

# Adult Bible Discovery- August 9, 2020

## For Starters:

*When someone who is guilty is pardoned, how does that usually make you feel?  
If you were guilty and facing significant jail time, how would you feel if someone  
took your place and you were set free?*

When Paul proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the Promised Messiah, he was preaching a message that was not at all agreeable to the Jewish way of thinking. Viewing Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament, with its carefully prescribed rituals and ceremonies, seemed to pose a threat to traditional ways and customs. In fact, when Paul returned to Jerusalem after completing his third missionary journey, James and the Christian brothers in Jerusalem warned Paul of the danger to his life from his Jewish enemies. Paul was perceived by the orthodox Jewish community as being hostile to Jewish customs and virtually anti-Semitic (see Acts 21:17-21). Actually, nothing could have been further from the truth.

## Read Romans 9:1-5

Paul is not biased against his own people. Far from it!! Rather, he accords them a premier place in the world. They are, in reality, the nation that is at the center of all world history by virtue of their being the bearer of the promised Messiah. But with all this national prestige and with all these God-given advantages, why are so few of them in step with what is happening through the worldwide spread of the Christian Church? Paul first heads off a wrong notion and then gives his answer.

## Read Romans 9:6-13

If many of the Jews are not in the Christian fold, Paul states that it is not because God wasn't earnest when he extended the Word and promise to them. They had plenty of advantages and God's promise are still good. The problem is not with God and his Word. The problem is that individuals have rejected those promises.

The Lord hates sin and sinners, and the Lord dearly loves sinners and wants them to be saved. The resolution to this seeming paradox is found in the cross of Calvary, where Christ's perfect sacrifice once and for all made it possible for a just and holy God to accept sinners—believing sinners with forgiven sins.

- How would you answer someone who, after reading parts of scripture comes to the conclusion that God is not fair!
- How would you respond to the question, "Why should God be merciful to anyone?"

## Read Romans 9:14-15

This whole thing does not make sense in our human minds. It seems that life is not fair on one hand and on the other hand it seems that God is not fair. Humanity finds itself inextricably intertwined between a world that is filled with sin and seemingly unfair and a God who has every right to judge and condemn us.

And in the middle of this we find Christ. In Christ we see mercy and in mercy we experience the love that God has for us. This only begins to make sense when we give up control and put aside our desire and effort to get right with God. Paul says it plainly.

## Read Romans 9:16

Why does God choose us? It makes no sense. Luther once wrote, "*Our election is not based on worthiness and merit on our part. If it rested on such a foundation, the devil could make it uncertain and overthrow it at any*

*moment. It rests in God's hand and is based on His mercy, which is unwavering and eternal...When your sin and unworthiness assail you and the thought occurs to you that you are not elected by God...hold to the promise of the Gospel. This will teach you that Christ, God's son, came into the world in order to bless all the nations on earth, to redeem them from sin and death, to justify and to save them. This he has done at God's command and in accordance with the gracious will of God"*

A wise man once told me, "I cannot explain everything I see in Scripture, but I am called to proclaim what Scripture says." And what does Scripture say? Perhaps the song Who Am I? from the contemporary Christian artist Casting Crowns begins to explain it.

Follow this link to hear the whole song- <https://youtu.be/3rT8Re1EIQc>

***Who am I, that the Lord of all the earth  
Would care to know my name,  
Would care to feel my hurt?  
Who am I, that the Bright and Morning Star  
Would choose to light the way  
For my ever wandering heart?***

***Not because of who I am  
But because of what You've done.  
Not because of what I've done  
But because of who You are.***

***I am a flower quickly fading  
Here today and gone tomorrow  
A wave tossed in the ocean  
A vapor in the wind  
Still you hear me when I'm calling  
Lord, you catch me when I'm falling  
And you've told me who I am  
I am yours***

***Who am I, that the eyes that see my sin  
Would look on me with love  
And watch me rise again?  
Who am I, that the voice that calmed the sea  
Would call out through the rain  
And calm the storm in me?***

The unbelief of his fellow Jews, to whom God had given so much, caused Paul great sorrow. Countering likely objections, Paul insists that God's Word has not failed and He is not unjust in His choices. Unbelievers sit under God's judgment, placing themselves in spiritual peril. Yet God is patient, desiring to show mercy on us all.

*Lord, give me a penitent heart and confidence in Your grace. Thank you for choosing us and calling us to faith in Christ. Amen.*