

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Romans 9-16 The Implications of Salvation

I am looking for preaching appointments in churches in Southern California – if you know of one that might be interested please email me at johned@aibi.ph

Number: 621

Verses: Romans 15:8-12

Topic: The Salvation Of The Gentiles

Date: 19th February 2007

Romans 15:8-12 HCSB *Now I say that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God, to confirm the promises to the fathers, (9) and so that Gentiles may glorify God for His mercy. As it is written: Therefore I will praise You among the Gentiles, and I will sing psalms to Your name. (10) Again it says: Rejoice, you Gentiles, with His people! (11) And again: Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; all the peoples should praise Him! (12) And again, Isaiah says: The root of Jesse will appear, the One who rises to rule the Gentiles; in Him the Gentiles will hope.*

The "promise to the fathers" (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) was that "in you all the nations of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 18:18) which of course includes the Gentiles. In fact the Holy Spirit coming upon the Gentiles was seen as an integral part of the Abrahamic blessing:

Galatians 3:13-14 HCSB *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written: Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. (14) The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

What Paul is trying to say is that the Gentiles owe their salvation to promises that were originally made to Jews. Remember there were divisions in the mainly Gentile Roman church and a fracturing with Jewish Christians so that Paul spent chapters 9-11 explaining that the Jews were not cast off and rejected, and chapter 14 carving out some space for Jewish Sabbath observance and dietary customs, and now Paul gets back to his theme of unity between Jewish and Gentile Christians by pointing out that:

1. The salvation of the Gentiles depended on promises originally made to Jews.
2. That the Jews, on the other hand, were to view the salvation of the Gentiles, as the full flowering of the religion of YHWH and the promises made to the patriarchs.

Therefore there was to be no separation between Jew and Gentile, because the Gentiles depended on the "root" that was God's dealings with the Jews, and the Jews were to see the salvation of the Gentiles as the crowning achievement of their faith.

Paul illustrates this with a clutch of OT quotes introduced by "it is written":
As it is written: Therefore I will praise You among the Gentiles, and I will sing psalms to Your name. (10) Again it says: Rejoice, you Gentiles, with His people! (11) And again: Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; all the peoples should praise Him! (12) And again, Isaiah says: The root of Jesse will appear, the One who rises to rule the Gentiles; in Him the Gentiles will hope.

The formula "it is written" was used when quoting the Bible in a very formal and powerful way much as a lawyer quotes the Constitution during a legal battle in the Supreme Court. It was used by Jesus when disputing with the Devil in the wilderness and the form of the Greek verb (perfect) is that of a "completed past action with continuing force and consequences into the present" e.g.

Matthew 4:3-4 HCSB *Then the tempter approached Him and said, "If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." (4) But He answered, "It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."*

So in the legal battle over Jewish – Gentile unity Paul brings four quotes that cover the main sections of Jewish Scripture (the Law, the Writings, and the Prophets). Two quotes were from the Psalms (the Writings), one from Deuteronomy (the Torah / Law), and one from Isaiah (the prophets). (In order quoted they are: Psalm 18:49, Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 117:1, Isaiah 11:10)

Thus the Abrahamic covenant, the Law, the Writings and the Prophets are all brought to bear on the conclusion that it was always God's intention for the Gentiles to hope in Christ. This was a devastating argument for those who saw Christianity as being solely Jewish affair with Jesus as solely a Jewish Messiah. The verses Paul quotes show that the Messiah would be for the Gentiles also.

On the other hand the Gentiles would have to acknowledge that their Messiah was a Jew and that their salvation came to them along Jewish railroad tracks. The root of the olive tree of faith was Israel.

On a practical note we need to take heed of Paul's high regard for Scripture and the formula "it is written". The Bible was Paul's constitution and every word had true and absolute legal force – including the Old Testament, though it was interpreted through the later revelation that came in Christ.

Even though Paul made it very clear that the OT law was no longer the covenant that bound Christian believers and that we were dead to the Law (Romans chapters 6-8) he still respects the written word of God and does not jettison it. Rather Paul reinterprets it in the light of the cross, yet sees every single word as authoritative, inerrant and infallible.

Paul saw Christ as the center of Scripture and since the Book was about Jesus and revealed Jesus then Jesus was the master key and master interpreter of the whole. By looking to Christ Paul could see what applied "after the cross" and what needed to be reinterpreted.

We need to revere the Word of God and to take it with absolute seriousness, not as just a "guide to daily living" or an encouraging verse like a greeting card, or an intellectual plaything. It is a RULE for daily living (not just a guide that makes suggestions which we can take or leave) and it is the inspired spiritual word of God, and it is the complete Truth that our minds must shape themselves to instead!

Blessings,

John Edmiston (johned@aibi.ph)
Chairman/ CEO
Antioch Internet Bible International
<http://www.aibi.ph>

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