

Redemption in Romans Lesson 10 3Q 2010

Redemption for Jew and Gentile

SABBATH

Read memory text – “Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.” Rom 9:18

Thoughts? What does this text mean? Is there anyone on whom God does not want to have mercy? Is there anyone God inflicts hardness? Does God use His power to cause the hardening of hearts? Does God use His power to prevent someone from conversion and instead forces them into rebellion and hardness of heart?

If God did that what would such action say about God?

Some argue that God’s sovereignty is such that He actively does cause all things including the hardening of hearts – this is a common teaching among Reform theology a.k.a. Calvinism.

Did God harden Pharaoh’s heart?

- But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go. Exodus 10:20
- But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh’s heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said. Exodus 7:22
- But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go. Exodus 8:32

Are all these verses equally inspired? Which is correct? How do we understand them?

From our Bible commentary on Romans 9:18 we read:

“In Exodus the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart is sometimes described as self-produced and sometimes described as produced by God. In the Bible God is often represented as doing that which He does not prevent (see on 2Chron. 18:18). Paul here chooses the latter representation as better suited to his purpose in this context.”

Thoughts? Is there any further explanation beyond this?

How is a heart actually hardened? What is required to harden a heart? Is it not the choosing against the truth, the choosing against God? Did God present to Pharaoh truth regarding the impotence of the Egyptian gods and the truth that He was the only true God? Did Pharaoh get convicted by this truth? Did he then choose to reject it? Would Pharaoh’s heart have been as hard without the truth presented? But did God force Pharaoh to choose against the truth? No! Thus all passages of scripture are true!

The Lord sends us warning, counsel, and reproof that we may have opportunity to correct our errors before they become second nature. But **if we refuse to be corrected, God does not interfere to counteract the tendencies of our own course of action.** He works no miracle that the seed sown may not spring up and bear fruit. {1MCP 35.2}

That man who manifests an infidel hardihood or a stolid indifference to divine truth is but reaping the harvest which he has himself sown. Such has been the experience of many. They listen with stoical indifference to the truths which once stirred their very souls. They sowed neglect, indifference, and resistance to the truth; and such is the harvest which they reap. The coldness of ice, the hardness of iron, the impenetrable, unimpressible nature of rock--all these find a counterpart in the character of many a professed Christian. {1MCP 35.3}

It was thus that the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh. God spoke to the Egyptian king by the mouth of Moses, giving him the most striking evidences of divine power;

but the monarch stubbornly refused the light which would have brought him to repentance. **God did not send a supernatural power to harden the heart of the rebellious king, but as Pharaoh resisted the truth the Holy Spirit was withdrawn**, and he was left to the darkness and unbelief which he had chosen. **By persistent rejection of the Spirit's influence, men cut themselves off from God. He has in reserve no more potent agency to enlighten their minds.** No revelation of His will can reach them in their unbelief.--RH, June 20, 1882. (3BC 1151.) 1MCP 36.

Thoughts?

Read third and fourth paragraph, "The answer is found..."

I agree that Paul is talking about God's use for various purposes and calls some for one office and another for another office. In this case Paul is saying that God has called Gentiles to share in the gift of salvation and the evangelizing of the world, and who are you, Jews, to argue with God – is He not free to call anyone to His service?

But, does this mean God forces people to take on certain roles against their will?

What do you understand about mercy? What is mercy?

A member of our online class, Jon Nash, emailed the following:

The word, "mercy", has always implied to me that an authority figure was bending a law so that I would not experience the consequence (real or arbitrary) of my action. In that context mercy always seemed at odds with "justice". I have come to feel that in the context of Romans, Christians actually mix laws and God's actions to create a confusing and contradictory explanation of what Paul was speaking about. It seems to me that "showing mercy" is in fact the extension of God's power to forestall the consequences of sin while God's justice or righteousness is His dependable actions based on His own law

of love - saving or letting go - always desiring to rescue and restore. His mercy is not the bending of His law at all.

This seems so consistent with Micah 6:8. We should show mercy - working to protect and save people from consequences of sin, act justly - applying the law of love to rescue or let go, and at all times walk humbly with God, following His leading, learning from Him, developing a Christ-like character which leads to hope.

Thoughts? I think it is well said.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "God needed..." thoughts?

What happened? What did God provide for Israel to help them succeed in their mission?

- Prophets – to reveal God’s truths
- Scripture – to reveal God and the truth
- Sanctuary service – to reveal God and His plan to save
- 10 Commandments/Sabbath – to reveal God and diagnose us
- Health reform – to reveal God and teach us His methods
- Tithes and offerings – to participate in God’s methods
- Jubilees – to exercise trust in God

What happened to each of these?

- Prophets – were martyred or rejected
- Scriptures – twisted and misinterpreted to see a severe and punitive God
- Sanctuary service – became legalistic
- 10 Commandments/Sabbath – became badge of honor, burdened with rules, test of obedience, and method of salvation
- Health reform became a spiritual work and point of pride
- Tithes and offerings became means of boasting and exploitation

- Jubilees became ignored

Was there a remnant in Israel that was true to Jesus and who did recognize Him and did become His followers?

And with this twisting and perverting of what God had given what happened to their construct of God?

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, **that men might lose the true views of God's character, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth.** Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes.** That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

Thoughts?

Read question 2 from FRIDAY's lesson:

“How do you see the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its calling in the world today paralleling the role of ancient Israel in its day? What are the similarities and the differences? In what way are we doing better? In what way are we doing worse?”

What was Israel’s purpose? To evangelize the world with the truth about God preparing the world for the first advent?

What is the mission of the SDA church? To evangelize the world with the truth about God to prepare the world for the second advent.

With what has God blessed the SDA church to help succeed in our mission?

- Prophet
- Scripture
- Sanctuary message
- 10 Commandments/Sabbath
- Health reform
- Tithes and offerings

What happened to each of these?

- Prophet – shipped to Australia and increasingly rejected
- Scriptures – do we struggle with twisting and misinterpreting scripture that promotes a severe and punitive God
- Sanctuary message – has it become legalistic?
- 10 Commandments/Sabbath – has it become a badge of honor and burdened with rules and a test of remnant status?
- Health reform – has it become a spiritual work and point of pride
- Tithes and offerings – an obligation or ignored?

What are all these blessings of God to do for us? Is it related to revealing God to us? How important is it for us, as a people, to have the right concept of God?

In order to endure the trial before them, [those who would stand during the time of trouble] they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; **they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them.** GC 593

We must understand the truth about God's character, government and purposes and act in accordance –

- What is God's character?
- What is the basis of God's government?
- What is God's purpose on earth at this time in history, His purpose for this last day movement?

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. **Men are losing their knowledge of His character.** It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. **Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory,** the light of His goodness, mercy and truth...**The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**” Christ's Object Lessons, p.415

Is it God's purpose that the message of His character is to go to the world? How? Does He have a last day purpose for us?

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. **When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.** {COL 69.1}

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown

with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain. {COL 69.2}

How do we hasten the day? Is it not be revealing God's character in our lives? Is it God's purpose for you and me to reveal His character in our lives?

Does the Bible speak of a group of people, who at the end of time, have the character of Christ reproduced within them?

After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and **the earth was lightened with his glory.** Rev 18:1

- Who is the angel referred to in this passage? God's last day people!
- What is glory? Character of God!
- Whose glory is lighting the world? The glory of the angel!
- How does the angel lighten the world with glory?

Is this message of God to be carried forward in our lives? Do we expect to be the very vehicles God uses to glorify Himself on earth to finish the work?

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, **but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. **Then the nations will know** that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, **when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.**

²⁴ "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.** ²⁶ **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I**

will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.
Ezekiel 36:22-27

In the parable the wise virgins had oil in their vessels with their lamps. **Their light burned with undimmed flame** through the night of watching. **It helped to swell the illumination for the bridegroom's honor.** Shining out in the darkness, **it helped to illuminate the way to the home of the bridegroom,** to the marriage feast. {COL 414.1}

So the followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world. Through the Holy Spirit, **God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver.** By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, **the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory--His character--is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom's home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.** {COL 414.2}

Do we believe God can do this in us, so perfectly that we genuinely glorify Him in our lives?

Has this message been made more difficult to see by some traditions?

THURSDAY

Was there a remnant in Israel?

Read Romans 9:27-32:

Isaiah cries out concerning Israel:

“Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. ²⁸ For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.”

²⁹ It is just as Isaiah said previously:

“Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.”

³⁰ What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. ³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone.” ³³ As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

Thoughts?

Here is my paraphrase of Romans 9:25-32:

²⁵ As he says in Hosea:

“I will call them ‘my representatives’ who were not my representatives; and I will call her ‘the conduit of my love’ who had previously rejected my love.”

^{9:26} and,

“It will happen that even though they were told, ‘You do not represent me,’ they will be changed in character and called ‘sons of the living God.’”

^{9:27} Isaiah declares concerning Israel:

“Though the genetic descendants of Abraham are as numerous as the sand by the sea, only a small remnant will accept the remedy and be healed.

^{9:28} For the Lord will carry out his diagnosis on the earth with accuracy and certainty.”

^{9:29} It is sadly as Isaiah has said:

“If the Lord Almighty hadn’t worked so hard, so patiently, so diligently to preserve us, we would have no descendents. We

would have ended up like Sodom, we would have ended up like Gomorrah.”

^{9:30} How then do we understand this? It is very simple – the Gentiles who had no idea they were infected with selfishness and were therefore dying, and certainly didn’t have a clue that a remedy to heal them was available, therefore, didn’t pursue God’s healing cure. But when they became aware of their condition and that a cure existed obtained it by trust in him who heals and restores; ³¹ but Israel, who knew their condition and knew a cure was available, who had been given the teaching tools designed to lead them back to trust did not attain it. ³² Why not? Instead of trusting God and accepting his free remedy, they attempted to cure themselves by their own efforts. Thus they stumbled over the “stumbling stone” refusing to trust in him. ³³ As it is written:

“See, I have placed in Zion a stone of truth that reveals the stumbling and shortcoming of men, and a rock of righteousness that exposes how far short they fall, but the one who trusts in him will be completely healed and never stumble or fall again.”

What about our church? Are we doing better than ancient Israel? In what way? What can we do better than we are currently doing?

MONDAY

The third paragraph expresses quite nicely who decides our eternal destiny – is it God’s judgment of us or our decision? The lesson says, “It’s our own choices, not God’s, that keep us from the promise of eternal life in Christ.”

TUESDAY

Read memory verse at top of page, “For my thoughts...” thoughts?

How have you heard this text used? Have you ever heard it used to justify the idea that God will inflict torture and suffering on sinners to make them pay and then execute them in the end?

But what is the context, verse 7, immediately before says:

Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

Thoughts? What is God saying are not His ways? The way of vengeance, revenge, punishment etc. Instead, God's ways are the ways of mercy and free forgiveness!

Does that mean Christ's death wasn't necessary for our salvation? Of course not, we could not be saved without the death of Christ, but Christ's death wasn't needed to get God to forgive or have mercy. Christ's death was necessary for our healing, our restoration!

Read second paragraph, "Obviously..." thoughts? Do you find this line of reasoning a little thin?

Read bottom green section – thoughts? If we understand God's character is exactly as Jesus revealed it, does that set certain parameters or boundaries on how we interpret the rest of Scripture? Any examples?

WEDNESDAY

Read Romans 9:25,26:

As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," and, "It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

What is Paul saying in this passage? Who are the people of God?
Why were they not God's people before?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph and discuss? Thoughts about what we are
elected to accomplish? How does Christ elect us to this?

Read and discuss question 1