here's the imaginary questioner who is coming back with his question and he's saying 'listen, we're just pawns on a chess board; we're just manipulated by God and why are we responsible?' This is not teaching that.

V. 20 (read) 'repliest' - talk back.- against God'. 'Shall the thing form - and these two words 'thing form' in the Greek is the word 'plastic'. Isn't this an amazing way that God describes man? Now this doesn't mean that He's degrading us but He's just showing how ~~XXXXXX~~ insignificant we are compared to the wisdom of God. Who in the world are we to question God? Shall a little piece of plastic say to Him that formed it; that created it 'why hast Thou made me thus?' Have you ever argued with God as to your looks? Why He didn't make you different size, or different face? Have you ever thought maybe God made a mistake?

Now here's the answer right here. Let me tell you, you're beautiful and you're precious just like you are. And it's not the way your face looks anyway and it's not your height - not at all! Some little men who don't look like anything have moved the world. God knew exactly what He was doing when He made you and me and we should never criticize ourselves and we should never put ourselves down and we should never put anybody else down! We have our preference but every human being in the world is beautiful with God and we are made - we are made in His image, just like He wants us to be and we should accept that and never talk back to God!

There's a great message here, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ unrelated even to the context. "Hath Not the potter with power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor"? - (V. 21). Of course the potter can do that. 'What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath' (V.22) notice? He endured with much longsuffering. Apply that to Pharoah. He gave Pharoah opportunity after opportunity after opportunity. He showed him the ~~great~~ great miracles and yet he would not let the Israelites go. He hardened his heart.

The Bible says that God hardened Pharoah's heart and the Bible teaches that in the N. T. We can

tamper with God and we can presume on His Grace until we will harden our hearts and cannot really come to Christ, which, in my judgment, is more serious than the unpardonable sin. But it's not the unpardonable sin. It may be unpardonable but it's not called 'the unpardonable sin'. The unpardonable sin is to attribute to the work of the H. S. the work of satan and this is different. Did you know it's been proven that you can set an alarm clock beside your bed and say you set it to get up at 6 A.M. and every time it alarms, you turn it off, until after a while, you do not even hear it?

And we can turn off God in our soul and we can say 'no' to the Lord God and to the call of the H. S. until we won't hear and that happens to a lot of people. It's dangerous to come to a Gospel service and not respond. It's more dangerous to come to a church where the Gospel is preached than to a church where it's NOT preached, really, if we're not gonna respond! Because we will come to the place that we will not hear! We've turned off the alarm and a hardening has set up in our hearts and you might call that 'God' if you want to, but the very laws of psychology will harden our hearts. It, evidently, happened in the case of Pharoah.

But notice it says in the last part of V. 22 'the vessels of wrath fitted - but this verb 'fitted' is an interesting verb in the original. It's in what we call 'the middle voice'. 'Fitted themselves to destruction'. Pharoah fitted himself for destruction and we can do that today. We can fit ourselves for destruction by turning away the voice of God and the Word of God. I do not have time to get in to the rest of this section.

V. 24 talks about God - turning to the Gentiles, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. The Jews did not believe that God would save the Gentiles. They believed that salvation would come only to the heirs of Abraham and Paul says 'NO, also His Grace reaches to the Gentiles'.

V. 25 (read) He's talking about the Gentiles. He called the Jews His people but they sinned so greatly that by the time of O'see, he gave O'see three sons and the names of these sons is

the prophecy of Israel: <sup>(1)</sup> The first son was Jezereel which means 'scattered'. The second son was Lorumaha (?) which means 'unpitted' and <sup>(2)</sup> the third son was Loamee which means 'not a people'. And the Jews came to that state and they're there today. They're not a people today as they were but one day they WILL be. But they're Loamee today and God had to turn to the Gentiles.

Which AMAZED the Jews. They could not believe it because they believed that salvation was only to the heirs of Abraham, the physical descendents of Abraham. We have people today, we have Jews who think that because

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.....BLOOD THAT God's gonna take care of them. Oh NO! - when we get to Rom. 11: 25 & 26 (read). That speaks of a national revival when Christ comes at the end of the Great Tribulation, there will be a national revival until Paul says 'all Israel' but you have to take it in the context of Chap. 9. It does not mean all the descendents of Abraham. It means all those who received the Messiah and who believe on Him. Nobody is gonna be saved except through JC. But what Paul is trying to show here is 'God's great mercy and grace has gone out to the Gentiles, not just to Jews, but to Gentiles, as well as Jews'. Do you realize if that were not true, that not one of us could be saved, except for the Grace of God. It's just of His grace!

That's the only way that any of us could ever be saved. And then he quotes a section from Isaiah and I just don't have time - I'm gonna run over, if I ~~don't~~ get into it. But I want you to notice at

V. 32 (read) there in the latter part: 'for they stumbled at that stumblingstone'. Who's they? The Jews. Who is the stumblingstone he's talking about? JC, the Messiah. Where did the Jews stumble at that stumblingstone? And the Greek means that they looked upon Jes. as being scandalous. Why? Because that cross and Jes. said to them 'you cannot save yourself. There's nothing in you, there's nothing in your ancestry, or your family that will save you! You have got to admit that you are a sinner and you have got to come the way of the cross' and



the Jews said 'that's a scandal. That's a stumblingblock. We are the heirs of Abraham.' You remember the 8th chapter of John? Jes. says to the Pharisees 'You're under bondage' and they said 'what in the world do you mean? We're the sons of Abraham. We've never been in bondage to ANYBODY!' and at that very moment, they were under the Romans. They simply were blind and they stumbled at the cross of Jes. Look at

V. 33 (read) 'as it is written' (this is in Isaiah 20: 16) and 'Rock of Offence' - that's Jes. He's sti-1 that Rock of Offence. You preach this today, even in many Protestant churches that men are to humble their hearts and repent and come the way of the cross, they don't like it. They don't like it. They want to be told of the ethical Christ. Of being saved through their own works. Of something THEY can do. Do Goodism! But you're not saved tthat way. Christ is the Christ of Death, Burial and Resurrection! But look at the last word and I want to show you this, in case you don't come back.

This has been a chapter that has told of Gods choice. Some would say this is an arbitrary choice, without man having any choice in it! Look at the last words in the chapter:

'And Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed (or disappointed)!'

That calls us to individual responsibility this morning. Sometimes a person who's never read a word of Greek or never seen a Seminary or College can come through with the most profound Truth. I love to talk to farmers. I love to talk to simple people, about the Bible and this country preacher who'd never seen a college, just studied the Bible, said 'I figured out this thing of 'election'. It's like this: God done voted from all Eternity for my salvation and the devil done voted for my damnation and I cast my vote with the Lord and we got a majority and I was elected!'

That's the way the Bible presents it. The Book of Romans - the 9th Chapter of Romans - has great mystery in it. We do not understand everything but one day we will. Let me illustrate it like this: <sup>sm</sup> I read of a young boy, who had a dog that he loved so very, very much. The dog was at his side all the time. The dog slept beside him at night. He just practically wor- shipped the dog. but one morning, as he raised the door on the garage, he saw his father shoot

that dog and he said 'daddy, I hate you. I hate you. You killed my dog. You killed my dog!' And that boy was just completely mystified. The father tried to explain it but he could never understand it. Until he grew a little older and then he understood that the dogs in that community, were afflicted with Rabies and many of them were going mad and they were biting children and there was a real crisis and the father had to kill the dog for the protection of his family and his neighbors. He understood when he got a little older.

We cannot understand all the ways of God. You never will understand some of the ways of God. One day we shall understand. In the meantime, we need to be thankful indeed that God has His hand on this world and on our lives. He doesn't do anything wrong. It may look like it's wrong and I run across people all the time, who say 'God took my mother' or 'God took my brother!!! and God made a mistake'. No, God hasn't made a mistake. He's never made ONE mistake. He has reasons for everything He does and you and I can't understand a lot of these things but one day we shall.

Thank God, His Grace is greater than any of our sins. Thank God that it's through His Grace that we are saved! It's not our effort; it's not our works; it's through His sheer love that He loved us so much! Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated. Jacob have I chosen to carry out <sup>sm</sup> My purpose; I did not chose Esau. Somebody said to a Bible scholar 'I have a problem with this text'. This great scholar said 'well, you know I have a problem too!! But my problem is probably not the same problem you have. My problem is not that God hated Esau or that God did not choose Esau but my problem is: how on earth did He love Jacob? ' That's the amazing thing! How could God love me?

Now if you're thinking that you're good enough to be loved or good enough to be saved, you've missed the whole point. You've missed it. You see, I'm not good enough to be saved and I never cursed and never drank in my life and I was a moral boy. And an obedient boy. But the amazing thing is that God loves Bill Bennett. When there was nothing in me that was loveable as compared with His Holiness. Nothing. And that He called me to preach the Gospel, which is

the MOST amazing thing in all the world. Did He do that because I was good? NO, indeed, but because He loved me. And if we miss this, we've missed an amazing teaching of Grace and of the great doctrine of the cross. We who are so blessed as Xtns., and in the church, if we're not careful, ~~deep down~~ deep down, we'll say 'we're special. We're good. We're decent! We're moral. We deserve all this' and when we do, pride creeps in - we become haughty and self-sufficient and we lose the attitude that we ought to have: that we're trophies of His Grace, and accept for that Grace, we would be lost! And this will help us to have compassion and to pray and to live for God and live where God would have us to live and that's the message that I leave with you today: We're Trophies, entirely, of His Grace and not of our own works or our own desserts! We would everyone go to hell, if we got our desserts!

Don't forget it! DON'T FORGET IT! The only hope we have is His Grace and His Love.

Let's pray before we go.