

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Romans 9-16 The Implications of Salvation

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Verses: Romans 9:6-8

Topic: Children of Promise

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Romans 9:6-8 MKJV *Not however that the Word of God has failed, for not all those of Israel are Israel; (7) nor because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children. But, "In Isaac shall your Seed be called." (8) That is, not the children of the flesh are children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for a seed.*

The problem for Paul was that the Jews had not believed in Jesus. Was this the same as saying that God had not saved His chosen people and that His promises through the prophets had come to nought?

The Jews interpreted the Old Testament as meaning they were automatically right with God and entitled to salvation simply through being children of Abraham. They had the patriarchs and the Law and the right religious system so they were saved, or at least first in line for salvation and if God did not save them all, then He was at fault in some way. Paul's answer is that God does not choose by the flesh, but by the promise. That is physical descent alone does not guarantee salvation. Salvation comes from entering into God's kingdom through His precious and gracious promises received by faith. To illustrate this Paul looks at the children of Abraham.

Now Abraham had eight sons, Isaac through his wife Sarah, Ishmael through her concubine Hagar and six through his second wife Keturah after Sarah died: "*And she bore him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah*" (Genesis 25:2). Only one of these was the "son of promise" through Sarah, and that was Isaac and he became of the line of Christ and received the entire inheritance. The "seed" was Isaac, the rest were simply physical children who were blessed, given gifts and sent away. In fact the other children of Abraham became enemies of Israel and opposers of the work of God. They were not of the spiritual line, they did not belong to the "red thread of redemption".

Paul then goes on to use Jacob and Esau as an example of pure election, but we will tackle that thorny topic tomorrow. Today we want to establish the fact that God's promises and God's work are God's choice and do not pass through any process of physical inheritance in an automatic fashion (though blessing can certainly flow down faithful believing families for many generations). No one can say "my father was a Christian therefore I am saved". Each person must find God for themselves, or rather be found by Him. As someone has wisely said "God has no grand-children".

Also no one can say "because I come from a family of atheists I cannot be saved". No physical family lineage stands between you and God. He can call someone out of the darkest of circumstances and has done so many, many times.

The question then remains – why could not God "make it happen"? Why was not all Israel saved? Why did He allow some to fall away from grace? If God is both all good and

all powerful then surely all Israel should have been saved? Did His promises fail? It will take the whole of Romans 9-11 to answer this question fully but we will start on it tonight.

Paul's first answer is that *for not all those of Israel are Israel;* (Romans 9:6). In other words there are two Israels, a physical Israel which is "according to the flesh" and a spiritual Israel which is according to faith, according to the promise and according to election.

We see the above principle working in every single church and we can just as easily say "Not all who are Baptists are Baptists" (or substitute the denomination you belong to or know of). There are those who go to church and just warm the pews and never believe and yet call themselves Baptists (or whatever) and yet who do not believe, who are not born-again, and who are not truly saved and therefore not truly Baptists in the fullest and truest sense of being a Baptist.

Now hopefully everyone getting this devotional is aware that you cannot simply be saved by belonging to a good Baptist family and going to a good Baptist church. You actually have to make a personal decision to receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then you are saved, then you are truly and really a Baptist (or whatever your chosen denomination is). Even if you have a thousand degrees in theology unless you believe the promises of God in Christ are true for you personally, then you are outside the Kingdom, no matter how far "in" or "up" you may be in an official ecclesiastical structure. We are never spiritually validated by the flesh, by descent, by degrees, or by the mere approval of men. Our entire spiritual validity comes from being born-again and entering the Kingdom of God.

Nicodemus was at the top of the Jewish theological, social and ecclesiastical tree but he had to be born-again in order to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:1-12) and in the very next chapter of John's gospel we find someone who was as far in the other direction as possible, a Samaritan woman who had five marriages and now living in sin, also entering the Kingdom of God. The side by side comparison of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman is a deliberate teaching tool by John the Apostle and shows us that social position, up or down, male or female, educated or uneducated, Jew or Samaritan, insider or outsider, is irrelevant, even utterly irrelevant. What matters is believing in Christ Jesus and entering into the Kingdom of God!

So physical descent did not entitle the Jews to automatic salvation – they still had to believe. And having Moses and the prophets and the law and the Temple and the sacrifices did not entitle the Jews to automatic salvation – they still had to believe.

God's promises work for those who believe and they do not come about for those who refuse to believe. If Israel had all believed, then all Israel would have been saved, and indeed this will happen one day! (We will see that, and why it has been delayed as we go through Romans 9-11)

Why then does God not compel all to believe? Because belief must be related in some way to character, and especially to repentance. If even the defiant rogue was compelled to believe, and did not abandon being a defiant rogue, but increased in treachery while still believing in God, then Heaven would quickly become Hell. Giving eternal life to wicked hearts is a recipe for disaster – which is why after the Fall, Adam was banished

from the Garden of Eden and the tree of life was put out of reach, guarded by a flaming cherub.

Genesis 3:22-24 MKJV *And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man has become as one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever, (23) therefore Jehovah God sent him out from the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he had been taken. (24) And He drove out the man. And He placed cherubs at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.*

And so repentance and faith must go hand in hand. The wicked must not enter the Kingdom of God, but only the truly repentant must go in, who accept the cost of becoming like Christ.

But cannot repentance be forced? Cannot change of character be compelled by the hand of God? It appears not, or surely Satan would have been forced into line long ago. Beings with free will can choose not to change. They can become hardened and stubborn, their consciences can become seared as with a hot iron and they can defy God forever. So in any group of people, whether Israel, or the Baptists or the Methodists or the Pentecostals there will be two groups, one will be outwardly religious, in form only, and the other will be inwardly spiritual, truly believing and of faith and of the promise. And the outwardly religious will persecute the inwardly spiritual for the flesh will always persecute those who are of the Spirit.

Galatians 4:28-31 MKJV *But brothers, we, like Isaac, are children of promise. (29) But then even as he born according to flesh persecuted him born according to the Spirit, so it is also now. (30) But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave-woman and her son; for in no way shall the son of the slave-woman inherit with the son of the free woman." (31) Then, brothers, we are not children of a slave-woman, but of the free woman.*

So God's promises are for the children of promise, and not for those "born according to the flesh" - who do not inherit at all. The promises of God are for those born according to the Spirit, and who have Christ in them as their hope of glory.

Romans 2:28-29 MKJV *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that outwardly in flesh; (29) but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart; in spirit and not in letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God.*

Not all who are of Israel are Israel. We cannot organize our way to Heaven. There must be an inward and spiritual work, we must be circumcised of heart, by the Spirit, through repentance and faith and thus receive our praise and spiritual validation from God and not from men. God's promises have not failed, they simply only work for the children of promise, and that has been God's way from all eternity. And how do we become a child of promise? By receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior!

John 1:12-13 MKJV *But as many as received Him, He gave to them authority to become the children of God, to those who believe on His name, (13) who were born, not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but were born of God.*
Blessings,

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