

ROMANS 9

In a part of the Bible that emphasizes the sovereignty of God, We see Paul sorrowing (9:1–3), praying (10:1), and worshiping (11:33–36). He did not feel that God’s sovereignty in any way destroyed man’s responsibility. The God who ordains the end (saving the lost) also ordains the means to the end, the prayers and witness of His people. They go together.

God is not obligated to save anybody, for all deserve to be condemned. Even Israel was chosen only because of His grace and love (Deut. 7:6–8). Therefore, nobody can criticize God or say He is unfair. That He is merciful to sinners should make us rejoice!

Israel’s rejection of Christ did not ruin God’s plan, for He went to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1ff.; 15:14) who gladly received the good news. However, God has a remnant among the Jews (vv. 27–29), and believing Jews and Gentiles are one in the church (Eph. 2:11–22).

ROMANS 10

Why did Israel stumble over Christ and reject Him? Because they did not understand the kind of righteousness God wanted or how to get it. Like the Pharisees (and many people today), they thought only of righteous *works* and could not comprehend a righteousness that comes by faith

The missionary heart of Paul comes out in verses 14–17. Salvation is by faith, and faith comes “by hearing . . . the word of God” (v. 17). But unbelieving sinners (including Israel) cannot hear unless we tell them. God needs people with beautiful feet (Isa. 52:7) to carry the gospel to the lost.

Despite Paul’s broken heart (v. 1) and God’s outstretched hands (v. 21; Isa. 65:2), Israel did not believe; but the Gentiles did believe and God saved them! When you feel discouraged in your witnessing, remember Paul; continue caring, praying, and sharing the good news. Keep those feet beautiful!

ROMANS 11

The theology of Romans 9–11 magnifies God’s grace and extols His sovereignty. Never lose the wonder of your salvation or of the greatness of God. No matter how deep the valley or difficult the battle, a vision of God’s greatness puts joy in your heart and strength in your soul. God knows what He is doing even if you do not understand it fully.

There is a future for Israel; Paul is proof of that (v. 1; 1 Tim. 1:16), and so is Israel’s past history (vv. 2–10). God has always had a believing remnant in Israel, no matter how dark the day. When you become discouraged about the future of the church and feel that you may be the only faithful Christian left, read 1 Kings 19 and focus on God’s greatness.

We cannot explain all the purposes and plans of God, but we can worship and praise Him for who He is (vv. 33–36). The end result of all Bible study is worship, and the end result of all worship is service to the God we love.

ROMANS 12

The biblical pattern is to relate doctrine and duty, for what you believe must determine how you behave. In these closing chapters, Paul discusses your relationship with the Lord (12:1–2), yourself (12:3), the church (12:4–16), your enemies (12:17–21), government (chap. 13), and believers who disagree (chaps. 14–15).

Transformation (vv. 1–2). The Spirit of God transforms your life by renewing your mind (2 Cor. 3:18), but He cannot do this unless you give Him your body. When you give yourself to God in spiritual worship, you become a living sacrifice to the glory of God.

Evaluation (3). To think more highly of yourself, *or less highly*, is sin, so have a proper estimate of who you are and what God has given you (Gal. 6:3–5).

Cooperation (4–16). You are part of the body of Christ with a ministry to fulfill, so do your part lovingly and joyfully.

Vindication (17–21). If yours is a godly life, you are bound to have enemies but leave all judgment to the Lord. If you let the Lord have His way, He will use your enemies to build you and make you more like Christ.

ROMANS 13

Believers are citizens of heaven, but we must not minimize our responsibilities on earth. We must be exemplary citizens so that the Lord will be glorified (1 Pet. 2:11–17).

Law (1–7). God has established human government because people are sinners and must be controlled. Governmental authority comes from God, so you must respect the office even if you cannot respect the officer. The fear of punishment is not the highest motivation for obedience, but it is better than having chaos.

Love (8–10). Love for God and for your neighbor is the highest motive for obedience. Love does what is right and just and seeks the best for others. By nature, we do not have this kind of love (Titus 3:3); the Lord gives it to us (Rom. 5:5).

Light (vv. 11–14). Christian citizens live in the light of the Lord's return.

ROMANS 14

Your love may be tested more by Christians who disagree with you than by unbelievers who persecute you. It takes a diamond to cut a diamond. What should you do when your brother or sister disagrees with you about how God's people ought to live?

Acceptance (1–9). Not all believers are mature, and love demands that the mature members of the family defer to the immature. Love protects people and gives them a chance to grow up. People may be difficult, but we accept them in love for the Lord's sake.

Accountability (10–12). We have no right to judge and condemn one another because the Judge is the Lord. Each believer will have enough to do in keeping his own account right without interfering with others' accounts!

Ambition (13–23). Our desire must not be to get everybody to agree with us; our desire must be to pursue peace, not cause others to stumble, and help others to mature in Christ. What starts as *grieving* (v. 15) can become *offending* (v. 21), *making weak* (v. 21), and *causing others to stumble and fall* (vv. 13, 21). The result might be *destroying* a brother's or sister's faith (vv. 15, 20). Is destroying another just to have your own way worth it? ¹

¹Wiersbe, W. W. 1997, c1991. *With the word Bible commentary*. Thomas Nelson: Nashville