

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on Rom 9****John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on Rom 9 - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/11/9 17:07**

John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on Rom 9

## Chapter 9

Verse 1. In Christ - This seems to imply an appeal to him. In the Holy Ghost - Through his grace. Verse 2. I have great sorrow - A high degree of spiritual sorrow and of spiritual Joy may consist together, Romans 8:39. By declaring his sorrow for the unbelieving Jews, who excluded themselves from all the blessings he had enumerated, he shows that what he was now about to speak, he did not speak from any prejudice to them. Verse 3. I could wish - Human words cannot fully describe the motions of souls that are full of God. As if he had said, I could wish to suffer in their stead; yea, to be an anathema from Christ in their place. In how high a sense he wished this, who can tell, unless himself had been asked and had resolved the question? Certainly he did not then consider himself at all, but only others and the glory of God. The thing could not be; yet the wish was pious and solid; though with a tacit condition, if it were right and possible. Verse 4. Whose is the adoption, &c. - He enumerates six prerogatives, of which the first pair respect God the Father, the second Christ, the third the Holy Ghost. The adoption and the glory - That is, Israel is the first-born child of God, and the God of glory is their God, Deuteronomy 4:7; Psalms 106:20. These are relative to each other. At once God is the Father of Israel, and Israel are the people of God. He speaks not here of the ark, or any corporeal thing. God himself is "the glory of his people Israel." And the covenants, and the giving of the law - The covenant was given long before the law. It is termed covenants, in the plural, because it was so often and so variously repeated, and because there were two dispositions of it, Galatians 4:24, frequently called two covenants; the one promising, the other exhibiting the promise. And the worship, and the promises - The true way of worshipping God; and all the promises made to the fathers.

Verse 5. To the preceding, St. Paul now adds two more prerogatives. Theirs are the fathers - The patriarchs and holy men of old, yea, the Messiah himself. Who is over all, God blessed for ever - The original words imply the self-existent, independent Being, who was, is, and is to come. Over all - The supreme; as being God, and consequently blessed for ever. No words can more dearly express his divine, supreme majesty, and his gracious sovereignty both over Jews and, gentiles. Verse 6. Not as if - The Jews imagined that the word of God must fail if all their nation were not saved. This St. Paul now refutes, and proves that the word itself had foretold their falling away. The word of God - The promises of God to Israel. Had fallen to the ground - This could not be. Even now, says the apostle, some enjoy the promises; and hereafter "all Israel shall be saved." This is the sum of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters. For - Here he enters upon the proof of it. All are not Israel, who are of Israel - The Jews vehemently maintained the contrary; namely, that all who were born Israelites, and they only, were the people of God. The former part of this assertion is refuted here, the latter, Romans 9:24, &c. The sum is, God accepts all believers, and them only; and this is no way contrary to his word. Nay, he hath declared in his word, both by types and by express testimonies, that believers are accepted as the "children of the promise," while unbelievers are rejected, though they are "children after the flesh." All are not Israel - Not in the favour of God. Who are lineally descended of Israel. Verse 7 Neither because they are lineally the seed of Abraham, will it follow that they are all children of God - This did not hold even in Abraham's own family; and much less in his remote descendants. But God then said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called - That is, Isaac, not Ishmael, shall be called thy seed; that seed to which the promise is made. Verse 8. That is, Not the children, &c. - As if he had said, This is a clear type of things to come; showing us, that in all succeeding generations, not the children of the flesh, the lineal descendants of Abraham, but the children of the promise, they to whom the promise is made, that is, believers, are the children of God. Genesis 21:12 Verse 9. For this is the word of the promise - By the power of which Isaac was conceived, and not by the power of nature. Not, Whosoever is born of thee shall be blessed, but, At this time - Which I now appoint. I will come, and Sarah shall have a son - And he shall inherit the blessing. Genesis 18:10. Verse 10. And that God's blessing does not belong to all the descendants of Abraham, appears not only by this instance, but by that of Esau and Jacob, who was chosen to inherit the blessing, before either of them had done good or evil. The apostle mentions this to show, that neither were their ancestors accepted through any merit of their own. That the purpose of God according to election might stand - Whose purpose was, to elect or choose the promised seed. Not of works - Not for any preceding merit in him he chose. But of him that called - Of his own good pleasure who called to that privilege whom he saw good. Verse 12. The elder - Esau. Shall serve the younger - Not in person, for he never did; but in his posterity. Accordingly the Edomites were often brought into subjection by the Israelites. Genesis 25:23. Verse 13. As it is written - With which word in Genesis, spoken so long before, that of Malachi agrees. I have loved Jacob - With a peculiar love; that is, the Israelites, the posterity of Jacob. And I have, comparatively, hated Esau - That is, the Edomites, the posterity of Esau. But observe, 1. This does not relate to the person of Jac

ob or Esau 2. Nor does it relate to the eternal state either of them or their posterity. Thus far the apostle has been proving his proposition, namely, that the exclusion of a great part of the seed of Abraham, yea, and of Isaac, from the special promises of God, was so far from being impossible, that, according to the scriptures themselves, it had actually happened. He now introduces and refutes an objection. Malachi 1:2,3. Verse 14. Is there injustice with God - Is it unjust in God to give Jacob the blessing rather than Esau? or to accept believers, and them only. God forbid - In no wise. This is well consistent with justice; for he has a right to fix the terms on which he will show mercy, according to his declaration to Moses, petitioning for all the people, after they had committed idolatry with the golden calf. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy - According to the terms I myself have fixed. And I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion - Namely, on those only who submit to my terms, who accept of it in the way that I have appointed.

Verse 15. Exodus 33:19. Verse 16. It - The blessing. Therefore is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth - It is not the effect either of the will or the works of man, but of the grace and power of God. The will of man is here opposed to the grace of God, and man's running, to the divine operation. And this general declaration respects not only Isaac and Jacob, and the Israelites in the time of Moses, but likewise all the spiritual children of Abraham, even to the end of the world.

#### Verse 17

Moreover - God has an indisputable right to reject those who will not accept the blessings on his own terms. And this he exercised in the case of Pharaoh; to whom, after many instances of stubbornness and rebellion, he said, as it is recorded in scripture, For this very thing have I raised thee up - That is, Unless thou repent, this will surely be the consequence of my raising thee up, making thee a great and glorious king, that my power will be shown upon thee, (as indeed it was, by overwhelming him and his army in the sea,) and my name declared through all the earth - As it is at this day. Perhaps this may have a still farther meaning. It seems that God was resolved to show his power over the river, the insects, other animals, (with the natural causes of their health, diseases, life, and death,) over the meteors, the air, the sun, (all of which were worshipped by the Egyptians, from whom other nations learned their idolatry,) and at once over all their gods, by that terrible stroke of slaying all their priests, and their choicest victims, the firstborn of man and beast; and all this with a design, not only to deliver his people Israel, (for which a single act of omnipotence would have sufficed,) but to convince the Egyptians, that the objects of their worship were but the creatures of Jehovah, and entirely in his power, and to draw them and the neighbouring nations, who should hear of all these wonders, from their idolatry, to worship the one God. For the execution of this design, (in order to the display of the divine power over the various objects of their worship, in variety of wonderful acts, which were at the same time just punishments for their cruel oppression of the Israelites,) God was pleased to raise to the throne of an absolute monarchy, a man, not whom he had made wicked on purpose, but whom he found so, the proudest, the most daring and obstinate of all the Egyptian princes; and who, being incorrigible, well deserved to be set up in that situation, where the divine judgments fell the heaviest. Exodus 9:16.

#### Verse 18

So then - That is, accordingly he does show mercy on his own terms, namely, on them that believe. And whom he willeth - Namely, them that believe not. He hardeneth - Leaves to the hardness of their hearts.

#### Verse 19

Why doth he still find fault - The particle still is strongly expressive of the objector's sour, morose murmuring. For who hath resisted his will - The word his likewise expresses his surliness and aversion to God, whom he does not even deign to name. Verse 20. Nay, but who art thou, O man - Little, impotent, ignorant man. That repliest against God - That accuses God of injustice, for himself fixing the terms on which he will show mercy? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus - Why hast thou made me capable of honour and immortality, only by believing? Verse 21. Hath not the potter power over the clay - And much more hath not God power over his creatures, to appoint one vessel, namely, the believer, to honour, and another, the unbeliever, to dishonour? If we survey the right which God has over us, in a more general way, with regard to his intelligent creatures, God may be considered in two different views, as Creator, Proprietor, and Lord of all; or, as their moral Governor, and Judge. God, as sovereign Lord and Proprietor of all, dispenses his gifts or favours to his creatures with perfect wisdom, but by no rules or methods of proceeding that we are acquainted with. The time when we shall exist, the country where we shall live, our parents, our constitution of body and turn of mind; these, and numberless other circumstances, are doubtless ordered with perfect wisdom, but by rules that lie quite out of our sight. But God's methods of dealing with us, as our Governor and Judge, are dearly revealed and perfectly known; namely, that he will finally reward every man according to his works: "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Therefore, though "He hath mercy on whom he willeth, and whom he willeth he hardeneth," that is, suffers to be hardened in consequence of their obstinate wickedness; yet his is not the will of an arbitrary, capricious, or tyrannical being. He wills nothing but what is infinitely wise and good; and therefore his will is a most proper rule of judgment. He will show mercy, as he hath assured us, to none but true believers, nor harden any but such a

s obstinately refuse his mercy. Jeremiah 18:6,7 Verse 22. What if God, being willing - Referring to Romans 9:18,19. That is, although it was now his will, because of their obstinate unbelief, To show his wrath - Which necessarily presupposes sin. And to make his power known - This is repeated from the seventeenth verse. Yet endured - As he did Pharaoh. With much longsuffering - Which should have led them to repentance. The vessels of wrath - Those who had moved his wrath by still rejecting his mercy. Fitted for destruction - By their own wilful and final impenitence. Is there any injustice in this? Verse 23. That he might make known - What if by showing such longsuffering even to "the vessels of wrath," he did the more abundantly show the greatness of his glorious goodness, wisdom, and power, on the vessels of mercy; on those whom he had himself, by his grace, prepared for glory. Is this any injustice? Verse 24. Even us - Here the apostle comes to the other proposition, of grace free for all, whether Jew or gentile. Of the Jews - This he treats of, Romans 9:25. Of the gentiles - Treated of in the same verse.

Verse 25. Beloved - As a spouse. Who once was not beloved - Consequently, not unconditionally elected. This relates directly to the final restoration of the Jews. Hosea 2:23

Verse 26. There shall they be called the sons of God - So that they need not leave their own country and come to Judea. Hosea 1:10 Verse 27. But Isaiah testifies, that (as many gentiles will be accepted, so) many Jews will be rejected; that out of all the thousands of Israel, a remnant only shall be saved. This was spoken originally of the few that were saved from the ravage of Sennacherib's army. Isaiah 10:22,23

Verse 28. For he is finishing or cutting short his account - In rigorous justice, will leave but a small remnant. There will be so general a destruction, that but a small number will escape. Verse 29. As Isaiah had said before - Namely, Isaiah 1:9, concerning those who were besieged in Jerusalem by Rezin and Pekah. Unless the Lord had left us a seed - Which denotes, 1. The present paucity: 2. The future abundance. We had been as Sodom - So that it is no unexampled thing for the main body of the Jewish nation to revolt from God, and perish in their sin. Verse 30. What shall we say then - What is to be concluded from all that has been said but this, That the gentiles, who followed not after righteousness - Who a while ago had no knowledge of, no care or thought about, it. Have attained to righteousness - Or justification. Even the righteousness which is by faith. This is the first conclusion we may draw from the preceding observations. The second is, that Israel - The Jews Although following after the law of righteousness - That law which, duly used, would have led them to faith, and thereby to righteousness. Have not attained to the law of righteousness - To that righteousness or justification which is one great end of the law

Verse 32

And wherefore have they not? Is it because God eternally decreed they should not? There is nothing like this to be met with but agreeable to his argument the apostle gives us this good reason for it, Because they sought it not by faith - Whereby alone it could be attained. But as it were - In effect, if not professedly, by works. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone - Christ crucified. Verse 33. As it is written - Foretold by their own prophet. Behold, I lay in Sion - I exhibit in my church, what, though it is in truth the only sure foundation of happiness, yet will be in fact a stumblingstone and rock of offence - An occasion of ruin to many, through their obstinate unbelief. Isaiah 8:14; Isaiah 28:16

**Re: John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on Rom 9 - posted by HomeFree89 (), on: 2007/11/9 18:31**

Thanks for posting this Christian. I was just wondering this week if I could find Wesley's writings on this chapter.

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