

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 9:22-30

Study Notes

Paul's question: "Why does God still blame us?"

Paul's previous answer: God's sovereignty in dealing with Pharaoh and Israel as a way to understand how Israel's hardening turned to the Gentiles' inclusion in the Kingdom of God.

"Why does God still blame us?" Paul's third explanation: "*God foretold these things in Scripture...*"

Verse 22-24:

What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory—even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

Just as Israel was the Potter's "special vessels" and the Gentiles were "common vessels" – now Israel represents the "objects of wrath", while the Gentiles represent "objects of mercy".

- **Hosea and Isaiah: Predicting the Jewish and Gentile Aspects:**

Paul makes it clear that God's dealings with the Jews and Gentiles had been clearly predicted in the Old Testament. To demonstrate this, he draws two quotes from the Book of Hosea and two from Isaiah.

Two outcomes: 1. The "common vessels" and "objects of mercy" have

been included in God's salvific plan. 2. Israel/Judah became a remnant of their former selves. (A biological Israel and a true Israel.)

- **The Hosea Story:**

Background to the Hosea texts: Hosea's marriage to a prostitute named Gomer. Gomer and her three children symbolized God's judgment on Israel's unfaithful northern kingdom.

Romans 9:25-26:

I will call them "my people" who are not my people; and I will call her "my loved one" who is not my loved one', and, "It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," they will be called "sons of the living God".'

Hosea and Gomer's second child: "Lo-Ruhamah" -- "Not loved". God: "I will no longer show love to the house of Israel."

Hosea and Gomer's third child: "Lo-Ammi" -- "Not my people". God: "You are not my people, and I am not your God".

These were very difficult revelations for the northern kingdom, but this was not to be the final relationship between Israel and God: He promised that at a future time the adverse relationship between Israel and himself would be healed.

A Word About Old Testament Prophecies:

Old Testament prophecies often have three stages of realization: 1. Immediate and literal fulfillment. 2. Intermediate and Spiritual. 3. Ultimate and eternal

- Hosea's promises:

1. Immediate and literal fulfillment: The captivity and history of Israel.
2. Intermediate and Spiritual: The Church and Christ.

3. Ultimate and eternal: The fully realized Kingdom of God.

The Hosea texts: While God had called Israel, “Not Mine” and “Not Loved”, he would again call them “My People” and “Loved by God”.

Paul shows that God’s promise has a New Testament fulfillment in the inclusion of the Gentiles – See: Ephesians 2:11-13

- **The Isaiah Quotes: vv. 27-29**

Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.” It is just as Isaiah said previously: “Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.”

Hosea: The inclusion of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God. Isaiah: The exclusion of the Jews – except for a “remnant.”

The Isaiah Context: The apostasy of God’s people in the 8th century B.C. The focus: The southern kingdom of Judah. In the Isaiah context, the judgment of God on Judah takes the form of the Assyrian invasion.

The Assyrian invasion and captivity are so thorough, only a small population of survivors are left. Still, God promises the situation is not permanent.

Isaiah’s son: Shear-Jashub ... “a remnant will return”. – Isaiah 7:3

- **Israel and Judah: Sodom and Gomorrah:**

“Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.”

In verse 27, Paul quotes Isaiah 10:22: "Though your people be like the sand by the sea, Israel, only a remnant will return. Destruction has been decreed, overwhelming and righteous."

"Though your people be like the sand by the sea..." -- God's promise to Abraham after his near-sacrifice of Isaac. A second metaphor – "as the stars in the sky".

Isaiah's prediction: In comparison with the countless number of Israelites, like stars and grains of sand, only a remnant would be saved.

Paul chose this quote very specifically to show there is a biological, genetic Israel – and there is a true Israel. There is a remnant within the larger biological Israel.

A second parallel with Sodom and Gomorrah: Only Lot and his two daughters survived God's overthrow of the twin cities. Only a remnant of Israel and Judah returned to the Promised Land.

- **A Segway For The Gentiles: Faith (v. 30)**

"What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal."

The Path: "What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith...."

The Gentile Christians number much more than Jewish-Christians. As time has progressed, especially with Paul's apostolic ministry, the number of Gentiles becoming Christians has only increased – while the number of Jewish adherents has not kept pace.

We saw how Isaiah prophesied that the Jewish numbers would be so small, it could only be characterized as a "remnant".

Jesus' statement in Matthew 8:11: "...Many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside...."

Now notice how the Gentiles were included. Paul says, "... The Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith..."

Paul returns to the discussion of righteousness by faith, versus righteousness by works. The Gentiles, who previously made no attempts at keeping the Law and pursuing righteousness by law keeping – have obtained a different kind of righteousness.

Romans 4: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness". Abraham, a Gentile by birth ... was credited with righteousness on the basis of faith.

Hundreds of years later, the Gentiles were coming to faith and being credited with righteousness ... just like Abraham. They did not pursue it by the Mosaic Code, but they obtained it just the same "a righteousness that is by faith..."

- **"Obtaining Righteousness"**

Paul says, "... But the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal."

"They have not attained their goal". Why? They pursued the Law of Moses as the way of righteousness. They pursued 613 commandments as the basis of righteousness. They strove to obey every command and tradition in order to procure righteousness.

All of their efforts to keep 613 commandments perfectly resulted in frustration. They did not obtain righteousness after all.

We will see more of this next time.