

Romans 9:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

Analysis

And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha—Paul quotes Isaiah 1:9. Kyrios Sabaōth (Κύριος Σαβαώθ) is Hebrew YHWH tseva'ot (יהָוָה אֵלֹהִים, 'LORD of hosts/armies')—God as commander of heavenly armies, emphasizing sovereign power. Sperma (σπέρμα, 'seed') is the remnant—those God preserves.

The comparison to Sodom/Gomorrah (Genesis 19) evokes total destruction—no survivors but Lot's family. Israel deserved such annihilation but for God's grace in preserving a seed. The conditional 'except' (ei mē, εἰ μή) underscores that survival is pure mercy, not merit. The remnant's existence proves election: if left to ourselves, all would perish. That any escape is God's sovereign grace. This prepares for chapter 11: the remnant exists 'according to the election of grace' (11:5).

Historical Context

Isaiah 1:9 addresses 8th century BC Judah, morally corrupt like Sodom (Isaiah 1:10). Only God's intervention saved a remnant. Paul applies this to his day: Israel's rejection of Messiah warranted total destruction, yet God preserved a believing remnant (Jewish Christians). The pattern repeats: judgment tempered by electing grace.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the Sodom/Gomorrah comparison emphasize the totality of deserved judgment?
2. What does 'the Lord of Sabaoth left us a seed' teach about the sovereignty of grace in preservation?
3. How does the remnant's survival prove that election is the only explanation for any being saved?

Interlinear Text

καὶ καθὼς προείρηκεν Ἡσαΐας Εἰ μὴ κύριος Σαβαὼθ
And as said before Esaias G1487 G3361 the Lord of Sabaoth
G2532 G2531 G4280 G2268 G2962 G4519

ἐγκατέλιπεν ἡμῖν σπέρμα ὡς Σόδομα ἀν
had left us a seed as Sodoma been made like
G1459 G2254 G4690 G5613 G4670 G302

ἐγενήθημεν καὶ ὡς Γόμορρα ἀν ὡμοιώθημεν
G1096 And as Gomorrah been made like G3666
G2532 G5613 G1116 G302

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 1:9 (References Lord): Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

Isaiah 13:19 (Parallel theme): And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

James 5:4 (References Lord): Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Amos 4:11 (References Lord): I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 50:40 (References Lord): As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.

Jeremiah 49:18 (References Lord): As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.

2 Peter 2:6 (Parallel theme): And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

Deuteronomy 29:23 (References Lord): And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:

Jude 1:7 (Parallel theme): Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.