

LESSON 20 9:27-10:4

The first three-quarters of chapter 9 dealt with the reality that Israel as a faith is by the sovereign election of God, including both Jews and Gentiles. Israel as a race is of much lesser importance in Scripture, however Israel as a faith is of utmost importance. Now, lest we look at the electing work of God as unfair, or unjust, we must remember the status of the Creator versus His creation. Paul continues with a theme reminding believers that God has called them all into this common faith.

THE WORDS FROM A PROPHET OF ISRAEL

The prophet Isaiah was a highly intelligent man who knew foreign affairs, had remarkable literary skill, and maintained a very high theology. His book has more messianic prophecy than any other O.T. prophet.

Prophecy #1 – Even though the Israeli race will be as innumerable as the sand of the sea, only some of them will be saved. The Lord will therefore accomplish His work to and through that remnant without hesitation or shortcoming. – 27-28

Careful students realize that this quote is actually an amalgam of two prophets, Isaiah (10:22-23) and Hosea (1:10). Interestingly, Paul quotes the Septuagint, not the Masoretic text here, which is good evidence for the confidence Paul had in the translation process.

Prophecy #2 – If God had not been gracious to the lineage of faith then the lineage of the race would have been exterminated to the same extent as that of Sodom and Gomorrah. – 29

THE INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION BECAUSE OF CHRIST

The context sheds fresh light on the covenant God made with Abraham. From day one, God was always interested in man's faith, not his race. We have nothing to boast on our race, gender, denomination, family name, etc. Our blessing is in that we are trophies of the grace of God through faith!

So, what is our conclusion? The heathen Gentiles have found righteousness by faith, and the pious Jews have fallen short of righteousness in keeping the Law? Why? They leaned on their works instead of placing trust for their sanctification in Christ. To them, He is a stone upon which they tripped. For Isaiah also wrote about the Messiah in such phraseology, noting that He would indeed be the cause of many faltering in their faith. - 30-33

THE PRAYER FOR ISRAEL

THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED!!! They have a great enthusiasm for God, but that zeal has no intellectual component. There is a profound difference between the righteousness of God and the righteousness of the religious. The Jews know the latter, and therefore neglect to submit to God's righteousness. If they would, they would discover that Christ is the prize for those who seek righteousness in faith (not justification through the keeping of the Law).

The Jews teach us a highly valuable lesson: our religion can get in the way of our faith. For us as traditional, regular Baptists, we let our relationship to Christ by faith dictate our worship style, our translation preference, our theology, our polity, or our outreach. We hold tradition and religion relatively lightly, but our faith tightly.