

Acts 1 Study and Discussion Questions

Lesson Twelve: Romans, Part 2 – Romans 9-16

Read Romans 9-11. In these chapters, Paul affirms continuity between the promises of God to the Jewish people in the Old Testament and God's promises to all people in the New Testament with regard to salvation by faith.

- 1) With regard to Romans 9:6:
 - a) What promise ("word") had Israel received from God (see Deuteronomy 7:6-9)? **God promised Israel that He had chosen them to be His own people. In the context of Paul's teaching in Romans, we might also say that God promised to choose "some" for Himself.**
 - b) What does the phrase "not all Israel descended from Israel" mean (see Romans 2:28-29, 9:8)? **Not all of those who are Jews by birth have inherited Abraham's faith. However, to share Abraham's faith would make any person (Jew or Gentile) his spiritual descendant.**
- 2) Paul says that God's justice in electing some (and not all) for salvation is not ours to question (9:19-23) and results from His mercy (9:16, 23). Explain how God's justice in election is ultimately a result of God's mercy (recall what you learned in the previous lesson on Romans 1-8 and review Romans 3:9, 5:8, 9:10-16, 22-23). **Paul has already been clear that no one deserves God's mercy (Romans 1-8). Jews and Gentiles alike are under His wrath (Romans 3:9). God's justice demands that *all people* fall under His awful judgment (Romans 9:22). It would have been perfectly fair if He had saved no one. Yet in love, and in order to demonstrate "the riches of His glory," God mercifully spared a remnant, electing them to salvation. He gave to a few what none deserved. (If He had spared all, would His mercy be as greatly celebrated in eternity?)**
- 3) List a few specific ways in which you have personally experienced God's mercy. How do these experiences give you hope regarding your loved ones who have not yet acknowledged their sin and God's merciful provision in Jesus (see Titus 3:5)? With God's mercy in mind, write out a brief prayer for these people (see Romans 9:16 and Titus 3:5). **Personal sharing**

From Romans 9-11

- 4) What explanation does Paul give in Romans 9:32-33 and 10:3 for the small number of Jewish converts to Christianity, despite Jesus' Jewish identity and the fact that Christ's teachings are rooted in the Jewish Scriptures (the Old Testament)? **Paul explains that most Jews have "stumbled" over the teachings and person of Jesus as their Messiah, disbelieving that "trusting in" Him (or anyone) was God's way of salvation. They believed that conformity to the Law of Moses was the way of salvation and thus pursued righteousness by works rather than by faith.**
- 5) In Romans 10:14-17, we learn that "faith comes from hearing the message." According to Romans 10:18-11:10, why is it that some people who "hear" do not really hear (see also 1 Corinthians 1:18-25)? **Paul quotes the Old Testament to make his point that it is God himself who regenerates (renews) the mind so that a person can comprehend spiritual truth ("...I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me," Romans 10:20). People can physically hear the gospel message yet not "hear" it in the sense that it is comprehensible to them. Paul carries this a step further by quoting Moses, Isaiah, and David in chapter 11 to prove that God Himself is the one who prevents those who have already rejected Him from becoming enlightened.**
- 6) What is the "mystery" (11:25) Paul reveals, the mystery that reconciles God's "promise" (see Question #1) with its present lack of fulfillment (see Romans 11:25-32)? **The mystery Paul reveals is that, although we primarily see Gentiles responding to the Gospel at the present, God will yet keep His covenant promise to Israel. Paul states that when "the full number of the Gentiles has come in... all Israel will be saved" (not meaning *every single Jew*, but a large majority of Jews; not meaning *apart* from faith, but *by faith*, just as God's people at all times in history have been saved).**

- 7) Explain how Paul’s doxology in Romans 11:33-36 is a fitting response to the doctrinal portion of his letter (Romans 1-11). Over which personal situation will you pronounce this doxology today? **Paul was so overwhelmed with awe by God’s plan of salvation that he could only burst forth in praise to God for the depths of the riches of His wisdom and knowledge in conceiving such a plan: all are sinners and deserve judgment, God graciously sent His Son to justify and sanctify (free from sin and from the law) all who believe, believers are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ and will share in His glory (8:17), and God is faithful to all His promises and will yet redeem Israel. Personal sharing**

Romans 12:1 bridges the doctrinal portion of the letter (chapters 1-11) with the practical application of Romans 12-16 (“Therefore... in view of God’s mercy...”). Read Romans 12.

- 8) Based upon all you have learned in the *Acts I* study, how does one “renew [their] mind” (Romans 12:2)? **Renewing of the mind is the work of the Holy Spirit. As we meditate on Scripture and pray, He radically reorients our viewpoint on life. Changed thinking is a precursor to changed behavior and is essential in determining God’s will in each step of our lives.**
- 9) Try to recall recent illustrations from your life about how the renewing of your mind resulted in transformed patterns of behavior and/or the ability to understand God’s will in a situation. **Example: Grasping that God is not only a God of judgment and wrath but also a God of love, and that His love for each of His children is deep and personal, enables a person to trust God with whatever He chooses to do in their lives. Example: One can discern God’s will in daily situations by understanding through the Scriptures that doing His will involves sacrifice. Personal sharing**
- 10) With which behaviors discussed in the remainder of Romans 12 (verses 3-21) do you especially need to ask God for help today? Explain why. **Personal sharing**

Read Romans 13.

- 11) Think about the ways in which you sometimes see Christians respond to authority figures, both inside and outside the church. Which commands in Romans 13:1-7 particularly challenge the Christian culture in which you live? **Personal sharing**
- 12) Since loving our neighbor as our self fulfills the Law (Romans 13:8), how could you demonstrate a more loving attitude toward those in authority over you this week? (Consider anyone whose authority you are under for which this has been either a recent or ongoing struggle. It may not be appropriate for you to name individuals in your discussion.) **Personal sharing**

Read Romans 14-16.

- 13) List some of the “disputable matters” (Romans 14:1) for which believers in this age and in your culture tend to judge one another. **Personal sharing**
- 14) In light of the teaching of Romans 14-15, of whom could you be more accepting? Conversely, for whom should you set aside certain personal liberties in order to keep them from stumbling? **Personal sharing**
- 15) As you consider all you have learned about Paul and his ministry in the *Acts I* study, which qualities of Paul or aspects of his ministry, seen in Romans 15:14-16:27, do you particularly want to emulate? **Personal sharing**