

Romans Part 24 (9:6-13, 9:25-26, 11:1-6)

by Erik Olsen

I. INTRO:

--Paul began chapter 9 by expressing his profound grief over the unbelief of Israel as a nation. In tonight's passage Paul further addresses the erroneous arguments of Israel's unbelieving religious leaders, as he frequently does throughout Romans.

II. "But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, 7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham..." (9:6-7)

--"For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham." (9:6a-7a)

--in God's eye's what matters is not physical descent from Abraham but spiritual descent... everyone who has saving faith like Abraham is one of Abraham's spiritual descendants, so to speak, and therefore heirs of the promise of salvation.

--in Galatians 3:26-29 Paul emphasizes how the singular importance of faith transcends all classes of people: "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, **then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**"

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

--Romans 4:11-16: "And he [*Abraham*] received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, **that he might be the father of all those who believe** [*the spiritual father, so to speak, of all who have saving faith, both Jew and non-Jew alike*], though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed [*credited*] to them also... ... 13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. ... 16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to **those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all...**"

--the essence of saving faith is faith in what God can do rather than what you can do... most of all faith in God's ability to pay for your debt of sin rather than your ability to pay your debt of sin through good works.

--it's easy to lose sight of just how monumental the task was for Christ to pay our debt of sin; "the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe" in Ephesians 1:19 speaks, in part, of how He was able to pay our debt of sin.

--the central theme of salvation by faith alone throughout Romans began with Paul's introduction in chapter 1...

--Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

--"But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect [*had failed* – NIV]." (9:6a)

--a natural argument the unbelieving religious leaders in Israel would bring up is that if Jesus truly was the Messiah then God's Word had failed because Israel as a nation didn't believe in Him; that is, they thought the Messiah was meant to save Israel, so if Jesus was the Messiah then the Messiah failed to save the one He was supposed to save.

--Paul addressed a similar question in Romans 3:3: "For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?"

--the religious leaders distorted God's Word with their tradition... what failed was their tradition not God's Word! If they had carefully studied God's Word they would have known that it wasn't God's plan to only save Israel...

--before Israel was even born God spoke to Abraham about His plan to bring salvation to all people: "In your seed [*through the Messiah*] **all the nations** of the earth shall be blessed..." (Genesis 22:18)

--Romans 9:25-26: "As He says also in Hosea [*Paul quotes from Hosea 2:23 and 1:10*] : '**I will call them My people, who were not My people**, and her beloved, who was not beloved.' 26 'And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," There they shall be called sons of the living God.'"

--Jesus gave a shocking wake-up call to those unbelieving Jews who trusted in the fact that they were physical descendants of Abraham rather than trusting in God...

--John 8:31-44: "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." 33 They [*those Jews who did not believe Him*] answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?" 34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. 37 "**I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.** 38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." 39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "**If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.** 40 But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father — God." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 **You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.** He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him."

III. "...but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. 9 For this is the word of promise: 'At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.'"

--once again Paul uses passages from the Old Testament to illustrate and prove his points because Jews were familiar with them (Romans is written with the presupposition that the reader is familiar with the Old Testament)

--before Abraham had any children, God promised him that his descendants would become a great nation (Genesis 13:14-17) and through him "all the peoples on earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:3).

--Abraham went on to have 8 children. God could have caused the nation of Israel to originate from all of Abraham's descendants, just like all of Jacob's children became the nation of Israel; but the promise was fulfilled through Isaac only who then begot Jacob.

--symbolism in Isaac's life that relates to Paul's point in Romans 9:

God's promise to Abraham was not fulfilled through all of Abraham's descendants	>>	the promise of salvation is not fulfilled through all people of Israel
the promise was only fulfilled through the son (Isaac) who experienced a supernatural birth... Sarah conceived Isaac past 90 years of age when her womb was "dead" (Romans 4:19)	>>	the promise of salvation is fulfilled only in those who experience a supernatural birth... "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6), "born again" (John 3:7, 1 Peter 1:23)
fulfillment of the promise through Sarah's womb required faith	>>	fulfillment of the promise of salvation requires faith

--the widespread unbelief in Israel should have come as no surprise... not only was their unbelief a fulfillment of prophecy but unbelief characterized much of their history.

--as we saw last week, Hebrews 3:12-19 compares Israel's rejection of Christ to their rejection of the promise land after being delivered from Egypt.

--in both instances faith in God is replaced by faith in self... the Jewish leaders had faith in their own good works rather than Christ, and at the promise land Israel was afraid to enter because they placed their faith in themselves rather than God.

--when Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab, massacred the prophets of the Lord in Israel and established Baal worship throughout all of Israel, Elijah cried out to God, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because **the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword.** I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.' 15 Then the LORD said to him: "... 18 Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." (1 Kings 19:14-18)

--the small remnant in Israel who believed in Christ were like the 7000 people during Elijah's time who did not forsake the Lord.

--there are many examples throughout the New Testament of Jews who believed in Christ... the 12 apostles, John the Baptist, Joseph and Mary, Simeon (Luke 2:27), Anna the prophetess (Luke 2:37), Philip (John 1:45), Nathanael (John 1:47), Paul, Barnabas (Acts 4:36), and many others.

-- in Romans 11:1-6 Paul cites the example of Elijah: "I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 'LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life'? 4 But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace."