

Eternity Daily Bible Study
Romans 9-16 The Implications of Salvation
PLEASE PRAY FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE AIBI

Number: 599

Verses: Romans 11:5-10

Topic: God Gave Them....

Date: 5th December 2006

Romans 11:5-10 MKJV *Even so then, also in this present time a remnant according to the election of grace has come into being. (6) But if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it is of works, then it is no more of grace; otherwise work is no more work. (7) What then? Israel has not obtained that which it seeks, but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened (8) even as it is written, "God gave to them a spirit of slumber, eyes not seeing, and ears not hearing" until this day. (9) And David said, "Let their table become for a snare and a trap and a stumbling block and a recompense to them. (10) Let their eyes be darkened so that they may not see, and their back always bowing."*

At first glance the expression: "God gave to them a spirit of slumber, eyes not seeing, and ears not hearing" seems like God predestining a whole group of people to lostness and to eternal punishment. However on closer inspection we find out that the expression "God gave to them" or "God gave them over to..." is used elsewhere in Romans to refer to God's reluctant reaction to persistent unrepentant human sin:

Romans 1:21-32 MKJV *(21) Because, knowing God, they did not glorify Him as God, neither were thankful. But they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (22) Professing to be wise, they became fools (23) and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things. (24) **Therefore God also gave them up** to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. (25) For they changed the truth of God into a lie, and they worshiped and served the created thing more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (26) **For this cause, God gave them up to dishonorable affections.** For even their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature. (27) And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust toward one another; males with males working out shameful things, and receiving in themselves the recompense which was fitting for their error. (28) And even as they did not think fit to have God in their knowledge, **God gave them over to a reprobate mind**, to do the things not right, (29) being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; being full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, evil habits, becoming whisperers, (30) backbiters, haters of God, insolent, proud, braggarts, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, (31) undiscerning, perfidious, without natural affection, unforgiving, unmerciful; (32) who, knowing the righteous order of God, that those practicing such things are worthy of death, not only do them, but have pleasure in those practicing them.*

In other words, in this context, the expression "God gave them" is His giving in to their wicked natures - and allowing them to follow the downward gravitational force of their own sin and depravity. So we see God's sovereign action "giving them over to" is simply His just and righteous response to stubborn human sin. It is giving people what they want, even though it is evil, and damns them:

In Acts it is used to refer to Israel's sinful choice of a king:

Acts 13:21 MKJV *And afterward they asked for a king. And God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.*

And in Revelation it is used to refer to the people choosing to be ruled by the Anti-Christ "beast" figure:

Revelation 17:17 MKJV *For God gave into their hearts to do his mind, and to act with one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast until the Words of God will be fulfilled.*

In all the above verses we see a picture of fallen humanity clamoring for its idols, its lusts and perversions and for a "strong man" to rule over them and refusing the glory of God that is revealed to them in Christ Jesus.

So what happened to the Israelites? Why did God give to them *"a spirit of slumber, eyes not seeing, and ears not hearing"* ? Because they refused to listen to Moses, the law and the prophets and to His revelation in Christ Jesus and instead chose their own laws and the rules of men, justifying themselves by their own works. Israel received so much revelation, and refused so much revelation, that it became deeply hardened to God! This is surely a lesson for the church in Western lands today! It is also a lesson to many Muslim lands which were "once Christian" (such as Egypt, Syria and Turkey) but which turned to the teachings of the Koran and which have remained in stubborn defiance of the witness of Christ to this very day!

Spiritual darkness comes from persistently refusing the light! *"Let their eyes be darkened so that they may not see"* is a curse pronounced on those who simply will not see. It refers in particular to those Jews at the time of Jesus who gave assent to the crucifixion of Christ and the persecution of the Church and comes from Psalm 69:

Psalms 69:21-28 MKJV *They also gave Me gall for my food; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink. (22) Let their table become a snare before them; and to those at ease a trap. (23) Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; and make their loins shake without ceasing. (24) Pour out Your wrath on them, and let the glow of Your anger take hold of them. (25) Let their dwelling be wasted; let none dwell in their tents. (26) For they persecute him whom You have stricken, and they talk to the grief of those You pierced. (27) Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let them not come into Your righteousness. (28) Let them be blotted out of the Book of Life, and not be written with the righteous.*

Verses 21 and 26 refer specifically to the cross and Matthew quotes verse 21 in his account of the cross (Matthew 27:34). Psalm 69 indicates a spiritual state of having no kindness, and in fact having deep contempt and hatred, for God's Son. Soon after the cross, the Romans invaded, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, the dwelling of the Jews was wasted and the land became empty with "none dwelling in their tents" for thousands of years.

Yet God spared some! The 'elect' were saved by grace!

Romans 11:5-7 MKJV *Even so then, also in this present time a remnant according to the election of grace has come into being. (6) But if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it is of works, then it is no more of*

grace; otherwise work is no more work. (7) What then? Israel has not obtained that which it seeks, but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened

Israel as a whole did not obtain what it sought (v.7) - salvation, because it sought it by works. Some were saved, a spiritually sensitive few, touched by the cross, believed and were saved. These Paul calls "the elect" in order to emphasize the Sovereign hand of God.

Paul makes a complete distinction between grace and works. It is almost the same distinction as that between a wage and a gift. The works approach to salvation see Heaven as a "wage" that is owed to the righteous and which is earned by many, many good deeds.

However the grace approach to salvation sees Heaven as a free gift that God can give to anyone He chooses and He chooses to give it to all who believe! Works follow later, out of gratitude and as a good and fitting expression of our new nature in Christ.

Thus the two approaches are not even in the least bit compatible. If salvation is earned, then it is certainly not a free gift, and if salvation is a free gift then it is certainly not earned in any way.

To keep refusing the free gift that God has provided and to say instead " No, I will earn my own salvation thank you very much" is to harden one's heart. That is what the Israelites did - *and the rest were hardened*. However as we will see later, this hardening is not permanent and we may be close to the day soon when "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26).

Therefore do not be stubborn. Do not persist in sin. Do not resist the voice of God when He speaks, and do not resist, grieve or quench the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 3:7-13 MKJV *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you will hear His voice, (8) do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, (9) when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. (10) Therefore I was grieved with that generation and said, They always err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. (11) So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest." (12) Take heed, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. (13) But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

Blessings,
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