

Northside Church of Christ

“God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
John 4:24



Would you please explain Romans 9:18?

By Kevin Cauley

Romans 9:18 states, “Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.” The context of this particular passage is in the midst of Paul’s expressed desire for the salvation of the Jewish people. He says in Romans 9:3, “For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Paul wanted them to be saved and he wished that this could be done even if it meant he himself being forever cursed. However, that was not God’s will for salvation. As such, it is up to God as to how men are going to be saved. This is the discussion that he enters into in this particular chapter.

Notice he says in verse 6, “not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.” The word of God had indeed said that Israel was going to be saved. Paul makes note of this in Romans 11:26, 27. However, who is Israel? He says in Romans 9:6, 7. Those who are of the seed of Abraham are the TRUE Israel—spiritual Israel. He explains this in verse 8 that just because one is the child of Abraham in the flesh doesn’t mean that he is the child of Abraham according to promise. Those are two different things. Who are the children of promise according to Galatians 3:16? “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.” Christ is the seed through which all nations would be blessed. So if the Jews in the time of Paul wanted to be saved, they must be saved through Christ, just as the Gentiles must be saved.

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SUNDAY MORNING

Triple E
Edify, Exhort,
Evangelize
Reasons to Believe
8:30 AM

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

Thru the Bible in
52 Weeks - Romans
9:30 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Worship Service
10:30 AM

WEDNESDAY NIGHT

Matthew 21:1 - 17
Mark 11:1 - 19
Luke 19:28 - 48
John 12:12-17;2:13-24
Triumphant Entry
Cleansing the temple
7:00 PM



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“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15

Northside Church of Christ
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Meridian, MS 39301

Place
Stamp
Here

For Where No Law Is There is No Transgression - Explain Romans 4:15 and 5:13?

By Kevin Cauley

Romans 4:15 reads as follows: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." Romans 5:13 says, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law." Admittedly, these are difficult passages to understand within the Bible. However, I believe that once we look at the context in which these statements are made, we can clear up what it is that Paul is discussing.

First let us go to Romans 4:13. Here is the beginning of the immediate context of this passage. In verse 13 the apostle writes, "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." The discussion in this context is justification by faith. Paul uses Abraham as an example of how one may be justified by faith. Abraham was justified because he had faith in the promise of God. The scripture says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:32). Paul, in continuing his discussion of being justified by faith, states that the promise was not made "through the law" (verse 13). The point that Paul is making in this regard is that the law cannot justify a person from sin. The purpose of law is to bring one to the knowledge of sin according to Romans 3:20. Since the law only brings the knowledge of sin and it cannot justify, then how is one to be justified? The answer is by faith. The promise of justification that was made by God to Abraham was thus by faith and one may be justified in that promise.

Verse 14 in this passage states, "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." The two are mutually exclusive of one another. If the law justifies—if the law makes one an heir of salvation—then faith is void and the promise to Abraham is inconsequential. Why? Because the promise was not by law, but by faith.

Verse 15 says, "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." The law can only bring transgression and as a result of transgression, wrath. Law condemns sin, but law offers no justification from sin. The promise to Abraham was not made "of law," but was made "of faith." The statement "for where no law is, there is no transgression" is a principle that should be limited to the object under Paul's consideration, namely, the promise of God to Abraham. Paul does not say there was no law in the day of Abraham or even before that. That is not his point at all. He merely says that where there is no law then there is no transgression. What then is the point? His point is that when God gave the promise to Abraham, that promise was given without law. Hence that promise was made to Abraham upon the condition of faith, not upon the condition of law. Abraham then believed God and was justified. Had Abraham failed to believe God, then he would have failed to be justified. But this would not be because he had transgressed God's law, but because he would have failed in faith. So Abraham, in putting his faith in God, was justified by faith, not by law.

The statement "for where no law is, there is no transgression," I take to mean "for where no law is, there is no transgression of law." This principle, however, is limited to the promise made to Abraham by God and not to the general situation of the day. God did not give the promise based upon law, but based upon faith. God did not fulfill the promise based upon law, but based upon faith. This is not to say that there was absolutely no law in effect at the time and as such there was absolutely no transgression of any law because then we would have to reject the account of the garden of Eden, the flood of Noah, the tower of Babel and all the other places where sin is recorded prior to the coming of the law of Moses.

Now in Romans 5:13 we read, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law." I believe that I have already explained that the statement made in Romans 4:15 does not imply that there was no sin at all in the world and that there was no transgression at all in the world. The statement is limited to the context in which it was made which is in regard to the promise that God gave Abraham. What then do we make of this statement in Romans 5:13? Does this statement imply that there was no law prior to Abraham? Sin was no doubt in the world prior to the law and so was transgression, hence there had to be some kind of law. Paul does not contradict himself here. He says that sin was not accounted until the law came. The point is that there was no law from God to this point that had been codified, that is, placed into written form. God had given laws directly to the Patriarchs and God expected these men to live under these laws, but God had not written the law down. Hence there was no general accounting of sin, transgression by transgression. Under the Mosaic Law there was an accounting and those under that Law had to bring their sacrifices accordingly. Prior to the Mosaic law, the Patriarchs offered sacrifices to God, but not as a result of particular sins—not because God said to them if you do such and such sin then you have to offer such and such sacrifices. The sacrifices of the Patriarchs were offered based upon faith, not law. Hence, there was no accounting of sin in order to get the number of sacrifices that one had to offer right. I am not sure that I understand completely everything that is going on in this context, but that is currently my studied judgment on the matter. Time and further study will, no doubt, help me to refine my thoughts in this regard.

Paul says that this is illustrated through the cases of the birth of Isaac and Jacob. Both of these children were born as a result of promise, not as a result of lineage. That is, God promised that Abraham would have a son. Isaac was born through that promise. God also promised that Jacob would be the head of the house over Esau and Jacob became the child of blessing. It was through the promise of God that these things happened, not because of lineage. The Jewish people of that day believed that they would be saved based merely upon being the offspring of Abraham. They believed that their salvation was in their physical lineage. But Paul makes it clear that this was not the case. It is not lineage, but promise that affords one's salvation.

Paul then takes up in verse 14 the hypothetical objection that God might be unrighteous because some have thought that they ought to be saved on account of the lineage. After all, this is what they understood God to be promising. But Paul answers this by showing that just because these Jews had this understand of God

Prayer Requests This Week

- Pray for all those with ongoing health ailments (Maxine Powell)
- All those affected by COVID-19
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Communion Preparation

- Sign up sheet for 2021 is in foyer
- February - Carlberg
- March - Rowell, T
- April - Juliano

Announcements

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March Birthdays & Anniversary's

- Mark Potts - 6th
- Robbi Cooper - 20th
- Larry Montgomery - 13th
- Kylie Joiner - 23rd
- GiGi Juliano - 19th
- Greg & Maxine Powell - 16th

Every Sunday Morning
@ 8:00 AM
on WTOK-TV



Sermon Notes

Men to Serve

- Announcements/Opening Prayer - Shay Cooper
- Scripture Reading - Romans 6:1 - 7
- Lead Singing - Chuck Rowell
- Head of Lord's Table - Rick Carlberg
- Assist on Lord's Table - James Johnson
- Scripture Reading - Matthew 26:20 - 29
- Closing Prayer - Larry Montgomery

- Comcast Cable 6
- Comcast Cable 431
- Comcast Cable 1011
- DirecTV 11
- DirecTV 396
- Dish Network 11
- Over-the-air 11.3