

A. Examining the texts.

1. Read Romans 9:1-5. What does it reveal about Paul and his heart for his people? What does verse three say about Paul's love for his nation?
2. Read Romans 9:6-13. What does Paul mean by the expression- not all that are descended from Israel are Israel? How is this illustrated by the example of Jacob and Israel?
3. Read Romans 9:14-21. How does this section of chapter 9 answer Paul's own questions- is God unjust and "why does he still blame us? What is Paul's defense of God in this regard?
4. Read 9:22-33. Whilst election remains something of a mystery to us and emotionally-difficult for us, in some ways it is a means to God's extending his mercy to more? How does this section reveal election as mercy?

B. Meditation & application

5. When you see Paul's heart for Israel- how does it challenge and encourage you about your heart for the lost? What does his statement in verse 3 say to you about his resolve and how does it reveal a new testament principle for ministry?
6. God values obedience and faithfulness above heritage or lineage. What does this fact have to say to you about you and your response to God in the gospel? What response does it call for?
7. What is your emotional response to the image of the potter and God's statement to Moses- that he will have compassion on whom he has compassion and he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy? Does the fact that Paul sees humanity as a whole as in constant rebellion toward God and therefore worthy of judgement add anything to our perception to understanding this "difficult teaching?
8. Pride and self sufficiency are enemies of experiencing God's saving grace. Discuss this in light of 30-33?

Dear heavenly Father- We recognize that in Romans 9 we are on "holy ground." We don't understand the mystery of election and yet we are indeed grateful for the capstone. Help us in humility & gratitude to receive your salvation and not be so proud as to miss the sheer grace of it. In Jesus Name- Amen.