DISCOVERY

Part 2 of Paul's Letter to the Romans



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Romans 8:1 through 11:36

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1)

BACKGROUND

After describing in chapter 7 the futility of trying to live righteously while still in bondage to sin, in chapter 8 Paul went on to describe victory over the former controlling force. He taught that while forgiveness for committed sin is obtained at justification, the ultimate provision for man's sinfulness is the experience of entire sanctification, which deals with the sin nature. When the Apostle asserted in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation . . . ," he was looking at the totality of sin: both committed sins and the carnal nature of sin with which all humanity is born. The phrase "no condemnation" refers to more than mere judicial acquittal; it also indicates deliverance from the condition described in Romans 7:7-25 (the sinful disposition and inclination of the flesh). Once freed from the dominion of sin, the sanctified believer is enabled by the Spirit to live in the righteousness provided by God.

The Apostle seemingly was concerned his readers might conclude that God's plan of justification apart from the Law meant that God had rejected the Jews. Perhaps for that reason, in chapter 9, he began a three-chapter segment explaining Israel's role in God's plan, and how God's righteousness is revealed and illustrated by Israel's history.

Chapter 9 deals with election and divine sovereignty, and emphasizes that the promises of God are obtained by faith, not bloodline. Paul illustrated God's sovereignty by using the patriarch Abraham as an example, pointing out that God ordained that the Messianic line would come through Isaac, the son of promise, rather than through Abraham's eldest son, Ishmael, who was the son of the bondwoman, Hagar. The Apostle made it clear that the true children of God were the children of promise (those who believed in the God of Abraham), rather than the children of the flesh (those who are merely Abraham's biological descendants).

The theme of chapter 10 is rejection and human responsibility. In this portion of text, Paul used Israel's rejection of Christ as an example, explaining that while Israel had the opportunity to respond to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they had refused it. He asserted that salvation is offered to all, both Jew and Gentile, and each person is individually responsible for the choice he or she makes. Though Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles, his love and concern for his Jewish kinsmen is evident throughout this passage.

In chapter 11, the final segment of Paul's three-chapter explanation of Israel's role in God's plan, the Apostle concluded that after the Jew's rejection of God, the Gospel message was extended to the Gentiles. Paul explained that God's purpose in turning away from Israel was a desire to provoke Israel to jealousy as the Gentiles embraced what the Jews had refused. Then the Apostle looked ahead to the day of restoration when Israel would once again be the people of God, this time through faith in the shed Blood of Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS

1. In Romans 8, the Apostle focused on deliverance from sin and the sinful disposition and inclination of the flesh, sometimes referred to as the "sin nature" or the "carnal nature." What does this deliverance from the sin nature—the experience of entire sanctification—accomplish in our lives?

2. In Romans 8:28, Paul asserted that God works all things together for good for those who love Him. How can we reconcile that statement with the fact that pain and adversity clearly occur in the lives of believers?

3. *Foreknowledge* and *predestination* are concepts Paul alluded to in Romans 8:29-30. God chose all humanity to be made righteous through His grace, but His *foreknowledge* identifies individuals who He knew

would respond to His call with repentance and faith. The word *predestinate* in verse 30 means "to predetermine." According to verse 29, what is God's predetermined purpose for all individuals?

4. In chapter 9, Paul continued his instruction on the sovereignty of God. In verse 19, he imagined someone asking, "If it is all a matter of God's choice, then how can God find fault with me?" He responded in the next verse by showing how disrespectful such a question is. His point was, who are we to question God? What illustration did Paul use in verse 21 to support his point?

5. Many of the Jews wanted to be righteous, but they tried to achieve that state in the wrong way. According to Romans 9:32, what was the great error of the Jews regarding how they sought to be righteous? What are some ways people try to be righteous in our day?

6. What was the "stumblingstone" to which the Apostle referred in Romans 9:32-33?

7. In Romans 10:3, Paul referenced the failure of the Jews to grasp the true meaning of information available to them in the Scriptures they studied so zealously. Paul's declaration that they endeavored to "establish their own righteousness" indicated the Jews' self-righteous pride in their own efforts. They were seeking to live up to the commandments of the Law only to prove their own worthiness. Paul went on in the next verse to assert that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." What do you think he meant by that statement?

8. In Romans 11:33-36, Paul concluded his synopsis of Israel's role in God's plan with a spontaneous outpouring of praise to God. Who could have conceived of the whole scenario with Israel and the Gentiles as God had done? Paul realized that God's ways are past finding out, and that His wisdom and knowledge were beyond him. In reference to Paul's thought expressed in verse 36, in what way are all things "of" God, "through God," and "to" God when it comes to our salvation?

CONCLUSION

God's remedy for man's sinfulness is available to both Jew and Gentile, and is accessed only through faith in the shed Blood of Jesus Christ, His Son.

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