

Saving Sophie

a bird's-eye tour of Paul's letter to the church at Rome

*“the gospel .. is the power of God for the salvation
of everyone who believes.. ” [Romans 1.16]*

Few books of the Bible provide such a comprehensive and in-depth statement of the gospel as Paul's letter to the Romans. This series of studies is intended simply to familiarize us all (in the case of some, *again*) with the landscape of the letter.

May the result of our studies be that we exclaim with Paul, *“Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! .. For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory for ever! Amen!”* (Rom.11.33-36)

You can find the background to this series [here](#).

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7. Romans 9.1-11.36 [w/b Sunday 13th August]

“.. to Him be glory for ever!”

Romans 9.1-11.36

These three chapters are not the easiest in the letter! But they are important and have a continuing and contemporary significance; and the truths expounded by Paul through these verses are well worth the effort involved in their study!

Although Paul might seem to be concerned simply with the place of the Jews as the people of God, in fact his concern is to explore the purpose of God on the widest canvas of human history; and he does so in such a way that, grasping all that's involved in the outworking of His purpose, we're constrained to bow low in adoring worship!

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1. Read Romans 9.1-11.36. There's benefit in getting a feel for the flow of Paul's teaching as he addresses the question – Are the Jews still God's promised people? If they are, how come they don't believe in Jesus? If they're not any longer God's promised people, what does that say about God's promises?

What are the truths about God which Paul seems to emphasise through these chapters ?

What did Paul mean to impress on the hearts of the *Gentiles* in the church at Rome by this discussion of the place of the Jews? What impression is left on *your* heart by reading these chapters?

2. Read Romans 9.1-29. The Jews' (general) failure to respond to Jesus is, first, argues Paul, a sign of God's sovereignty – in the election of His people (6b-13), in the bestowal of His mercy (14-18), and in the revealing of His glory (19-24). This is the consistent teaching of Scripture (25-29)

Why is there no 'injustice' on God's part according to what Paul says in vv.14-18?

The doctrine of the sovereignty of God can subtly slip into 'fatalism': how does what Paul says in vv.19-24 help us avoid that?

What would you say are 'the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy' which God is making known in and through *your* life?

3. Read Romans 9.30-10.4. In this next section (9.30-10.21) Paul looks more closely at the 'failure' of the Jews, underlining that this failure is not only a sign of the sovereignty of God but also a snub to the goodness of God.

How does Paul describe the underlying malady of the Jews in 10.2-4?

In what ways can you be tempted, almost without realizing it, to 'seek a righteousness of your own'?

4. Read Romans 10.5-21. In these verses Paul sets out what, for the Jews, the 'substance of the faith' has always been according to the teaching of the Scriptures.

How do we come to enjoy God's salvation, in terms of what Paul says in vv.8-13?

What are the five stages mentioned by Paul here in the process of a person being saved?

What does 'calling on the name of the Lord' entail? How does that find expression in your life?

5. Read Romans 11.1-10. The final part of Paul's argument is that the Jews' failure to respond marks a particular 'stage' in the outworking of the purpose of God. In these first 10 verses he reminds his readers that the Jews' 'rejection' is *partial* not total.

What points does Paul make in vv.1-5 to highlight the fact that the Jews' 'rejection' is only partial (ie not all of them)?

Why did Israel fail "to obtain what it was seeking"?

6. Read Romans 11.11-24. Paul here underlines that the Jews' 'rejection' is not only partial (rather than total), it is also temporary (rather than final).

What different 'stages' in the outworking of God's purpose does Paul allude to in vv.11-15?

What practical lessons might you take from Paul's exhortations to his Gentile readers in vv.18-22, as those who have been 'grafted in' to the people of God?

7. Read Romans 11.25-36. This whole section of his letter is now rounded off by Paul as he gives a summary of the purpose of God through history.

How does Paul envisage the mercy shown to the Gentiles becoming the means by which that same mercy will be experienced and embraced by the Jews?

Being stretched by the truths of God's Word leads only to humble worship: how might we cultivate this sort of worship in our own hearts and lives?