

Romans Lesson 11

1. Can God Still Find Fault? (9:19-20)

1.1. An objector will say, "Why then does He find fault with those who reject Him or who have not received His mercy?"

- For it seems that no one can resist His will
- Did Pharaoh have any choice in the matter at all?
 - This is an invalid question based on an incomplete understanding of God and Pharaoh's own actions
 - Pharaoh never repented, changed his heart, or sought to yield to the will of God.
 - Does that mean he could not have?
 - God has perfect foreknowledge, and knew exactly how Pharaoh would respond
 - However, we cannot conclude that Pharaoh was obeying the will of God by hardening his heart and rejecting the will of God at the same time. This is a logical impossibility.
 - God does not say, "Let My people go," but at the same time tell Pharaoh's heart, "Do not let My people go."

1.2. But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God (charge God with wrongdoing or unrighteousness)?

1.3. Paul has already demonstrated in chapters 1-3, that we humans are the unrighteous ones.

1.4. Paul has further taken on the task in his thesis statement (1:16-17) of revealing to us the righteousness of God.

1.5. So, when man questions God with unrighteousness, he is out of line in every way.

1.6. This is why Paul tells us over and over in Romans, "Certainly not! God Forbid! Do not even permit yourself to think this way!"

2. The Potter and the Clay (9:20-21)

2.1. Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me this way?"

- How absurd a question
- Clearly the potter has absolute authority over the lump of clay, while the clay has no ability to say or act on its own against the potter, and certainly not to question his actions
- How much more so between God and man?

- If we lose sight of the fact that God is perfectly righteous, and we have zero righteousness in us, unless the Lord God has sown mercy to us and given us His own righteousness, we will find ourselves in desperate peril with not only our Creator, but our Savior.

2.2. Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

- By logical extension, yes, the potter can form the clay in whatever manner he so chooses. It all depends on the will of the potter.
- If God is the Potter (and He is), then does He not have every right to form us in whatever way He so chooses?
- Does God ever form or create a being whom He intends, from the beginning, to be unrighteous and to oppose Him so as to accomplish a greater purpose?
- Did God create Satan to be His enemy and to trouble His creation?
- Did God create Pharaoh just to use Him as a pawn to bring His Ten Plagues against?

3. What if? (9:22-24)

3.1. Would God be unjust if:

- He created some vessels knowing, that He would destroy them in the end?
- He used the vessels destined and prepared for destruction in order to show His plans and mercy the vessels who will receive the riches of His glory?
- He showed mercy to vessels from every ethnic people group who receive Him by faith?

3.2. Prepared for destruction? (9:22)

- Who is preparing who for destruction?
 - God is not the initiator of this preparation
 - The Greek verb tense is clear – the vessels are preparing themselves (by rejecting God) for their own destruction
- God is enduring with these vessels
 - To accomplish His divine purposes
 - To permit an opportunity for repentance

3.3. Paul's Thesis Affirmed (9:22-24)

- Reviewing what Paul has already revealed to us:
- There is no shame whatsoever in the Gospel of Christ
- God has done His part in all righteousness

- None of His actions are unrighteous or immoral
- God has nothing to explain or apologize for in His actions
- God's measuring rod of who receives His mercy, and who does not receive His mercy, is based on faith alone, for the Just shall live by faith (Rom 1;16-17; Hab. 2:4)
- God is also perfectly justified in revealing His wrath upon all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men
- Therefore, God is perfectly righteous to allow vessels, who have long since hardened their hearts to Him, and are destined and prepared for destruction, to remain alive and unjudged for the present time in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon whom He has shown His mercy.
- We are all vessels of God's wrath, and we are all destined and prepared for destruction in our old, unregenerate man
- We only become vessels of mercy prepared beforehand for glory when we are born again by faith
- Just because God knows the end from the beginning, and thus everyone who will ultimately receive His grace and mercy, does not mean He makes those choices for us
- God is sovereign, but man is made in His image, and we also have a sovereignty over our own will. If we reject God, He is not at fault. Man's rejection of God does not mean that He was unwilling save us or that He predetermined our choices
- The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9)

4. God's Sovereign Will (9:25-29)

- 4.1. Hosea 2:23 God always intended to show His love and mercy to the Gentiles
- 4.2. Isaiah 10:22-23 God always ensured a remnant from Israel will be able to partake of His mercy and His promise
- 4.3. Isaiah 1:9 God has protected and preserved the seed of Israel and Abraham according to His promise

5. Israel's National Failure (9:30-33)

- 5.1. The Gentiles have attained what God desired for Israel to possess, but they nationally failed to do so
- 5.2. Righteousness was, and always is, only obtained through faith
- 5.3. Israel has been so focused on fulfilling the Law of righteousness that they have neglected the faith God requires

- They preferred to work for righteousness rather than receive grace from God by faith
 - The Law became their stumbling stone and that which has blinded them to God's will
6. Linking Chapter 9 to Chapter 10
- 6.1. Chapter 9
- Israel has corporately failed to attain righteousness
 - The Gentiles have individually attained righteousness through faith
- 6.2. Chapter 10
- The descendants of Israel, individually, need to hear and respond to the gospel
 - Corporately, Israel remains ignorant of how righteousness is attained
7. The Problem and the Solution (10:1-8)
- 7.1. Paul's heartfelt desire and prayer is to see all Israel come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ
- They have zeal without knowledge
 - Israel sought to establish righteousness apart from faith
 - The Law ceases to be the focus of righteousness when one believes in Christ
- 7.2. The Law of Moses demands unfailing conformity to every detail and requirement
- 7.3. By contrast, faith is a simple matter of the heart
8. Salvation and Faith Confirmed (10:9-10)
- 8.1. You will be saved if (Gentiles, Israel, all):
- You confess Jesus Christ as Lord with your mouth
 - And believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead
- 8.2. For:
- With the heart one believes and receives the righteousness of Christ
 - And with the mouth confession is made as a confirmation of salvation
9. The Blessings of Faith (10:11-13)
- 9.1. The one who believes will not be put to shame (Isaiah 28:16)
- There is no distinction between Jew and Greek
 - The same Lord is over all and is rich to all who call upon Him for salvation
 - Whoever calls upon the Lord shall be saved

9.2. Carrying the Gospel to the Lost (10:14-21)

- Seeking those who have not yet believed
 - Belief in Christ comes by hearing of Christ
 - Those who proclaim Christ to those who have not heard are preachers
 - Preachers are sent on their task to share the gospel
 - “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” 10:17
- National Israel has heard the gospel, but has not yet responded with faith