

Sovereignty in Salvation # 34

Romans 9: 24-33

As we continue to study the parenthetical chapters written to the Jews (Chapters 9-11,) we again discover the recurring themes Paul sought to convey: the sovereignty of God and the salvation of men. The Bible teaches that salvation is of the Lord, [Psalm 37:39](#) and [Jonah 2:9](#). If salvation is of the Lord, and we know it is, it stands to reason that God would be sovereign over salvation. We cannot remove or deny God's sovereignty in the salvation process.

While seeking to convey the truths of salvation to a Jewish audience, Paul also understood their skepticism in regard to salvation being available to the Gentiles. The majority of the Jews had rejected Jesus as the Christ, while many of the Gentiles had received Jesus as the Christ. However, most of the Jews could not embrace salvation being offered to the Gentiles. Maintaining his focus, Paul reveals that God is sovereign in salvation and will offer it to whomever He pleases. [Romans 9:24](#) – *Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?* He hopes to persuade the Jewish audience to embrace Jesus as the Christ and accept the fact that salvation has been offered to Gentiles as well.

While this passage was written with the Jews in mind, the principles of salvation remain the same. All men must embrace Jesus as the Christ if they are to be saved, recognizing the sovereignty of God in relation to salvation. We are from a different culture and race than the Jews, but often we develop preconceived notions regarding salvation that are contrary to Scripture. Let's consider the [certainties](#) within the text as we think on: [The Sovereignty in Salvation](#).

I. The Challenge in the Scripture (25-29) – Here Paul challenges the Jewish reader to consider the Word of God in relation to salvation. He speaks of:

A. A Word in Hosea (25-26) – *As he saith also in Osee (Hosea,) I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.* ^[26] *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 makes reference to [Hosea 1:10](#), and [2:23](#). If you are familiar with the book of Hosea, you are aware that it is a story of grace, forgiveness, and redemption. Hosea's wife, Gomer, had been unfaithful in the marriage. In fact, she had left Hosea and found herself enslaved because of her infidelity. Hosea went and purchased her from the slave market, and brought her home as his wife. He knew two of the children Gomer bore unto him were not his children, but he embraced them as his own. Paul uses this illustration in Scripture to teach a profound truth about salvation. This illustration reveals a couple aspects regarding salvation we need to consider. Notice:

➤ **The Call** (25-26) – Although the children were not naturally his, Hosea decided to embrace them as his own, calling them his children. God was working in the life of Hosea to reveal His

sovereign plan to redeem and provide salvation for the Gentiles as well. Gomer had been unfaithful, just as Israel would be; and her unfaithfulness brought children who were not born from Hosea's loins, just as the Gentiles were not of Abraham. Paul declares unto the Jews that the Gentiles had simply responded to the call of God in salvation!

The call of God has been extended to the Gentiles, literally to the entire human race. We ought to rejoice that God chose to extend the call to those who were undeserving. This is nothing short of His marvelous grace! We certainly did not deserve it, and we hadn't earned it, but grace was extended as the call was given in salvation!

➤ **The Conversion** (25-26) – Those who heard the call were no longer the same. These children may not have been born naturally to Hosea, but his acceptance of them afforded great privilege. *I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.* ^[26] *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.* The same would be true of all Gentiles who believed in Christ by faith for salvation. Although they were not of God's chosen people, they would become His people, embraced as children of the living God. They were no longer viewed as infidels and outcasts; they were now considered children through faith in Christ!

We too enjoy this blessing. All who come to Christ in salvation, responding to the call of God, are no longer the same. We are placed within the family of God, made heirs to the inheritance, and joint-heirs with Christ. We enjoy all the privileges and benefits of every other child. He takes one who was unworthy and makes them worthy in Christ!

B. A Word in Isaiah (27-29) – Now Paul reminds the hearer of a word spoken in Isaiah the prophet's writings. He speaks of:

➤ **The Opportunity** (27) – *Esaias* (Isaiah) *also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:* Isaiah revealed that even though the Israelites were great in number, as the sand of the sea, only a remnant would be saved. God had dealt favorably, mercifully, and graciously with His people for thousands of years. He blessed them such that from one man came a multitude of people, beyond the ability to number. However, of the vast number of Israelites born into life, only a small remnant believed in the Lord and followed Him. Most were rebellious and defiant. Only a few embraced Jesus as the Christ, believing unto salvation.

One could look at this and see only the tragedy, but I look at it and see the great opportunity that was given. Although the majority rejected the Lord's guidance in the Old Testament and few believed in Christ at His coming, the grace of God was shown and offered to all who would believe. God was faithful when men were not. He remains faithful today!

➤ **The Enmity (28)** – *For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.* Isaiah also warned of the judgment of God to come upon all who deny His righteous ways and rebel against Him. He is gracious and merciful, but when His grace and mercy are rejected, judgment is all that remains. The people of Israel and Judah suffered the consequences of their rebellion. Paul sought to warn those who lived in his day against rebellion and denial of Christ the Lord. God had sent His Son to provide redemption for all men. He alone is the source of salvation. To deny Christ as Savior and Lord is to invite and expect the righteous judgment of God.

God dealt with the rebellion of Israel, but His plan of redemption was not thwarted due to their unbelief. When they rejected Jesus as the Christ, God turned to the Gentiles, offering them salvation. Rebellion did not pay in Isaiah's day and it doesn't today either. Many will reject Jesus as the Christ, denying the sole means of salvation, but their denial doesn't prevent the salvation of those who believe by faith and embrace Jesus in salvation.

➤ **The Mercy (29)** – *And as Esaias (Isaiah) said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrhah.* The Jews boasted in their heritage, viewing the Gentiles as heathen apostates, but Paul reminded them of the mercy they too had received. Had the Lord not been merciful to Israel, they would have been judged and destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah of old. Although they failed to see the severity of their sin, their lives had been no better than those of Sodom.

I am reminded of the grace and mercy of God that has been extended to all of humanity. We tend to judge others, viewing their sin and transgression worse than our own, but God doesn't see as we see. Sin is sin in the eyes of God. We try to categorize it, hoping to minimize our own transgressions, but it is simply by God's grace that any of us were given the opportunity to receive salvation. The Jews despised the Gentiles, and often we are guilty of the same. If God had not been merciful to us, we would yet be in sin without hope. We are nothing more than sinners saved by His grace!

II. The Certainty in Salvation (30-33) – In our closing verses, Paul discusses some certainties regarding salvation. He speaks of:

A. The Approach (30-31) – *What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.* ^[31] *But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.* Paul declares that the Gentiles, who had not followed God in the past, were counted righteous because of their faith. On the other hand, the Israelites, who abided by the law, had not obtained righteousness because they had not come by faith. Paul affirms to the Jews within Rome that faith was essential to salvation. It wasn't one of many ways; it was the only way to obtain salvation.

- We have discussed this at length, but it applies to all: Jew and Gentile alike. The only way to receive salvation of the Lord is by faith in the finished work of Christ. Our heritage and past deeds do not secure our salvation, nor do the sinful ways of one's past hinder salvation!

B. The Assumption (32) – *Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone.* I am sure the Jews didn't appreciate these words, but they are truth. Paul declares that many sought salvation and acceptance of God based upon their adherence to the law, assuming it would translate into salvation. However, even in their zeal for the law, they stumbled at the only means of salvation. Paul emphatically declares that works and adherence to the law do not generate salvation, no matter how much men believe it does. One has to come to Christ by faith.

- We might be judgmental of the Jews, but these assumptions remain today. They may be masked under a different approach, but many continue to seek acceptance to the Lord and salvation by a host of means, all of which fail miserably. Good works, church attendance, baptism, family heritage, Bible reading, and prayer are just a few of the things people are counting on, but they will sadly discover their efforts were never enough. Salvation is of the Lord; Period! We come to Him by faith or we remain in sin. I pray you are not basing your assurance in salvation on an assumption, but faith alone in Christ alone!

C. The Assurance (33) – *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.* Many of the Jews would continue to reject Jesus as the Christ, but Paul affirmed that He was the only means of salvation. Salvation in Christ affords assurance and boldness in the faith. Paul had been delivered from the bondage of the law and rejoiced in the liberty he had through Christ. He was secure in his salvation and felt compelled to share the Good News with others!

- I was challenged by this final verse. I too rejoice for the assurance I have in salvation, but I also realize that I have not had to deal with the struggles many have for embracing Christ. The Jews would have been rejected by their family and friends. Many around the world suffer the same consequences today, and yet they are willing to embrace Jesus unashamedly. Our families have not rejected us, and yet we often remain silent about our faith. We, of all people, ought to be willing to proclaim the Good News to a world that needs to hear! What hinders us from being a faithful witness? Let us be bold in our witness for the Lord!

Conclusion: Many of the Jews remained deceived and confused in Paul's day. They refused to accept salvation by faith alone in Christ alone. Many continue that path of resistance today. There is no other way of salvation. If you have yet to embrace Christ by faith, I urge you to do so today! If you are saved, I want to challenge you to do as Paul and share your faith with those who have yet to come to Christ in salvation!