

八月廿七日

經文：羅馬書九至十章

鑰節：「…我要憐憫誰就憐憫誰，要恩待誰就恩待誰。」(9:15)

提要

羅馬書九、十、十一章是整本聖經裏最具爭議性的經文之一，因為它很容易令人斷章取義，忽略了保羅所要表達的整體思想。

例如：身為猶太人的保羅在一處說道：「從以色列生的不都是以色列人……肉身所生的兒女不都是上帝的兒女，惟獨那應許的兒女（從以撒生的——7節）才算是亞伯拉罕的後裔」（6、8節）。這段話會使你以為以色列人的「選民」身份及使命已經取消了（至少從種族和國家的角度來說）。但保羅後來又說：「以色列全家都要得救」（11:26），並引用舊約以賽亞先知的預言為他的話作辯護。這一來又使你認為「選民」仍具有獨特的地位，上帝與他們的關係也仍是不可侵犯的（因為「上帝的恩賜和選召是沒有後悔的」，11:29）。這到底是怎麼回事？保羅難道自相矛盾嗎？

這一大段經文牽涉太多錯綜複雜的觀念、主題、和副題，我真希望能用二、三十頁來幫助你捕捉保羅論點的脈絡。但這裏有一句出自出埃及記（出33:19）的重要引言，是保羅論點的樞紐，也就是今天的鑰節（羅9:15）。上帝有至高無上的主權。祂可以做祂想做的事，不論我們喜不喜歡，也不論我們瞭不瞭解祂的理由。祂可以拯救那些祂想拯救的以色列人（部分或全部——主權在祂），祂也可以拯救凡祂想拯救的外邦人。

而且有一點十分清楚。任何的「拯救」都只能透過一個人：拿撒勒的耶穌基督——以色列的彌賽亞和世界的救主（11:26~27）。

禱告

噢，上帝，我們也和保羅一樣，祈禱以色列能得救。幫助我們更多禱告、更多奉獻，更多行動，好叫更多人能聽見真理，就是我們若口裏承認主耶穌，心裏相信，就必得救。我們為您的美善讚美您，奉主耶穌聖名，阿們！

August 27

Scriptures: Read Romans 9 & 10

Key Verse: "... I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." (Romans 9:15)

Overview

Chapter 9, 10, and 11 are some of the most controversial in all of Scripture. Controversial because there is explosive potential in interpreting some of what Paul says rather than all of what Paul says.

For instance: in one place Paul, a Jew himself, says "not all who are descended from Israel are Israel... it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise [through Isaac—v.7] who are regarded as Abraham's offspring" (vv.6, 8). This leads you to think that the "chosen people" factor and the messianic mission of Israel have somehow been nullified (at least in any racial or national terms). But Paul later says, "and so all Israel will be saved" (11:26), and goes on to defend this by quoting Old Testament prophetic passages from Isaiah. This leads you to think that the "chosen people" are still uniquely chosen and that God's relationship with them is inviolable ("for God's gifts and His call are irrevocable" 11:29). So what's going on here? Is Paul contradicting himself?

There are so many complexities, themes, and sub-themes involved here that I wish I had twenty or thirty pages to help you grasp the flow of Paul's argument. But there is an absolutely vital quote from Exodus (33:19) that is pivotal to Paul's presentation. It's the key verse (9:15) God is sovereign. He will do what He will do, whether we like it or not. No matter that the human attempt to reason through God's reasons is muddy. He will save those of Israel He wants to save (some or all—it's up to Him). He will also save those of the Gentiles He wants to save.

But one point is clear. Any "saving" going on will be through one person only: Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Israel's Messiah and Savior of the world (11:26, 27).

Prayer

O God, we also pray as Paul prayed that Israel might be saved. Help us to pray more, go more, and give more so that more will hear the truth that if we confess the Lord Jesus with our mouths and believe on Him in our hearts, we will be saved. We praise You for Your goodness. Amen!