

The Gospel Story: Salvation by Faith

A Study of Romans

Romans 9:30-10:21

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Opening Discussion

1. There are many truths about God that defy human reason. What are some of the mysteries of God that we believe are true but certainly go beyond our ability to understand or reason out?
2. What happens to our view of God if we limit God to what we can understand or explain? What is the practical effect of this?
3. Do you think it's more important to create and define a theological camp where everything fits neatly into place or to study each text in its context and arrive at the obvious conclusion of the text even if it doesn't fit perfectly into another text? Why? Why are we so uncomfortable with the thought of not being able to figure something out?

Bible Study

1. What were the main points of Romans 9:1-29 and why does God's Sovereignty matter?
2. Read Romans 9:30-33. What was the difference between the Gentiles and Israel? What are the two types of righteousness mentioned in the text? How does this same dynamic play out today? Who is harder to reach, the self-righteous religious person or the pagan? Why? Using the text as your guide, why are people so antagonistic specifically towards Jesus today?
3. Read Romans 10:1-4. When it comes to God, is sincerity enough? What does the text mean that Christ is the "end" of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes? Compare Romans 7:1-3. (For more on this topic refer to the transcript from II Corinthians 3, available on the website.)

4. Read Romans 10:5-21. Does the text seem to be saying God predetermines some for wrath or is Paul addressing human responsibility in salvation? Do you think 10:13 is true? Do you think the “whoever” means whoever or only the elect? If only the elect then what sense does the whole chapter make?
5. If God already has predetermined who can be saved, why would He claim He has stretched out His hand all day long to them (v.21)? Has He really? In other words, if the issue is not really human responsibility but God’s choice not to elect them, why say this? In other words, if the offer of salvation is not really made available to all then why make such statements? Is it not true that once you deny human responsibility in salvation you impugn the character of God; is it not like having tryouts for the Easter Play knowing the parts are really already assigned? Does that have integrity?
6. What would you consider the normal plain reading of this text? Is the issue at hand in chapter 10 that Israel was “non-elect” or predestined for wrath or is it Israel’s failure to choose faith over personal righteousness by works?

Application

1. What conclusions must you arrive at to be true to both Romans 9 and 10? What do we do with what seems to be a paradox between the two chapters?
2. Do you think the point of Romans 9 and 10 is to figure it all out or is there a more practical application of these two chapters? If there is a more practical application, what is it?
3. When challenged with the mysteries of God that go beyond our ability to explain, is it ok to just say, “I don’t know?” Is it better to just say we don’t know than to try to explain something we can’t really explain? Why or why not?