

Romans: A Study on Reformation
Lesson 27 “The Power of Prophecy”

I. Introduction and Review - We are continuing our series on **Romans** today. We began this series in January and focused on the theme of reformation. We took a break for several months and spent some time talking about discipleship, but now we are going to finish **Romans** and focus on reformation, specifically reforming our relationships.

A. Here's a first thing we need to reform about our understanding of **Romans**. Most people think it's a letter about how we are justified by faith. That is true, but only a small part of the truth. The context of the letter is human relationships and bringing together different people groups with different belief systems around the centrality of Jesus.

1. The religious Jews didn't think they needed Jesus because they had the law.
2. The Gentiles worshipped everything from rocks, to trees, got into all sorts of debauchery, etc. Paul showed them they needed Jesus in this letter.

B. Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome to reform it in 57 A.D. prior to his trip to Jerusalem. He wrote to deal major issues the church in Rome was having which related to the banishment of the Jews from Rome in the year 49 A.D.

1. When the church in Rome began it was mostly comprised of Jews who converted to Christianity. The church culture was very much in line with Judaism (keep the law of Moses, focus on circumcision, keep the feast days, etc.)
2. In 49 A.D. the Roman Emperor Claudius banished all the Jews from Rome because of their religious and political disturbances. **Acts 18:1-2**. The Jews were banished until 54 A.D. when Nero became Emperor and said they could return.
3. When the Jewish Christians were banished, the only Christians left were Gentiles (the heathen). They were now in charge in the church in Rome and the culture of the church was completely different. Modern example would be if all of the traditional people were banished from town and the church was turned over to Millennials/Gen Z who brought in a more contemporary vibe to service.
4. Each side had an aura of superiority. The Jews thought they were better because they were God's original chosen people and the Gentiles thought they were better because they were the replacement of the Jews since they rejected Jesus.

II. The Power of Prophecy

A. **Romans 9-11** is about the doctrine of election. Many have taught this doctrine means that God elects to save some and elects to send some to hell. This is not true. What we have found is God elected to bring the Messiah through the family of Abraham and started the Jewish nation, but His goal was to always reach the whole world.

1. Last week we talked about how God is like a potter and Israel was like clay and how even though they were marred and rebelled against the Messiah, God could reshape and repurpose them if they repented.

B. Romans 9:22-29

1. **Verse 22** We are going to pick up on the idea of vessels of wrath prepared for destruction. That will be a major theme today. These vessels of wrath (unbelieving Israel) prepared themselves for destruction.
2. **Verse 24** Anybody who will believe can be part of God's family whether they are Jew or Gentile.
3. **Verses 25-26** are a quotation of **Hosea 2:23** and **1:10**. God calls the the Gentiles his people and his beloved and then goes onto say they are sons of the living God! The original context of **Hosea 1:10** was the Jews, but in the New Testament Paul says it about the gentiles. **The principle is the gentiles (heathen) are now part of the family of God. God is not just for the religious.**
4. **Verses 27** quotes **Isaiah 10:22-23** and makes the point as numerous as the Jews are only a handful will be saved.
5. **Verses 28-29** are interesting because Paul says God will cut the work short (expedite it) in righteousness. This means this probably isn't talking about a future fulfillment. This is something that would have happened in that day. He then quotes **Isaiah 1:9** about Sodom and Gomorrah. What's this talking about?
 - a. **Revelation 11:8** Jerusalem is referred to as Sodom.
 - b. Sodom was destroyed by fire because of its blatant sin.
 - c. Paul makes a parallel with Israel (the Jews) who don't repent will suffer a similar fate to those in Sodom. This will leave only a remnant of Jews. What's this talking about? Probably not a far off future event, but a major reason Paul wanted to go to Jerusalem.

C. Jesus's Most Startling Prophecy - This will build your faith.

1. **Matthew 23:34-38** Jesus tells the Pharisees they rejected the prophets God sent and all these things (judgment) would come upon that generation (40 years). He then talks about how the house (temple) in Jerusalem will be left desolate.
2. **Matthew 24:1-3** The disciples begin to marvel at the beauty of the temple and Jesus tells them that not one stone will be left on all these buildings. The disciples are stunned and they ask Jesus 3 questions:
 - a. When will these things be?
 - b. What is the sign of your coming (in judgment)?
 - c. When is the end of the age *aiōn* (Jewish Old Covenant age)?
3. Jesus then described the events leading to the destruction of the temple (Also **Mark 13, Luke 21**). In **Matthew 24:21** he says *it's the greatest tribulation that will ever be.*

4. Over the next few weeks, we'll unpack all of this symbolic language because it will help you connect with what Paul is saying to the church in Rome, but I want to share a couple of things that will build your faith in the power of prophecy.
 - a. **Matthew 24:34** This generation. Jesus was not talking to a future audience, he was speaking to people in His day.
 - b. **Matthew 24:15-20** Jesus gave instructions to the disciples when they saw armies surrounding Jerusalem (**Luke 21:20**) to not go back into the city or to get your things in your house, but to flee to the mountains. This was a prophetic warning first century Christians were very aware of.
 - c. Both Josephus and Eusebius tell us when the Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Christians fled to a mountain town called Pella and none of them died. The Jews decided to fight against Rome and went into the walled city of Jerusalem and were destroyed. The city was burned and the temple was destroyed. Over 1.1 million Jews lost their lives.
 - d. All of the family records were lost in the fire so it became impossible for the priesthood to be set back up. This ended the Old Covenant system.
 - e. There were a remnant of Jews saved and they were sold into slavery.

III. Conclusion

- A. The vessels of wrath prepared for destruction **Romans 9:22** were the Jews. Jesus gave them a prophetic warning they didn't heed and they prepared themselves to be destroyed.
- B. Paul quoted prophecies given by **Hosea** about the gentiles being His people and sons of God and declared them over the gentiles. They went outside the family to part of the family.
- C. The Christians heeded Jesus's prophecy. and were supernaturally spared from the destruction of Jerusalem. This caused them to live in victory!
- D. Takeway - If you get a prophetic word next week, pray and discern if its from God. If it is, mix faith with it and act on it. This will set you up for protection and blessing!
- E. Transition to Craig