

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY

16 – Romans 9: 30 - 33, “Spirit Help: Not our desires but God’s” -- with commentary

The purpose of the Letter to the Romans is to develop a “Model for Living the Awakened/Transformed Life.” **Today’s study is the 16th of 27 lessons.**

According to our Study Chart we are studying the 3rd section of “Embrace The Work of Christ and the Spirit” This is one of seven sessions under the rubric of “Spirit Help.” This is the third session in this series. Remember, the focus of the Book of Romans is to provide us “The Model For Living The Awakened/Transformed Life.”

KEEP YOUR “GUT TRIP ANALYSIS CARD” IN YOUR BIBLE FOR REFERENCE! Add to the list of words as you identify them so that you do not struggle with the definitions as you have need of them. (The card is printed in lesson # 12.)

BACKGROUND: Honoring our Romans Chart is important. In this section we have seven lessons, three of which we’ve completed. At this point, it is helpful to keep before us that each of these seven lessons teach us what Paul has to say about *how this information helps us awaken to our human purpose of standing in the presence of God as Perfect At-One-Ment?* This is what is known as “Embracing the work of Christ and The Spirit.”

In this series of lessons we have discovered how The Spirit helps us. In lesson # 13, the Spirit helps us to **embrace our weakness** so that it is no longer our enemy, but a friend; in lesson # 14, the Spirit **helps us to fulfill God’s desires** rather than our own desires; and in lesson # 15, the focus is on how The Spirit helps us **act on God’s desires and not our own**. In this week’s lesson # 16, the Spirit helps us embrace Perfect At-One-Ment through the pursuit of **fulfilling our intended purpose**.

Honoring the Romans’ Chart: The IHOPers declared: “Only four verses!” Yep, that’s right. Why? Well, to be truthful, I hadn’t really noticed until they drew my attention to it. However, in order to honor the fact that Paul gives us seven points to study, it really doesn’t matter how few, or how many, verses he gives to us. The important thing is to honor what the chart reveals to us as important and significant.

I. Vs. 30, What is the righteousness that Israel pursued?

WS: The term “righteousness” literally is to have a right relationship with God. In Gut Trip Analysis, this is experienced as fulfilling our intended purpose of living humane lives.

A. Why did the Gentiles not pursue righteousness?

WS: The simple answer is they didn’t know any better because they didn’t have The Law. Also, they did not have the example of the death and resurrection story to help them awaken to the humane life lived in At-One-Ment. From a universal understanding it can be said that the Gentiles pursued righteousness whenever they lived humane lives, but they did not have a way to name it. The Good News always is the good news that while life victimizes us we have a choice to either be victims or victors.

II. How did Israel pursue righteousness but not attain it?

WS: Israel pursued righteousness through The Law which produces a human existence. The Law does awaken us! The flaw in The Law is it leaves us with a guilty conscience. There is no way to experience forgiveness.

III. Describe what the stumbling block refers to.

WS: The "Living Stone" is referred to in 1 Peter 2: 7 and 8. In this letter the "living stone" refers to the activity of the Christ who transforms us into "spiritual homes." In verse 7, Peter references this statement back to Psalm 118: 22 where the psalmist speaks of the stone the builders rejected "have become the capstone," or the stone *that holds us together*. This Psalm passage is referenced again in Isaiah 5: 1 - 7, and again in 8: 13 - 15.

Then, in 1 Peter 2: 8, the writer references his statement back to Daniel 2: 31 - 35, 44, and 45 where this stone becomes the stone of stumbling over which we fall *when we worship idols*.

IV. Research Isaiah 8: 14 to discover Isaiah's purpose in this quotation.

WS: One of the traps we frequently fall into is assuming that the Old Testament is a testimony to the arrival of Christ in the New Testament. The truth of the matter is that Christ is as active in the Old Testament as the Christ is active in the New Testament.

It is important to remember that Christ is a dynamic and not an object. In the opening statement in the Gospel of John we read that "In the beginning was The Word. . ." Christ is a dynamic present throughout the history of creation. Consequently, the Christ activities were as evident in Isaiah's time as in the time of Jesus.

With this understanding, Isaiah concerned himself with the problems of his time. He is a part of the second great macro-story of salvation called the Exile and Return. The first macro-story is that of Enslavement and Liberation. The third such macro-story is concerned with Sin and Salvation. While each of these ancient Biblical stories are about other communities, their applications apply to us in personal and communal ways.

The Exile and Return relates the tale of the Jewish people's disobedience against their intended purpose as being lovers of God. From Isaiah's perspective, their assignment in history was to share the story of Enslavement and Liberation with the entire known world. Because they were too busy defending a county given to them by God—but belonged to someone else—they never got around to their missionary purpose in life.

The purpose of 1st Isaiah (Is. 1 - 39), is to point out to the people of Israel what was going to happen to them if they didn't take this mission seriously. They would be sent into Exile.

The purpose of 2nd Isaiah (Is. 40 - 66), is to describe the purpose of The Return.

If you followed this line of reasoning so far, it is easy to make the connection to our own human experience. When we fail to fulfill our intended purpose of living lives pleasing to God, then **our reward is Exile**. When we fulfill our human purpose of living lives pleasing to God, then **our reward is The Return** into God's presence where we experience a peace with self, neighbor and God.

Alright folks, talk to me!