

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# Small Group Bible Study

## Romans 9 to 12

### SERIES INTRODUCTION

We continue with Romans 9 to 12, where Paul presents key doctrines, such as God's sovereignty, salvation, election, hope, etc. Paul brings God's promises to Abraham into focus and identifies us as the spiritual children of Abraham, explaining how the Jews have been rejected in the same way that they have rejected Jesus. By fulfilling The Law, Jesus, the stumbling block, became the stepping stone to God. However, Paul also brings the argument back to the Jews that God has not completely abandoned them, there is hope for both Jews and gentiles. The climactic point Paul makes is an exhortation for us to be living sacrifices, worthy of our calling, because this is the only appropriate response to God's mercy.

5 Feb

**God's Sovereign Choice**  
Romans 9:1–29

12 Feb

**Salvation To All**  
Romans 9:30–10:21

19 Feb

**Rejected But Hopeful**  
Romans 11:1–36

26 Feb

**A Living Sacrifice**  
Romans 12:1–8

# God's Sovereign Choice

ROMANS 9:1-29

## GENERAL SURVEY

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TOPIC

KEY VERSE

MAIN PERSON/S

KEY IDEAS & QUESTIONS

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## Introduction

Paul lays out his argument that God's love and salvation plan are promises for all who are adopted as God's children through the cross. God brings us into His future glory by His special calling (election), through His promises and bless us to be His children. As such, God's adoption takes the place of the law; God's covenant with His people is now His promise to all who believe; and God's glory is now our sacrificial worship. So let us learn the "new" language as we "enter" in to the new relationship with God through the cross of Jesus Christ.

## For Study and Discussion

- 1) Rom 9:1-13 Joy and sorrow
  - a) Chapter 8 is full of triumphant joy. Why, then, does Paul speak of having great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart? v9:3
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) Many of us experience great joy when we first heard of the Gospel and accepted Christ to be our saviour. But are there times when you have felt sorrow and anguish in the same way that Paul did? Who did you feel sorrow and anguish for? How did you respond to this sorrow and anguish?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) Some people in Paul's time, and indeed today, have raised an objection to the Gospel that can be summarized in this statement: God intended for the Jews, His chosen people, to be His children. That is why He gave them the promises, the covenants, and the law (v4). If God now rejects the Jews who do not accept Jesus as the Messiah, doesn't it mean that God's word has failed – God has failed to keep His promise?
  - a) Explain Paul's main argument against making this conclusion. Which part of the statement above is not true?

- b) Paul explains the spiritual principles of God's election through the Old Testament examples of (i) Isaac and (ii) Jacob and Esau. What are these principles and how does it help you understand the doctrine of election?

3) Rom 9:14-29

Opponents of the doctrine of election often point to the unfairness of God in choosing some people to be saved over others. But Paul points us to the truth that God's election is an act of mercy by the God who is always righteous and always just: God does whatever He wants, but the acts of God are always true and right, because it is God who does them. God cannot act against His own nature.

- a) Why does God alone have the right to decide who, among all the people of the world, is to be saved? Why does this seem to be unjust or inhumane to the world?

- b) What is the inevitable result if God were to carry out His judgment on the world, righteously, justly, but without mercy? Why does God delay His judgment?

- c) Why does God choose to save us, the elect, in such a seemingly roundabout way? Is there a purpose to God's plan in redeeming His children which is revealed in stages through Israel's history, the coming of Christ, and His death on the cross? How is the Bible the key for us to understand this purpose and how does it affect the way we read and study God's Word?

## **Discipleship Pointers**

- We are spiritual heirs of Abraham - Galatians 3:29 says that "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise". There are privileges and also responsibilities associated with this identity. Are we acting as heirs of Abraham?
- We are chosen not by our own efforts or goodness, but solely through God's mercy. We should reflect deeply on this truth and let it dictate the way we live our lives.

## **Family/Group Moments**

- Are we struggling like Paul for his kin? Commit to a prayer plan for anyone (your family members, friends, loved ones) who need to hear the Gospel and accept Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

# Salvation To All

ROMANS 9:30 – 10:21

## GENERAL SURVEY

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## Introduction

Here, Paul shows us how Israel's unbelief became the hope of the Gentiles. Israel failed in its efforts to pursue right standing with God by following the law. Christ shows us that the cross opens the door to all - salvation comes by grace through faith in Christ.

## For Study and Discussion

- 1) Israel's unbelief (9:30-33)
  - a) Based on these verses, what does Paul say is the reason for Israel's unbelief?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) Do you think verses 30 to 33 somewhat contradict verses 1 to 29? After all, in verses 1 to 29, did Paul not allude heavily to God's sovereign choice and election of Israel? How would you explain this apparent "contradiction"?
  
- 2) Zeal for God (10:1-8)
  - a) Although Paul openly and sincerely commends the Jews for their zeal for God (v2a), there is something not quite right with their zeal. What was it? How do we avoid falling into the same spiritual pothole as the Jews?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) What does Paul mean when he says, "Christ is the end of the law..." in verse 4?  
NB: There could be more than one layer of meaning here.
  
- 3) Steps to being saved (10:9-13)
  - a) Discuss what verses 9 to 13 teach about becoming a Christian.

- b) Being a Christian, you may think that verses 9 to 13 do not apply to you personally (since the verses talk about how to be saved). Yet they do. To what extent do you think “confession” and “belief” continue to apply in your life?
- 4) Faith and hearing (10:14-17)
- a) What do these verses 14 to 17 teach us about evangelism and global missions? What would you and ORPC do about it?
- b) Why do you think Christians (including yourself) may be reluctant to share the gospel with others?
- 5) Why Israel still does not believe. (10:18-21)
- a) Summarise Paul’s way of explaining why the Jews have no excuse for not believing in Christ.
- b) How are “faith” and “hearing the word” related in your personal life?
- c) What attributes of God are shown in the Isaiah quotations in verses 20 and 21?

## **Discipleship Pointers**

- Jesus Christ is the “end of the law”, who “came from heaven” as the “stone” God “laid in Zion” and who was “raised from the dead”.
- “Faith” that attracts the “righteousness of God” comes by “hearing” the “word of faith”.

## **Family/Group Moments**

- Discuss in your group or family about some challenges and difficulties which you have encountered in sharing the gospel.
- Does your life show the link between “faith” and “hearing the word”? How would you strengthen this?

# Rejected But Hopeful

ROMANS 11:1-36

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## GENERAL SURVEY

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TOPIC

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KEY IDEAS & QUESTIONS

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## Introduction

While the large majority of Jews do not accept that Christ is the Messiah, this does not mean that God has rejected all Jews as a whole. In this chapter, Paul presents evidence that God is not through with the Israel. There is hope for the conversion of the Jews. The Apostle Paul presents five witnesses, beginning with himself, the smallest element to receive God's grace, progressing to the remnant, the gentiles, the patriarchs, and finally to God Himself, revealing the fullness and majesty of God's redemptive plan. Throughout this chapter, God's sovereign election and grace is evident in His plan for the salvation of both Jews and gentiles.

## For Study and Discussion

- 1) Rom 11:1 — The Witness of Paul. How is Paul a living example that Jews are not rejected by God? What does Paul's testimony say about God's grace (consider Acts 9:20-22; 1 Cor. 15:9)? What hope is there for those who have rejected God?

Rom 11:2-10 — The Witness of the Remnant.

- a) What is Paul's purpose in quoting God's assurance to Elijah that He has reserved a remnant who will continue worshiping Him? Is there a remnant today? Who are they?

- b) Even if the majority of people do not believe in God, God's truth still stands. But peer pressure from the majority can result in subversion of the truth. Share some personal examples where you have experienced pressure to conform or compromise because the majority in your country, workplace, or family reject God's truths? How can you stand firm if you were to face such pressures.

- 2) Rom 11:11-14 – The Witness of the Gentiles. What is the "good" that has come out of the Jews' rejection of God? Who has benefitted from this rejection? What does this tell you about the way God works for your good?

- 3) Rom 11:15-24 – The Witness of the Patriarchs. Using two metaphors in verse 16, Paul expresses the idea that “if one part of the Jewish people is holy, so also is the other.” The “firstfruits” and “the root” refer to the Jewish patriarchs (i.e., Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) while “the whole batch” and “the branches” refer to the Jews as a people. Here, the Jews are called holy because they are consecrated to God, set apart for His service.
- a) In light of the above, who are “the branches which have been broken off” (v17)? Who do the wild olive shoot represent (v17)?
- b) Paul has both a warning and a word of assurance for us (v18-24). What are they?
- 4) Rom 11:25-36 — The Witness of God Himself.
- a) What is the “mystery” (v25) that Paul now reveals?
- b) In verses 33-36, Paul breaks out into spontaneous worship. It is not as if he has just discovered something he did not know. Rather, being reminded of God’s amazing grace and wonderful plan for salvation caused him to praise and worship God. How can we experience this sense of amazement and joy that Paul demonstrates every time we approach God’s Word or hear the Gospel?

## **Discipleship Pointers**

(Extract from ‘With the Word - The Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Handbook’ by Warren W. Wiersbe. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991).

- The theology of Romans 9-11 magnifies God’s grace and extols His sovereignty. Never lose the wonder of your salvation or the greatness of God. No matter how deep the valley or difficult battle, a vision of God’s greatness puts joy in you even if you do not understand it fully.
- There is a future for Israel; Paul is proof of that (v1; 1 Tim 1:16), and so is Israel’s past history (vv2-10). God has always had a believing remnant in Israel, no matter how dark the day. When you become discouraged about the future of the church and feel that you may be the only faithful Christian left, read 1 King 19 and trust on God’s greatness.
- We cannot explain all the purposes and plans of God, but we can worship and praise Him for who He is (vv33-36). The end result of all Bible study is worship, and the end result of all worship is service to the God we love.

## **Family/Group Moments**

- Are you downcast, despondent? Take heart, hope in the LORD. He is the Maker of the heavens and earth. (Psalms 42, 43, 95, 121).
- Hope and worry are inconsistent - do we have areas that we worry too much? Commit it to the Lord and group for prayer support and accountability.

# A Living Sacrifice

ROMANS 12:1-8

## GENERAL SURVEY

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TOPIC

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KEY IDEAS & QUESTIONS

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## Introduction

From this point on, Paul's exhortation has reached its climax. What are we to do in view of God's mercy for us? Paul refers to the OT system of sacrifices but applies it in the context of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Under that dispensation, animals free from blemish were presented to God. Under the new dispensation, a nobler and more spiritual service is to be offered – not by way of a dead animal but by way of the entire person of the believer - a living sacrifice. What does such worship entail and how do we know if it is fully acceptable to God?

## For Study and Discussion

- 1) True worship of God (Romans 12:1-2)
  - a) In Romans 12 Paul begins with a strong encouragement and an earnest exhortation to believers to follow a particular course of action. What two things does Paul urge us to do? Describe what they would mean for you in practical terms.
  
  - b) What does Paul state as the only sufficient motivation for the hard work of Christian living? Discuss what other motivations are possible and how they are ultimately ineffective.
  
  - c) Choose one or two of the following areas to discuss what it means for you to not conform but be transformed: money; work; your conversations; priorities for your children; relationships, sex and marriage; how you spend our free time, etc.
  
- 2) Right thinking of Ourselves (v3-4)
  - a) What two mistakes should Christians avoid when thinking of themselves?
  
  - b) From what two sources does a Christian get his or her self-image?
  
  - c) Why is pride a great danger to the Christian? How can we keep ourselves humble?

- 3) Right relationship with Others (v4-8)
- a) Discern what steps or ways Paul says one should take in order to discern one's spiritual gifts?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) List the gifts mentioned in v6-8 as well as 1 Cor 12:8-10,28 and Eph 4:11. Which ones could possibly describe you? How are you using the gifts that God has given you to serve His church?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c) Some people have the mindset that: the church should serve and fulfil my needs, providing the teaching, music, friendships that I desire. In what ways does that reflect your hopes and disappointment about your church? How does the gospel change your thinking and relationships with others in your church?

## **Discipleship Pointers**

- Everything that Paul calls us to do is rooted in the knowledge and an understanding of God's mercy. All Christian living and ethics are ultimately rooted in a deep gratitude for what God has done for us. A true understanding of His mercy will inevitably bring about an acknowledgement of our sin, since we know we deserve only His wrath. And it will give us an overwhelming thankfulness for what he has done for us through Christ.
- True worship is defined here as offering the whole of one's life back to God. It means that we need to give our mortal bodies for His use and glory. Worship is not the activity that goes on in church, nor is it related merely to singing and music. It extends to all places and all activities and is possible for anyone who has turned to Christ. It means putting God first and putting Him at the centre of every decision and action. It resists being influenced by the principles and standards of a world that has rejected God. On the contrary, we allow our new minds, informed by the gospel and controlled by the Spirit, to shape our thinking and behaviour.
- Paul expects the gospel to transform the way we treat other people, both within and without the church. The appeal of relationships characterised by service, devotion and harmony rather than selfishness, malice and duplicity inevitably attracts unbelievers.

(References: The Message of Romans by Redeemer Presbyterian Church and Read Mark Learn Romans by St Helen's Church)

## **Family/Group Moments**

- Discuss what are the key challenges for you in living a life of "living sacrifice"?

# Daily Prayer Guide

## Sunday: The Church

Church members & families  
Visitors  
Pastor & church leaders  
Sunday School teachers  
Worship leaders  
Small group leaders  
Other churches  
Outreach efforts

## Monday: The Workplace

Supervisor  
Co-workers  
Subordinates  
Customers & suppliers  
Difficult situations  
Work attitude  
Work performance

## Tuesday: Acquaintances

Mentors & mentorees  
Accountability partners  
Friends  
Neighbours  
Merchants  
Public servants  
Teachers & other school Workers  
Children's friends & their families

## Wednesday: My Country

Public officials - executive, legislative,  
& judicial  
Armed forces  
Public morality  
The media  
The economy

## Thursday: The World

International peace & understanding  
Missions and missionaries  
Persecuted churches  
Hunger, sickness, & disaster relief

## Friday: My Spiritual Growth

Maturity  
Understanding  
Faith  
Love toward God  
Love toward others  
Servanthood

## Saturday: My Family

Spouse  
Children  
Grandchildren  
Parents  
Brothers & sisters  
Extended family  
Unsaved loved ones

*"Call to me and I will answer you and  
tell you great and unsearchable things  
you do not know."-Jeremiah 33:3*

# Little Steps To Great Learning!

## Preparation:

- Attempt all questions in the relevant Bible study before your group meeting.
- Expect spiritual growth by thoughtfully working on the Bible study questions (and the suggested reading, if any) throughout the week.
- Seek the Holy Spirit's insight and guidance by praying daily in reflection of what you have learned through the Bible study.

## Group Time:

- On the following Sunday, take notes during sermon to assist in focusing your thoughts.
- Be punctual for your group meeting.
- Share the insight gained through the sermon with your group.
- Be frank in sharing your response to the questions in the discipleship pointers.
- Encourage others by attesting to God's goodness and reality by sharing to the group (and others) how the Word has changed your thinking and action in response to your study in the past week.
- Using the front sheet, summarise how the lessons have helped you to understand God's revelation in the Bible through Jesus Christ, and your response to the revelation.

### **THE BIBLE is to be...**

*Read through...*

*Reflected in...*

*Lived out...*

*Given away...*