

Introduction

1. Romans 9-11 a most interesting section
2. It shows how Israel has gone wrong
3. The lesson is crucial for us all

1. THE TRAGEDY OF HAVING A FALSE RELIGION

- 1) The case of the Jews here is a warning:
 - (i) they had godly forefathers
 - (ii) they had the Holy Scriptures
 - (iii) they had other privileges: v.4-5
- 2) But they clearly went wrong in religion:
 - (i) v.31: "not attained". Worthless religion.
 - (ii) they went wrong in a vital point
- 3) This made clear by Paul:
 - (i) v.32: "not of faith, but...by the works..."
 - (ii) This is the classic mistake in religion

APPLICATION: Do you understand the Gospel?

2. WHY PEOPLE STUMBLE OVER THE GOSPEL

- 1) God has given us a gospel which it is possible to stumble over:
ILLUSTRATION: a man who catches his foot
- 2) What are the reasons for this?
 - (i) unbelief sees nothing good in Christ
 - (ii) still less in his Cross
 - (iii) the message is offensive
 - (iv) it is all about the heart
 - (v) it offers blessing to the very worst
 - (vi) it rebukes the self-righteous

- (vii) it levels us all out as equally in need of God's mercy

ILLUSTRATION: The Pharisee + Publican

APPLICATION: Do you understand Luke 20:18?

3. THE COMFORT OF TRUE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST

- 1) All who believe are given comfort: "not be ashamed"
- 2) At every point we need to believe:
 - (i) our view of Christ as Saviour
 - (ii) the wisdom of God in this
- 3) The faith that saves has repentance:
 - (i) Job's experience
 - (ii) Isaiah's experience
 - (iii) Paul on the Damascus Road
- 4) The great problem is always Justification
ILLUSTRATION: "men as trees walking"
APPLICATION: You can only be saved BY FAITH

4. THE RELEVANCE OF THIS TO US ALL

- 1) Faith is essential at every point:
 - (i) our view of the Origins of Life
 - (ii) our view of life after death
 - (iii) our attitude to the Bible
 - (iv) our grasp of the Way of Salvation
- 2) What to do if faith is feeble: "Lord, help my unbelief".

- 3) Look at Hebrews 11
OBSERVE: The sad case of the Jews.
APPLICATION: Faith alone saves us.

CONCLUSION

1. Are you stumbling?
2. God can lift you up
3. Do you want to be saved?

PSALM

33: 8 – 14

32: 1 – 5

32: 8 – 11