

Introduction

In Chapter 9 of Romans, Paul changes his exposition from opening to the world the wonderful grace of God, to the description of God's present dealings with the nation of Israel. In Chapter three of Romans, Paul asks the question: "What advantage then has the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" He answers his own question by answering "much in every way.": Chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. To be that one nation that God picked out of all the nations of the world, to bless them more than all the nations of the world, and now to set them aside for a while was difficult for them to grasp. To add to all that, this Apostle was telling them that the reason God had temporarily set them aside was to bring the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God. The message was that God was not going to make a difference in the Jew and the Gentile. How were they to reconcile this new message of *grace through faith* with the divine faithfulness they had known for so long?

- **Deuteronomy 4:32-34**

For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

We could say they were a disobedient people, therefore God set them aside permanently; that God has rejected them entirely in order to bless the Gentiles. One could read the following and perhaps draw such conclusions:

- **Ephesians 2:14-16** *For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.*

However, the truth here in Romans 9,10,11 is that God has not rejected Israel entirely or forgotten them forever. He will remember His covenant. God is going to restore Israel.

- **Romans 11:11** *I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*
- **Romans 11:15** *For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*

Chapter 9

Verse 1. *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,* Whether Paul was answering his Jewish people, or his own conscience as to his loyalty to the nation of Israel we don't know, but he calls on the Holy Ghost to witness the truth of his conscience. This is good commentary on the use of conscience, which is that judgment of the mind by which we decide on the lawfulness or lawlessness of an action and by which we approve or condemn them. This conscience exists in all men, and is often expressed in actions of integrity or perhaps guilt.

Verse 2 *That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.* This heaviness of heart is a very strong emotion. I would think he would often ask the help of the lord to bear it in the right way.

Verse 3 *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:* We are not certain how Paul was using this deep feeling, because he had just taught in chapter 8 the impossibility of being separated from the love of God. I think the intent is to show his people how seriously he felt about his nation. Also, we must be very careful that our care and love for Israel be of God like attitude and affection such as that which stirred the Apostle's heart.

Verse 4 & 5 *Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

To whom pertains the adoption: Adoption is the making of a son, receiving into the relation of a son, to set or place as a son.

- **Galatians 4:5** *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

God wanted to change basis under which he had dealt with Israel. They were under the law and were expected to perform the duties of the law as a basis on which to receive God's blessing. The change would be that God could bless them as a Father who loves his son. He used the common practice in Israel of a child being under the care of a servant until the son became grown. Then he would be under his Father.

The Glory: There were many ways that God expressed His love and care for Israel. He protected them, supplied them with their daily needs, taught them to be able to relate to God. All this amounted to a wonderful and glorious relationship with their Father. They were set apart from all the nations of the earth and that caused them to be the recipient of much jealousy among the nations.

The Covenants: There are many covenants in scripture, but we will consider only those directly given to Israel;

- Abrahamic Covenant
- Mosaic Covenant
- Palestinian Covenant
- Davidic Covenant
- New Covenant

The Abrahamic Covenant was the primary covenant. It is eternal in its effect upon Israel, to a lesser degree the church. It may be said that the land promises of the Abrahamic Covenant are developed in the Palestinian Covenant. The seed promises are developed in the Davidic Covenant. The blessing promises are developed in the New Covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant then determines the whole future program for the nation Israel and proclaims blessing on the church.

The giving of the Law: It was God's choice to make the nation of Israel the custodian of the Law. It was holy and brought eternal advantage to the nation Israel.

- **Romans 3:3** For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

God proves Himself true to His word, and will forever continue to do so.

The service of God: This service was referring to the various offerings and ordinance that were connected to the Tabernacle worship. This outward form of worship applied only to Israel and not to the church.

- **Galatians 4:9-10** But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

The Promises: If you speak to a Jew, especially one who understands something of his history, you will find he will speak very favorably of the promises. In Abraham were the salvation promises; in David, the Kingdom promises. None of these were made to the church.

Whose are the Fathers: These fathers refer to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Also Joseph of Judah is held in high esteem. but Abraham is the Father of us all.

- **Galatians 3:29** And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Whom as concerning the flesh Christ came: This scripture assures us that Christ is the Son of God, yet the greater part of the Jewish nation does not accept him as God.

- **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- **Colossians 1:16-17** For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.
- **Acts 4:12** Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Verse 6 *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:* In verses one and two, Paul allows us to see his heart of love for his people. He is very aware of their spiritual condition. However, Paul is quick to assure us that the word of God is sure and will not fail, but will be effective.

- **Romans 3:3** *For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*

In the second part of this verse, Paul is beginning the subject of election, which he continues through chapters 9,10,11. We are not to conclude from the fact that many in Israel rejected the message of the gospel therefore God's purposes for Israel were failing. There were many who did receive.

- **Romans 2:28-29** *For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

Verse 7 *Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.*

The first son of Abraham was Ishmael and he was made into a great nation. However, God rejected him because he was not of the pure natural seed as was Isaac. The point Paul was making was that God made a selection for one man and rejected the other. So we see election at the very beginning of Israel's history. The Jews of Paul's day knew all this and those who were the sons of Isaac were very proud of their true blood line. Also, Ishmael's line could trace their history back to Abraham. They are proud of this even today. However, this is much of the cause of trouble in the Middle East today.

Neither of these lineages of people, however, received the Gospel. That was Paul's purpose, proving that God was once again making a selection. This time it was for the sake of the Gospel.

Verse 8 *That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

In our verse, Paul is making a difference between the children of promise, Isaac and his descendants, and the children of the flesh, Ishmael and his descendants. He is calling the children of promise the children of God. For the natural seed of Abraham, both Ishmael and Isaac considered being descendants of Abraham of the greatest importance and gave them every right to the blessings of God. However, Paul was saying that the blessings of God did not belong to them on natural basis but on the promises; and this promise was the line from which Christ came and looked forward to Him. This was Paul's calling and for which he paid a very great price. We all realize our Lord Jesus Christ paid a much greater price when Paul said of the children of promise they are counted for the seed. This is God's counting and we must agree with God.

- **Romans 4:17** *(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*

Verse 9 *For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.*

We recognize that God was able to bring to pass what He had promised. This was taken from

- **Genesis 18:10** *And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.*

Notice that Isaac, the promised son, did not have to do anything to be born as the promised seed. God promised Isaac to Abraham and kept His promise by a miracle. Therefore, when Isaac was born, he was the child of promise by the sovereign will of God. Again, this was looking forward to the greater promise of a Redeemer.

Verse 10-13 *And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;*

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Now we are going to watch God make an even more acute selection; the elder shall serve the younger by saying, "Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated." Understand God is saying "I hate" before the individuals are even born.

How so? By His great foreknowledge. About this time, some might be thinking Calvinism! Perish the thought! We simply realize the great sovereign God of the universe can do whatever He chooses and doesn't need to answer to anyone.

Verse 11 begins to give answers as to what God is doing. God is establishing the great purpose of election, grace and mercy: not of works, but of Him that calleth. Election is simply the manner God chose to bring about His purpose of rejecting the works of the flesh.

- **1 Corinthians 1:28-29** *And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in His presence.*

Notice: the selection was made before these boys had formed any character traits, or before there were any actions - good or bad.

- **Ephesians 1:5-6** *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.*

This great salvation is not conferred on men because of any merit of their own. This principle will be seen throughout all eternity. This rejection of the effort of the flesh for our redemption will be the center piece of the glory of God for all eternity. "God did it all."

Verse 14 *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid*

This verse is a comment or support for verses 11-13. His very positive answer to the question, "is there unrighteousness with God?" It is important that we have the right attitude and right thinking toward the word of God. To doubt or question God's word is very dangerous. Having a full acceptance of His word is to be full of faith.

Verse 15 *For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

This is stating the desire of God for His people. It is the expression of love from our God. The intent of this is to bring us into harmony with God.

- **Romans 15:13** *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

We find real joy in agreeing with God. Much of the controversy around religious things is simply unbelief. So we need to allow God to express His heart of mercy and compassion.

Verse 16 *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*
God wants His people to let Him do the work in their lives that He longs to do.

- **Philippians 2:13** *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*

We are not supposed to run out in front of God; He wants to lead us.

Verse 17 *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

It should not be surprising to us that God would use a man who was not a man of God or have any belief in God. Remember God called Nebuchadnezzar His servant. Through His interactions with Pharaoh many people, both of Egypt and Israel, learned much about God. God delights in showing Himself to mankind.

Verse 18 *Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.*

God is stating by this verse that He will leave Pharaoh to be hardened by the sin in his heart and the rejection of the will of God for the nation of Israel. God does not sovereignly harden a man's heart against the man's will. He simply allows sin to have its' expected result. As with Pharaoh, so with us. To any degree there is rejection or self will in our hearts, there will be hardness as a result.

Verse 19 *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?*

Those people of Paul's time were complaining about the supposed action of God. "Supposed" in that they had not understood Paul correctly and therefore were not accepting his teaching.

Verse 20 *Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?*

All men everywhere must be careful not to question God. It is an attitude that is wrong to challenge any action of God. It is not enough to say, "I don't understand." The correct attitude is to accept and trust for understanding; subsequently, many people have a belief system that restricts them in their believing God. However, that does not justify their attitude. The scripture teaches that if we are willing to do His will, we shall know the doctrine.

- **See John 7:17** *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

No where has there been a more cutting or humbling statement as to the pride of man. There are times when man will say "I didn't know,"; when through the whole question there was the possibility of knowing. We must not question God. It is nothing but pride.

Verse 21 *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?*

God is asserting His right to do as He pleases with all men.

- **Romans 2:2** *But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.*

Our place and attitude is to be pliable, soft as clay and recognize we are but clay vessels in His hand; to accept God's position without question.

- **See Jeremiah 18:6-8** *O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. 7At what instant I shall speak*

concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; 8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

Verse 22 *What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:*

God is not willing that any should perish, but there are those who continually reject God's approaches to them. These are the same as the ones of

- **Romans 2:5** *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*

We see the Lord showing them much longsuffering, giving them many opportunities for salvation. These are also similar to those of

- **2 Thessalonians 1:8** *In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

Fitted to destruction does not mean God fitted them, but that He drew back His hand of mercy and allowed sin to take its course. Destruction is the result. It is beautiful to watch God in action, even in showing His wrath.

- **See Romans 2:2** *But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.*

Verse 23 *And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory,*

Two classes of men are seen in Verses 22 and 23; Vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy. God is willing to show His wrath on the vessels of dishonor. He, by doing so, is making His power known. These vessels of wrath are fitted for destruction. This means God simply pulls back His presence from them and allows sin to run its course.

On the vessels of mercy, that is the saved ones, God is making known the riches of His glory. In fact, He is preparing them for Glory. Even though God is dealing with the wicked in wrath, He never the less has no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

See Ezekiel 33:11 *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

Verse 24 *Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*
 "Even us"-Paul is classifying himself with those being prepared for glory.

Note: He uses the word "called" both for the Jew and the Gentile. This is important. The Jews knew they were the called, but they didn't think the Gentiles were called. Paul is saying in verses 23-24 he himself was prepared for glory and so are all those who allow this preparation to take place in them. Bringing the Gentiles into the picture here is where Paul has been headed in this whole chapter.

Verse 25 *As he saith also in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.*

The ministry of this Apostle was to the Gentiles. In this verse, the wording used is “as He saith in Hosea.” which was without question speaking of the 10 tribes. Paul is not quoting exactly from Hosea as he applied this to the Gentiles. This is unusual, but he is telling us that God is calling the Gentiles that were saved, “my people who were not people before.” Simply put, Paul takes the wording of Hosea and applies them to the Gentiles.

Verse 26 *And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.*

The Apostle continues to use this comparison to the 10 tribes for the Gentiles.

- **See Ephesians 2:12-13** *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

The references in Hosea assure us that God is going to restore Israel.

Verse 27 *Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:*

Paul is explaining how God is going to reject a large part of the Jewish nation, yet affirming that a remnant will be saved. It occurred during Isaiah's time, therefore it should not be surprising that it could happen again. We will see this same principle take place in the Rapture of the Church in the end time.

Verse 28 *For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.*

God is patient. He waits long. He is even silent for long periods of time. Then suddenly He puts into action the purposes of long ago. The nation was taken into captivity around 600 years before Christ. Seventy years later, a small remnant returned. From that time until 1948, there was not a national Israel. In our day, Israel has not yet accepted Christ as their Messiah. Soon however, a remnant as a nation will see the One whom they pierced and open their hearts to Him.

- **See Jeremiah 31:33** *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

Verse 29 *And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabbath had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah.*

The difference between Sodom and Gomorrah and Israel is Sodom and Gomorrah ceased to exist. Israel as a nation will return to the Lord. A remnant will return.

- **See Romans 11:26** *And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:*

Verse 30 *What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.*

These are the Gentiles of Romans 3:

None righteous, not one
 None understands
 None that seek after God
 All gone out of the way
 Unprofitable
 None doeth good, not one

However, when the gospel was preached, they received it and were brought into the great family of God because they sought it by faith. Therefore, this stands as a pillar for righteousness by faith alone.

Verse 31 *But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.*

Israel, following the law by works of the flesh, never attained to the law of righteousness even though they pursued after it for hundreds of years; But only by self effort! No man has ever or will ever find God's righteousness by self effort.

- **Romans 10:21** *But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

Verse 32 *Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;*
 Israel has not yet learned to seek God by faith.

- **1 Corinthians 1:22-23** *For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;*

Stumbling at the Gospel is a sign of pride and self sufficiency which, as long as these are present, form a wall against believing.

Verse 33 *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

Jesus was a stumbling stone: the only way for Israel to have Him was to believe on Him. He offended all the claims of the Jew who considered themselves to be the "children of Abraham." Jesus offended all their claims of righteousness. He offended the leaders by exposing their sin. He offended their hopes of a kingdom of the Jews. He taught them that it was the poor in Spirit that would win. He overthrew the whole structure of works which the Jews had built. However, there were some that believed. In the end, the whole nation will be saved.

- **Romans 11:26** *And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:*