

**Welcome - (~2 min)****Opening prayer – (~1 min)****Opening Comments – (~3 min)**

- Remember, Paul's letter was not divided into chapters and verses. It was one continuous letter.
 - So, it seems strange that he would move his discussion so abruptly from the security of the believer's salvation in the previous verses, to the nation of Israel now.
- Paul was a very wise man and he knew what his Jewish audience would be thinking at the conclusion of the previous verses so what he says in the next three chapters is completely logical.
 - Note though, that these are three very difficult chapters, so if you seem to get confused as you read them, take heart. Multiple reading of a passage helps tremendously.
 - Also ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what He has for you in these chapters. He may have something in store for you that is completely unique and is not touched on in the sermons or the leaders' guide! He works that way some times and that is one thing that makes studying Scripture such a joy!
- A brief summary of these three chapters might be the following:
 - The emphasis in Chapter 9 is on Israel's past election;
 - Chapter 10 is on Israel's present rejection (not all Israel because there were some believers, a *remnant*.); and
 - Chapter 11 is on Israel's future restoration.
- Remember, Paul was considered a traitor to the Jewish nation.
 - He ministered to the Gentiles and taught freedom from the Law of Moses.
 - He supported this new religious movement which was contrary to Judaism, the nation's religion.
 - Everywhere he went, he encountered trouble from Jewish leaders.
- One thing we must note though is that these chapters were not written in anger but in heartbreak.
 - Paul never forgot he was a Jew and he would gladly have laid down his life to bring his Jewish brothers to Christ.
 - Paul never denies that the Jews were the chosen people.
 - His first point is this – it is true that the Jews as a nation rejected and crucified Jesus, but it is also true, that *not all the Jews rejected Him* as already stated.
- In these next three chapters we will see Paul discuss the following truths:
 - 1) Israel is the chosen people;
 - 2) To be a member of Israel means more than racial descent. There has always been election within the nation; and there has always been the *remnant* that was faithful;
 - 3) This selection by God is not unfair, for He has the right to do what He likes;
 - 4) God did harden the hearts of the Jews, but only to open the door to the Gentiles;
 - 5) Israel's mistake was dependence on human achievement, found in the law, not a totally trusting heart;
 - 6) The Gentiles must not be prideful for they are only wild olives grafted into the true olive stock; and

7) This is not the end; the Jews will be so moved to envy at the privilege the Gentiles have received, that in the same way they will be brought back by them to God!

- All that being said, let's begin this journey into these three difficult, yet interesting, chapters!

Discussion of the Study Lesson – (~50 min) The Gospel's Power to Free the Found: The Call Of God

(Start time: _____)

Topic for Day 1: Overview - Read Chapter 9:1-19

1. List some of the attributes of God that you recognized as you read these verses.

(See how many attributes you can get – everyone should be able to contribute at least one – this type of question is easy and can get everyone involved early on. A suggestion is to just go around the group and ask for each person to give an attribute – there can be duplicates)

2.(+2 min) Identify a couple of questions Paul asked that interested you and tell why you were interested?

- Paul asks 9 different questions – this should be an interesting discussion question

3. (+2 min) What group of people do you think Paul was talking to in this chapter?

- Paul was addressing this section of his letter to the Jews – both Messianic and Judaism Jews

4. (+2 min) Give some verses that support your answer above.

- **9:3** – Paul's brothers were Jews – “my own race”
- **9:4-5** – Paul identifies their privileges – only the Jews had these privileges
- **9:6-13** – he speaks of Israel, Abraham, Sarah, Rebekah, Isaac, Jacob, and Esau – all Jews
- **9:17** – he mentions Pharaoh
- **9:25-29** – he quotes the prophets Hosea and Isaiah plus Sodom and Gomorrah

(+2 min) Application 1: What will you apply to your life from the sermon?

(Take some time here – again if you deem necessary, encourage people to take notes)

Topic for Day 2: God's call and Israel. - 9:1-5

1. (+2 min) Why did Paul feel great sorrow and unceasing anguish? What do you learn from this?

- (This is a two part question – be sure they answer both parts!)
- Remember Paul, when he heard of this movement, he set out to stamp it out! (**Acts 7:57-8:1**)
 - He persecuted Christians, put them in prisons, who knows what else
 - He received a dispensation to go to Damascus to wipe out the Christian movement there
 - Then it happened – he ran head long into Jesus Christ! Could be literally!
- Now Paul is working with these same people, the Jews and Jewish religious leaders
 - When Paul started new churches, Jewish religious leaders would deny Paul's words to the Jews
 - Paul knew their hearts because his heart had been in the same place!
 - He knew the Jewish people had become proud of their heritage, so proud that they killed Messiah!
 - People often become proud when they are given *all the advantages*!
- Paul's heart must have burned with sorrow and anguish that his race of people was rejecting their Savior – of course there was a *remnant* but they were so few in comparison!

- Paul knew they would be eternally separated from God – damnation – if they weren't saved!
- Paul knew the seriousness of their rebellion and refusal to accept Jesus Christ
- Hopefully people can't accuse us of not caring for the lost or being indifferent towards them!

2. (+3 min) **What was Paul willing to do in order to bring the people of Israel into a right relationship with God?**

- (he was willing to sacrifice himself if it would bring his brothers into a relationship with God and Jesus)
- The truly remarkable thing is **not** that the Jews hated Paul – that was expected given their beliefs
- The truly remarkable thing is that Paul had an overwhelming love for his enemies – they hated him!
- The words *accursed from Christ* mean to be *damned* for the sake of the Jewish people
- Although we all know there is no alternate who can save another person's life – only Jesus Christ can
- But, Paul was expressing his willingness to *do anything*, including being an *alternate* to save his people!
- There have been leaders in the past who stood in the gap for their people – Moses for one:

Read Exodus 32:7-10 – *"Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.' "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."*"

- God was ready to make Moses into a great nation and give up on Israel! **What did Moses do?**

Read Exodus 32:31-32 – *"So Moses went back to the LORD and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. ³² But now, please forgive their sin--but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."*"

- Moses stood in the gap for Israel and now Paul is willing to do the same thing for Israel but can't because Jesus has already stood in the gap for all who will believe!
- Warren Wiersbe says, "It is remarkable how Paul moved from the joy of Romans 8 into the sorrow and burden of Romans 9. When he looked at Christ, he rejoiced; but when he looked at the lost people of Israel, he wept. Like Moses, he was willing to be cursed and separated from Christ if it would mean the salvation of Israel. What a man this Paul is! He was willing to stay out of heaven for the sake of the saved, and willing to go to hell for the sake of the lost."¹

3. (+2 min) **List the advantages Israel had and categorize them as physical and spiritual.**

- Adoption as sons (both); their divine glory (spiritual); the covenants (both); receiving the law (physical); temple worship (both); the promises (both kinds); the patriarchs (physical); ancestry to Christ (physical)
- Adoption – took place back in Exodus – **Read Exodus 4:22-23** – *"Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son, ²³ and I told you, "Let my son go, so he may worship me." But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.'*"
- Divine glory – in Old Testament called the Shekinah glory – visible symbol of God – cloud/fire
- The covenant – covenants were promises made by God – some were conditional and some unconditional – a fun thing to do is look up the various covenants and decide which kind they are.
- Receiving the Law – began back in Exodus 20
- These are just some of the advantages Israel had...

4. (+2 min) **List the patriarchs (see Acts 7:8-9; Genesis 35:22-26).**

- **Acts 7:8-9** – “Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs“
- **Genesis 35:22-26** – “While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard of it. Jacob had twelve sons:²³ The sons of Leah: Reuben the firstborn of Jacob, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.²⁴ The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.²⁵ The sons of Rachel's maidservant Bilhah: Dan and Naphtali.²⁶ The sons of Leah's maidservant Zilpah: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in Paddan Aram “
- **Patriarch** – defined as the founder or ruler of a tribe, family, or clan; the forefathers of the Israelite nation.
 - The word *patriarch* usually refers to the tribal leaders of Israel. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the 12 sons of Jacob. Peter added King David in Acts 2:29.

(+2 min) **Application 2: Write down the name of one person who causes your heart to sense anguish/sorrow because he/she is lost? Write down one thing you will do today to help lead that person in the direction of salvation?**

(This is a very personal application but would be good for the newer people to Bible study to hear from some more experienced people - if that is possible?)

Topic for Day 3: God's call is for His purpose. - 9:6-13

1. (+2 min) **In verses 6-9, who does Paul say are regarded as Abraham's offspring?**

- **9:6** - Not the *natural* children of Abraham's offspring but the *children of the promise (9:8)*
- **9:7** - Remember Abraham had two sons, Ishmael by natural means and Jacob by miraculous means
- If the “*seed of promise*” were through natural birth alone, then Ishmaelites, Midianites, and Edomites would have all been included but Paul is saying that wasn't the case
- So Paul was saying to be a “natural offspring” of Abraham was no assurance they were a child of the promise
- **9:8** – Paul is making a clear distinction between the *elect* and the *non-elect* in the nation of Israel
- He is saying *the children of the promise* are the ones who God counts as *seed*
- **9:9** – The *children of the promise* are not those who believed something.
- Isaac didn't *believe* before he was born and yet he **was** the *promised seed*.
- God had chosen Isaac before he was born and he had told Abraham how it would play out, which it did!

2. (+2 min) **Do you think Paul is making a distinction between physical offspring verses spiritual offspring? Explain.**

- He was making a distinction between the physical and spiritual
- He gives two miraculous accounts to prove it –
 - First, he speaks of Abraham and Sarah's miraculous experience with Isaac but that wasn't enough
 - **9:10** – Paul knew some Jews could argue some reasons for God's rejection of Ishmael
 - So Paul used another illustration of God's *divine principle of election* through the Rebekah reference
 - **9:11-12** – Paul knew there would be no argument in the case of Isaac and Rebekah's children
 - God said the “older (1st born)” would serve the younger (2nd born) – a break in custom!

- Again Paul emphasized it was **not** by works (*had done nothing*) but by God's miraculous work!
- Paul was proving the sovereignty of God and His election of Israel would remain in force regardless of their disobedience.
- **9:13** – God made His choice according to His sovereign will – period!
- Studying the entire Bible reveals that God is sovereign and His Word doesn't fail!

3. (+3 min) **What attribute of God do you see Paul stressing in verses 10-12?**

- Some are: just, omniscient, sovereign, wise, loving, faithful, and the list goes on!

(+2 min) **Application 3: What do you believe God's purpose is for calling you? How will you fill that purpose today?**

(An interesting question to see how the people in the group are serving the Lord (if they are?))

Topic for Day 4: God's call is based on His mercy. - 9:14-18

1. (+2 min) **Paul asks the question, "Is God unjust?" How does he answer that question in verses 15-18?**

- Paul actually asks two questions, the first being "What then shall we say?" whereby he is referring to everything he has said to this point (in verses **6-13**)
- Paul uses Pharaoh as an example of God using His sovereignty to demonstrate His glory to everyone
- Paul answers his questions basically in **9:18** – (paraphrase) he says God does what He wants because He is God!
- **9:15-16** – Paul is making a very important point here that all believers need to **know**
- Paul has avoided talking about God's fairness in electing some and not others
- His focus is on the **mercy and compassion required by God to elect anyone!**
- Paul points out via the Old Testament that God has always been just in His passing over and not electing some
- A simple explanation:
 - **We know** no one seeks God – **Romans 3:11**
 - **We know** that **every person** is born a sinner because of Adam's fall – **Romans 5:18**
 - **We know** man cannot save himself – **Romans 11:5-6**
 - **We know** the wages of sin is death – **Romans 6:23**
 - **We know every person** stands condemned – does not deserve mercy/grace! – **John 3:18**
 - **We know** unless God does something about it, **no one would be saved!** – **Matthew 19:25-26**
- So from what **we know**, it should be obvious that God is not unjust when He does not call everyone!
- In fact, you may ask yourself this question "Do I really want God to be just with me?" "To be fair with me?" – Suspensions are that most would answer emphatically NO!
- Think about this, if He were only a *just* God without *mercy, compassion, love, and grace*, everything would have most likely ended with Adam!
- **The wonder of wonders is that He chooses to save anyone!**
- We need to **know** that God extends *mercy* and *compassion* as He does because **He is God and we aren't!**

2. (+4 min) **Paul indicates God was just with Pharaoh. Read Exodus 5 and give reasons why God was just.**

- Pharaoh was not God-fearing (Paul talked about that in Romans 3:18, took it from Psalm 36:1)
- He was arrogant, cruel, and accountable for his own behavior toward God!

- Paul is saying that God was *just* in not showing *mercy* to Pharaoh.

3. (+2 min) **Explain how mercy is described in the following verses: Dan. 9:9; 1 Tim. 1:13, 16; Matt. 9:27-31; Luke 17:11-19; Matt. 5:7; James 1:27.**

Dan. 9:9 – *“The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him”*

- (God is merciful towards us and the implication is that we should be merciful to others)

1 Tim. 1:13, 16 – *“¹³Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief” “¹⁶But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life”*

- (God's mercy shown to us should be able to be seen by others through our actions)

Matt. 9:27-31 – *“As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” ²⁸ When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” “Yes, Lord,” they replied. ²⁹ Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith will it be done to you”; ³⁰ and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, “See that no one knows about this.” ³¹ But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region”*

- (Jesus showed mercy and healed them even though He knew they would be disobedient to His words. A lesson for us to not limit our mercy to others)

Luke 17:11-19 – *“Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance ¹³ and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” ¹⁴ When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed. ¹⁵ One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸ Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹ Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”*

- (Jesus showed mercy to all ten men even though He knew only one would thank Him. His mercy was like the rain, it fell regardless of the ground it fell upon.)

Matt. 5:7 – *“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy”*

- (The merciful will be blessed – you might ask if anyone has experienced this truth by showing mercy to someone)

James 1:27 – *“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world”*

- (Our “religion” is indeed expected by God to be merciful for widows and orphans – the question is, “Are we merciful to widows and orphans?”)

(+3 min) **Application 4: How will you show the effects of God's mercy to you, as you interact with others today?**

(Great opportunity to have people share how they have experienced mercy in their lives)

Topic for Day 5: God's call always includes His faithfulness. - 9:19-29

1. (+2 min) **How does Paul quench questions anyone might have regarding God's fairness in verses 20-21?**

- Paul really questions anyone who has the audacity to *talk back to God* (9:20)
- Think how impossible this is, for a weak, ignorant, man or woman to question a mighty, all wise God!
- Paul uses the analogy of the potter and the clay – the clay doesn't tell the potter what to make of it!
- Paul also nicely ties this analogy in with what he said about God having *mercy* on whom He wishes and *compassion* on whom He desires (9:15)

Isaiah 55:8 says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD"

- Paul is emphasizing that He is God
- If you would like to get another perspective of God's wisdom verses man's read **Job 38-40:5**
 - It would be good for all of us to periodically read those chapters when we have thoughts of questioning God's wisdom!

2. (+2 min) **What does it say to you about a person who says that God is unfair?**

- (There should be some interesting responses after the previous question)

3. (+2 min) **What are the two "objects" Paul talks about in verses 22-24? What is the purpose of the first in regards to the second?**

- Objects of wrath and objects of His *mercy*
- Paul says a lot in these verses:
 - 1) God's purpose for the first *objects* – to show His wrath and make His power known
 - 2) God literally waited so He could do this – *bore with great patience the object of wrath*
 - 3) His purpose for the second *objects* – to make the riches of His glory known to the objects of His mercy!
 - 4) Those objects He had *prepared in advance* for glory!
- Paul was speaking of believers as being the objects of His *mercy* – both Jew and Gentile

4. (+1 min) **Reading verses 25-29, do you believe there will always be a remnant (see Rom. 11:3-6)?**

- There are a total of 64 references to a remnant, three in the New Testament and 61 in the Old Testament
- There are eight references to the *remnant of Israel* – God has always had a *remnant* and always will
- This is a sign of His faithfulness to His Word
- Paul quoted Hosea and Isaiah to show that God will always have a *remnant*
- William Barclay summarizes this passage this way, "It is easy in this passage to criticize Paul, but the one thing that must be remembered is that Paul, in his despairing anguish for his own people, clung to the fact that somehow everything was God's work. For him there was nothing left to say but that."²

(+2 min) **Application 5: In these verses, Paul has defended God's character including His faithfulness. Describe how you are being faithful to Him.**

- A question to cause people to look at themselves to see if they are being as faithful to Him as they can be.

(+2 min)

Closing Comments – (~3 min)

- Now, what does all this prove?
- Paul has tried to prove to his readers that God was not unjust in saving some and judging others, because He was only fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies given centuries ago.
- He would be unjust if He did not keep His own Word.
- But even more than that, these prophecies show that God's election has made possible the salvation of the Gentiles.
- That is the *grace of God!*
- So far, Paul has defended the character of God by showing His *faithfulness*, His *righteousness*, and His *justice*.
- Israel's rejection had **not canceled God's election**; it had only proved that he was *true to His character and His purpose*.

Closing Prayers – (~1 min)

¹ Warren Wiersbe, "The Bible Exposition Commentary New Testament Volume 1," Cook Publishing, p. 543

² William Barclay, "The Letter To The Romans Revised Edition," The Westminster Press, p. 133