

Don't Trip and Fall!

Romans 9:22-33

Thought for the Day: Jesus Christ is either the Keystone that holds all of life and eternity together or the Stumbling Stone over which we trip and fall.

In Romans 9, we see displayed the sovereignty of God over the affairs of nations and the lives of individuals. As one looks out upon a world that seems, in many ways, to be rapidly descending into chaos, it is reassuring to know that God is in control and He is working out His will and purposes on the earth.

A Panoramic View of Human History:

- Genesis 9:1,7,19 (after the Flood) – God commanded the people to spread out and populate the entire earth.
- Genesis 11:4 – the people defied God and “Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.’”
- Genesis 11:9 – God judged them and confused their language and “From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.”
- Today humanity is once again defying God.
 - There is a worldwide movement to destroy national borders and intermingle the peoples, contrary to the will of God.
 - There truly are those who envision and who are working toward *a new world order* in which Man, not God, is supreme!
 - Acts 17:24-28 – God does what He does so that men will seek Him and turn to Him—so that we will pursue intimate relationship with Him and submit to His authority in our lives. “What in the world is God doing?” He is reestablishing Himself as the Rightful Ruler of planet earth.
- God is still in control and He is working out His will and purposes on the earth.
 - We have not yet seen the prophecy of Psalm 2:1-6 fulfilled but the day will come when we will!
 - We have the power to choose—and we will be held accountable for our choices—but the world is moving forward according to God’s plan and timetable.
 - And in the end, “at the name of Jesus every knee [will] bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:10-11)

Part of the message and application of Romans 9 is that God sovereignly uses all the events of human history, and even those who reject Him, to accomplish His will and purposes. (Proverbs 21:1; 16:9; 20:24; Daniel 4:35). In Romans 9-11, Paul is declaring God’s sovereignty in setting aside the nation of Israel, because of her unbelief and rejection of the Messiah, and opening the door of salvation to the Gentiles, to you and to me! This was a major shift in God’s dealings with mankind that was foretold by the prophets but was largely misunderstood, rejected and resisted by the Jews of Paul’s day. Consequently, they tripped and fell over the Stumbling Stone, the Lord Jesus Christ.

22 What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath — prepared for destruction?

- The wrath of God is the holiness, righteousness and justice of God poured out in devastating and final judgment on those people who reject His offer of salvation and forgiveness.
- The objects of God's wrath are those people who are *preparing themselves* for destruction by their rejection of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. (Cp. John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9)
- God chooses (*NIV*), desires (*ESV*), wants (*NKJV*), and is willing (*NASB*) to show His wrath toward the objects of His wrath.
 - God's wrath is a response of His entire being—mind, heart and will—to the sin and rebellion of mankind.
 - God determines, not as an impulsive emotional response, but as a conscious act of His will, to pour out His wrath upon these people.
 - God's wrath is the natural and logical expression of His holiness, righteousness and justice; it is His settled disposition to judge and punish all unrighteousness, sin and iniquity that has not been atoned for and dealt with by the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - God's wrath was poured out upon His Son on the cross, so that all who place their faith in Him for salvation are delivered from experiencing His justice, condemnation, and wrath for their sins. (1 John 2:1-2)

23 What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory—

- Paul is using the word "glory" in two different ways:
 - The first "glory" – refers to the perfections of God's character and nature. (Rom.3:23)
 - God does what He does, in the way He chooses to do it, in order to reveal Himself—His glory—to mankind—to reveal His holiness, righteousness and justice on the one hand, and to reveal His love, grace and mercy on the other. (Cp. Eph.1:3-14)
 - The second "glory" appears to be a reference to heaven—the abiding place of the glory of God. (Cp. Romans 8:28-30)
 - In verse 22 the "objects of God's wrath" *prepare themselves* for destruction. In verse 23 it is the work of God in salvation that prepares the objects of His mercy for heaven.
 - The objects of God's wrath prepare themselves for judgment but God prepares His chosen ones for eternity in heaven.
- Today, God is calling both Jews and Gentiles to Himself. The sovereignty of God is seen in the fact that what is happening in the world today was prophesied by the prophets.
- Today, those who put their faith in Jesus Christ have the privilege of being the people of God, His beloved ones, and the children of God. (Cp. 1 Peter 2:9-10; 1 John 3:1-3)
- Jesus Christ is the Center Point of all of human history.
 - He is the either the Keystone that holds all of life together or the Stumpline Stone over which those who reject Him stumble and fall.
 - "The one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame."