



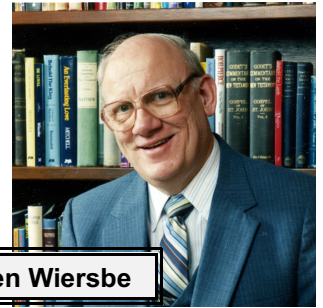
ELECTION

TRUTH TOUGH TO TAKE

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. -- Romans 8:28

Paul had argued in Romans 8 that the believer is secure in Jesus Christ and that God's election would stand (8:28-30). But someone might ask, "What about the Jews? They were chosen by God, and yet now you tell us they are set aside and God is building His Church. Did God fail to keep His promises to Israel?" In other words, the very character of God was at stake. If God was not faithful to the Jews, how do we know He will be faithful to the Church? -- **Warren W. Wiersbe**, *Be Right*, p. 101

... it must be our first task to inquire whether this third main part of the epistle does not, despite all said to the contrary, constitute an organic part in the total message of the letter, and whether it does not have a very definite function to fill in the unity of the epistle. Careful examination shows that that is indubitably the case. -- **A. Nygren**, *Romans* p. 355



Warren Wiersbe

Study 11a: NOT EVERY ELECTION TO SALVATION (9:1-5)

9:1-3 *Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ, but how far will Paul go for the sake of his lost kinsmen?* (10:1)

But, above all else, a real problem in **theodicy** was involved. The present situation called in question the whole exposition of the gospel set out in the foregoing chapters. It was of the essence of Paul's argument that the gospel which he (and his fellow apostles) preached was no innovation. It was attested in the Hebrew Scriptures; it was the fulfilment of God's promise to the fathers; it proclaimed that God's way of righteousness through faith, by which Abraham had been blessed, was still open to all who believed in God as Abraham did. How came it, then, that it was pre-eminently Abraham's descendants who refused to believe the gospel? Surely, had Paul's claims been valid, the Jewish people would have been the first to acknowledge them? Such objections were no doubt voiced, and Paul could appreciate their force, although he was well aware of the fallacy which they involved. Yet it was a paradox, not to say a scandal, that the very nation which had been specially prepared by God for this time of fulfilment, the nation which could glory in so many unique privileges of divine grace (including above all the messianic hope), the nation into which in due course the Messiah had been born, should have failed to recognize Him when He came, while men and women of other nations which had never enjoyed such privileges embraced the gospel eagerly the first time they heard it. How could this be harmonized with God's choice of Israel and His declared purpose of blessing the world through Israel? -- **F.F. Bruce**, *Romans*, p. 183

For those who truly love God with a love that comes from the Holy Spirit these words are most wonderful. Such (*consecrated and loving Christians*) never seek what is their own, but they are willing to suffer

hell and damnation, in order that God's will might be accomplished (*in the salvation of others*). -- **M. Luther**, *Romans*, p. 121

9:4-5 *To what privileges and priorities was Israel nationally elected?* (3:1,2; Amos 3:2; Deut. 4:32-37)

For they are ... Israelites, bearers of the glorious theocratic name, sons of the "Prince with God" (Gen. xxxii. 28): **theirs is the adoption**, the call to be Jehovah's own filial race, "His son, His first-born" (Exod.

iv. 22) of the peoples; **and the glory**, the Shechinah of the Eternal Presence, sacramentally seen in Tabernacle and Temple, spiritually spread over the race; **and the covenants**, with Abraham, and Isaac, and Levi, and Moses, and Aaron, and Phinehas, and David;... -- **H.C.G. Moule**, *Expositor's Bible: Romans*, p. 247



Handley Moule

But among the Rabbis the idea of Election has lost all its higher side. It is looked on as a covenant by which God is bound and over which He seems to have no control. Israel and God are bound in an indissoluble marriage (*Shemoth rabba* I. 51): the holiness of Israel can never be done away with, even although Israel sin, it still remains Israel (*Sanhedrin* 55): the worst Israelite is not profane like the heathen (*Bammidbar rabba* 17): no Israelite can go into Gehenna (*Pesikta* 38a): all Israelites have their portion in the world to come (*Sanhedrin* 1), and much more to the same effect. ...

And this has not been done as part of any larger Divine purpose; Israel is the end of the Divine action; for Israel the world was created (vi. 55); it does not in any way exist for the benefit of other nations, who are of no account; they are as spittle, as the dropping from a vessel (vi. 55,56). -- **W.Sanday/A.C.Headlam**, *International Critical Commentary: Romans*, p. 249

It is indeed a splendid roll of honours, recited over this race "separate

among the nations," a race which to-day as much as ever remains the enigma of history, to be solved only by Revelation. "The Jews, your Majesty," was the reply of Frederick the Great's old believing courtier, when asked with a smile for the credentials of the Bible; the short answer silenced the Encyclopaedist King. It is indeed a riddle, made of indissoluble facts, this people everywhere dispersed, yet everywhere individual; scribes of a Book which has profoundly influenced mankind, and which is recognized by the most various races as an august and lawful claimant to be divine, yet themselves, in so many aspects, provincial to the heart; historians of their own glories, but at least equally of their own unworthiness and disgrace; transmitters of predictions which may be slighted, but can never, as

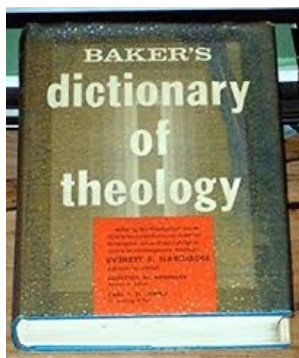
a whole, be explained away, yet obstinate deniers of the majestic fulfilment in the Lord of Christendom; human in every fault and imperfection, yet so concerned in bringing to man the message of the Divine that Jesus Himself said to them (John iv. 22), "Salvation comes from the Jews." On this wonderful race this its most illustrious member (after his Lord) here fixes his eyes, full of tears. He sees their glories pass before him -- and then realizes the spiritual squalor and misery of their rejection of the Christ of God. He groans and in real agony asks how it can be. One thing only cannot be; the promises have not failed; there has been no failure in the Promiser. What may seem such is rather man's misreading of the promise. -- **H.C.G. Moule**, *op.cit.*, p.248,249

Study 11b: IS ISRAEL'S STUMBLING "NEW TRUTH"? (9:6-13)

9:6-9 *Were Old Testament promises proven wrong by Israel's unbelief?*

9:10-13 *To whom would divine election be truth tough to take?* (v.14; Luke 18:9-27; Gal.2:15,16; 5:4)

Election on the part of God in eternity is the source from which the process of salvation springs and it is the ultimate reason for the salvation of men -- they are chosen by God unto salvation (II Thess. 2:13). The fruits which accompany salvation supply to us men the proof of God's election (cf. I Thess. 1:3,4). This election took place in Christ before the foundation of the world and was to the end that the elect should be holy and without blame (Eph. 1:4). As election is eternal, so is it sovereign. No passage shows this more clearly than Rom. 9:11 where the differentiation between Esau and Jacob finds its explanation in, and is directed to the vindication of, "the purpose of God according to election." -- **John Murray** *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, p. 179



Paul has been misunderstood and unfairly criticized through failure to recognize that it is the God-defying rebel and not the bewildered seeker after God whose mouth he so peremptorily shuts. God, in His grace, does abide His people's question; but He will not be cross-examined at the judgment-bar of a hard and impenitent heart. ... It is a pity that in some schools of theological thought the doctrine of election has been formulated to an excessive degree on the basis of this preliminary stage in Paul's present argument, without adequate account being taken of his further exposition of God's purpose in election at the conclusion of the argument (xi. 25-32). ... The point on which Paul insists here is that all mankind is guilty in God's sight; no-one has a claim upon His grace. If He chooses to extend His grace to some, the others have no ground for arguing that He is unjust because He does not extend it to them. If it is justice they demand, they can have it, but: "Though justice be thy plea, consider this, That, in the course of justice, none of us should see salvation." -- **F.F. Bruce** pp.190-1

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THEODICY -- the vindication of God

(Greek *theos*, "God" and *dike*, "justice"). A term taken from the title of a work of Leibnitz entitled: *Essais de Theodicee sur la bonte de Dieu, la liberte de l'homme, et l'origine du mal*. It is the realm of theology or philosophy devoted to the vindication of God's goodness and justice despite the existence of evil ... The Bible makes no attempt to justify God. It is clear that he is absolutely sovereign, and that he has willed the existence of both good and evil, and that all of this is for his own glory.

Morton H. Smith *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* p.517