

Romans 9:1 *I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,*

Paul is now moving into Israel as a Nation and their rejection of Jesus. He used the first eight chapters to say it is not about what we are doing but it is about what Jesus has done on our behalf.

Paul himself was very legalistic and thought his many achievements earned him right standing with God. The greatest sin of all is self-righteousness and not thinking we need Jesus. Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) who was an expert teacher of the law and highly respected by the Jews (Acts 5:34) and he became a pharisee of the pharisees and very religious. It was not until he encountered Jesus that he forsook all his many achievements. Paul was once someone who relied on his ancestry, circumcision, and adherence to the Old Testament law (Phil 3:5-8) and could relate to the Jews better than anyone.

Paul starts this letter with an open heart and deep compassion. We can truly see the heart of God through Paul's concern for the Jews. This compassion and love that Paul felt for the Jews was not his own human love. This was truly Christ in him that Paul was able to express just how much he loved his brethren in the following verses.

Romans 9:2 *that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart.*

Paul wrote the entire book of Philippians that could have been titled "Rejoice". Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter but said rejoice and joy at least sixteen times in this letter alone. So, was Paul living a depressed life? No, it actually was the joy of the Lord that was Paul's strength (Neh 8:10), however there is a yearning and compassion that goes on when we see our brother or sister in deception. The Holy Spirit Himself is never angry with us but we can grieve Him (Eph 4:30).

Jesus wept during Lazarus' death. He had emotions and was tempted at all points like us (Heb 4:16) but was this an indication that Jesus was depressed and walking around in grief? Jesus knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead so it is doubtful to say that Jesus was grieved over Lazarus' death. Jesus had more joy than all His companions or anyone else so He was not in a depressed state (Heb 1:9). Jesus was in intercessory prayer and many times we are interceding for someone our hearts can become full. Lazarus' death was an opportunity to disrupt the enemies' plans and raise him from the dead; not move into depression.

Romans 9:3 *For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,*

Why was Paul so grieved? Paul knew that the only way to be in right standing with God was through Jesus but the legalistic Jews of Paul's day had taken the law and used it as a way to promote their righteousness to God that would ultimately end up in eternal separation from God (1 Tim 1:8). Paul is saying here that if him going to hell would produce justification for the Jews, he would. Although taking someone's place and going to hell for them is not the way to the Father; we still can see Paul's heart towards the Jews. Again, this was Jesus living through Paul.

Only one person would be willing to go to hell for another and the only person that can be our substitute is Jesus.

The word kinsmen in Greek is *suggenes* and means relative, by blood, or country man. This is important to note that Paul refers to the Jews as his bloodline and the connection he has with the Jews but justification for salvation does not come through bloodline. In this chapter we will see Paul making the point that God does not choose based off blood line, lineage, or natural descent but by faith.

Romans 9:4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises;

The Jews were God's chosen people in the Old Covenant. They were the ones that God chose to give the law to and all of the promises. Even their forefathers were the patriarchs of the faith but this did not grant them right standing with God. None of this counted if they continued to reject Jesus. The word Israel and Jews is used interchangeably.

Israel was a vehicle through which God chose to bless the nations. The Jews did not realize they were the vehicle and the way which God would bless all the other nations. They thought they had eternal life and everyone else was lost.

Romans 9:5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

Christ came and offered payment for sins for all (1 Jn 2:2) but if the payment is rejected and we are deceived to thinking we can pay God through our own righteousness, we end up having to face payday and that is a bill that none of us can afford apart from Jesus paying it (Rom 3:23). Verse 4-5 states all that the Jews had but it didn't matter if they rejected the truth, the way, and the life (Jn 14:6). Jesus came to His own, but His own received Him not (John 1:12).

If we owed a billion dollars to someone and another person came along and said I will pay that bill for you don't worry about it. Many would rejoice but to the one who is in pride and feels they can work towards paying that debt off will ultimately fail. It is humbling to receive the payment that is being provided.

The gospel may sound simple to a Gentile but to a Jew this was mind blowing to hear that God accepts all (Eph 3:6). Gentiles under the Old Covenant were referred to as dogs and now Paul comes with the message saying none of your lineage gives you a leg up with God and the gospel is to whoever will believe (Titus 2:11). This was heresy to the Jews.

Romans 9:6 But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,

Paul already addressed that the Jews rejection of Jesus did not make God's word of none effect (Rom 3:3).

The Greek word for no effect is *ekpiptō* and means to fall powerless. The word has power regardless if anyone believes it or not, it just won't benefit the person who disbelieves it (Heb 4:12). This verse says not **all** of Israel had rejected Jesus as a whole. Paul himself was a Jew and accepted Jesus (Acts 22:3).

Romans 9:7 *nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "in issac your seed shall be called."*

The Jewish nation as a whole trusted in their ancestry to be considered as children of Abraham but true children of Abraham are those who put faith in Jesus (Gal 3:16). It is not because of natural descent, bloodline, or lineage that makes someone a child of Abraham (Gal 3:7). The promise Seed came through the lineage of Abraham and through Issac.

Romans 9:8 *That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.*

It is not because you are a physical descendant that you are a child of Abraham but it is the children of the promise which are those who put their faith in Jesus. True children of Abraham are not determined by a physical circumcision of the flesh but one who has a spiritual circumcision of the heart (Gal 5:2).

This verse is clear that it is not because one is a natural descent of Abraham that they are children of God, but it is those who put faith in a promise. We are children of a promise not children of blood. A believer that relates to God based off the promise is identifying with the covenant of grace which was symbolic of Sara in the Old Testament (Gal 4:23-24).

Romans 9:9 *For this is the word of promise: "at this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son."*

The promise was spoken to Abraham and Sarah that they would bear a son. Sarah represented the covenant of grace but Abraham got into works and in the flesh and slept with Hagar who was symbolic of the Law. Self-effort will never produce the promises of God. Issac was the vessel through which the promise Seed would come, even though he was not the first born. Natural selection always choses the first born to pass the inheritance to but God does not choose the way we do. Issac, the second born was who God chose to pass the blessing through.

Paul is setting the tone for this chapter in proving that God chooses based off election not natural selection. God chose for the blessing of Abraham to flow through the second born. Through natural selection it would have gone to the first. In the same way God did not choose the way man would choose for salvation, God has chosen for salvation to flow through Jesus and not through blood line or ancestry.

We would think God would choose the first born and one would think God would choose based off being a natural descent, but God is not choosing this way. He chooses based of election and God has elected to offer salvation to all (not just Jews) who believe.

Romans 9:10 *And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac*

Not only was Issac chosen for the promise to pass through but it was also passed to Jacob instead of Esau. Issac nor Jacob was the first born but God chooses by election. Abraham is showing Old Testament saints who the Jews are familiar with to prove it is not based off natural selection that God chooses but God picks off election.

The mindset is the first born receives the inheritance but not with God. God is electing to break the culture and the way man does things. Just because one is a Jew or Israelite does not mean they are saved.

Romans 9:11 *(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),*

God chose for the promise to come through Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. He chose this beforehand so that means it was independent of the boy's performance. They could not offer any of their works to the Lord because they were chosen before. Issac and Jacob didn't do anything good or bad to be chosen, it was predetermined.

In the way God is not held accountable for Ishmael and Issacs behavior or decisions, God is is not responsible for the decisions the Jews and Gentiles make.

We are not saved by our own works (2 Tim 1:9). Holiness can't produce fellowship with God, but fellowship with God can produce holiness.

Romans 9:12 *it was said to her, "the older shall serve the younger."*

There is nowhere in scripture that says Esau served Jacob. This verse is not talking about the individual brothers but the nations. The Edomitie nation did serve the descendants of Jacob and David's servants (Gen 32:3, 1 Chron 18:13).

Romans 9:13 *As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."*

God does not hate anyone. This was speaking of the two nations that came from Jacob in Esau. God had a plan for both Esau and Jacob but God will not over ride our free will. God chose the promise Seed to come through Jacob but he also had a plan for Jacob's life. In God's foreknowledge, He knew Esau would give up his birth right and ended up turning from God. God does not have a plan for everyone to be called into the five fold ministry (Eph 4:11) but that does not mean that he does not have a purpose for their life. He may call another into worship or have a ministry of giving. God is good and does not have bad plans for anyone's life. God chose Jacob and he was right in His selection.

God elected for the blessing to flow through Jacob. God is bringing about the plan of redemption, but it is not how the natural man would think He would. God is electing to show mercy to all who believe (Rom 1:16).

Romans 9:14 *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!*

God is not unjust (Heb 6:10). Anytime someone turns from God, He will allow them and will not force them to serve Him.

God's plan of salvation is removing Him from being the decider and putting the ball into each individual person's court for them to either accept or reject Jesus. God has opened the door of salvation to all similar to a door being opened at a home. Those who choose to walk in the door will enter in but the door has been open to all.

Romans 9:15 *For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."*

This scripture is not speaking of how God deals with individuals but in context Paul is speaking about the nation of Israel as whole. He previously stated the God does not choose the first born for the blessing of Abraham to flow but He chose the second born. He is now saying that God is not offering salvation to those who are of natural descent or lineage but to all; Gentile included. He is electing to have mercy on all regardless of bloodline.

This is not saying God has mercy on some people and others He is absent from caring. In context, Israel had rejected Jesus as a whole and God was not going to override their free will to do so.

Romans 9:16 *So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.*

God's nature is one of mercy but He will not force anyone to do anything.

Romans 9:17 *For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "for this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show my power in you, and that my name may be declared in all the earth."*

The scriptures do say that God hardened Pharaoh's heart but that was well after Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex 9:34). The plagues described in Exodus are all acts of mercy extended to the Egyptians but Pharaoh hardened his own heart and God just enforced it.

When Jesus came to this earth the Father knew that He was sending Jesus to die for us and redeem us. The crucifixion was a part of God's redemptive plan; however He did not force anyone to fulfill His will and crucify Jesus. The ones that chose to crucify Jesus did it by their own free will but God in His wisdom knew what would happen and used that to His advantage to redeem us. God chose to use their rejection of Jesus to accomplish His purpose so that we can now be accepted.

Pharaoh hardened his own heart and God simply enforced or sealed his decision. God will use even the unrighteous man to accomplish His work and purpose to bring praise to His name.

Romans 9:18 *Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.*

God has given man a free will from the beginning of creation, even Adam had a choice. God will only harden someone's heart after they have chosen that path. God does not do anything that man does not already allow.

This is what Paul describes in Romans chapter one of a person who did not glorify God and professing to be wise. God eventually gave them over to a reprobate mind. It is possible for one to turn from God so much that God will give them over. He will not force anyone to do anything, and it is the person who makes the initial step to turn from God and through that God responds to them or gives them over.

Romans 9:19 *You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"*

In context, God's will was for the Jews as a nation to receive their Messiah but as a whole had rejected Him (Jn 1:11-12). His will is a desire for all to be saved and come to repentance (1 Tim 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9).

Romans 9:20 *But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"*

God does not make anyone bad but has a purpose and good plan for all (Jer 29:11). No one can say God did not have a good plan for their life and that it was God who forced them to reject His plans or even Jesus. God did not make Pharaoh the way he was. Sin will impact us and harden our hearts (Rom 1:21, Heb 3:13).

God does not choose what kind of vessel we will be, we do.

Romans 9:21 *Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?*

This verse is taken from Jeremiah 18:3-6 and is referring to when God sent Jeremiah to the potter's house to be taught. This verse is saying that even though a piece of clay may be damaged or marred the potter can still use it and make something out of it. God does not delight in evil and does not force anyone to act evil but He can use it to His advantage (James 1:13). The chief priest played right into the plan of redemption by crucifying Jesus. God did not force the chief priest to crucify Jesus but God knew this would happen and still used it to send Jesus to hell but only to get the keys back and raise Him so that He could offer justification through Jesus to mankind.

Judas is another example of this. Judas betrayed Jesus but it was not God's will or plan for Judas to yield to this (Jn 6:64).

In context Paul is still speaking of two nations. It is not God's fault that the nation of Israel had rejected their Messiah but He can still use this to bring about glory.

Romans 9:22 *What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,*

God endures with long suffering and mercy but will not force someone to walk with Him. A potter can have marred clay and instead of discarding the clay the potter can make use of it. The potter is not the reason the clay is marred. Likewise, Pharaoh hardened his own heart and God enforced his decision and used that for His Glory.

Romans 9:23 *and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,*

The word riches in Greek is ploutos and means fullness or abundance and the word glory in Greek is doxa and means view and opinion. The church is not lacking in the wisdom or will of the Father towards the Jewish nation. God predestined that those who put faith in Jesus would be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29).

Romans 9:24 *even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*

God not only called the Jews but the Gentiles as well (Eph 3:6). The Jews could not see how God could accept people who did not adhere to the law or be a natural descendant of Abraham but Jesus came to the sinner and all have sinned and fallen short (Luke 19:10, Rom 3:23).

Romans 9:25 *As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them my people, who were not my people, and her beloved, who was not my beloved."*

In the last part of this chapter Paul uses Old Testament scriptures to confirm that salvation is not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles and that the message Paul is preaching is not anything new. Hosea 1:10 refers to Jews once being God's chosen people but Hosea is prophesying a time when the Gentiles who were not in covenant with God would be brought into the covenant.

Romans 9:26 *"and it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'you are not my people,' there they shall be called sons of the living God."*

This is a quotation taken from Hosea 1:10. "Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God.'

"You are not my people" is referring to the Gentiles. This is speaking of those outside the Nation of Israel.

Romans 9:27 *Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved,"*

Here, Paul is using a scripture from the Old Testament book of Isaiah and the remnant that will be saved is only a small number of Jews. Not all Jews rejected Jesus as a whole.

There is a remnant and it is according to the election of grace (Rm 11:5).

Romans 9:28 *For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make short work upon the earth."*

This is quotation from Isaiah 10:23 and 28:22.

Romans 9:29 *And as Isaiah said before: "unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah."*

This is another quotation from Isaiah 1:9 and 13:19.

God's Seed Jesus was left for us; without Him coming on our behalf we would have been destroyed.

Romans 9:30 *What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;*

Paul is now moving into the present condition of Israel. The Gentiles were not God's chosen people and were outside the covenant of promise. Paul spoke of the Gentiles and their lifestyle in chapter one and how they were not pursuing God or the things of God. So, can they be righteous with God? Yes, because it is by faith in Jesus finished works not their own (Gal 2:16).

There are many times, it is easy for someone who hears the Gospel that is not seeking God to put faith in Jesus finished works because they don't have any of their own works to trust in. It is the religious person that attempts to place trust in their own works and reject salvation through Jesus because they can become deceived into thinking they measure up based off their performance.

Romans 9:31 *but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.*

Israel was given the very word of God and was the nation God chose to bless. The legalistic Jews sought after righteousness by trying to adhere to the Mosaic law and earn right standing with God but in their own ability fell short (Rom 3:23) and were unable attain righteousness. There are two kinds of righteousness ours and God's (Rom 10:3) and only God's righteousness imputed to us through faith in Christ can put us in right standing with God.

We if cannot offer God complete perfection than we are a complete failure.

Romans 9:32 *Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.*

Jesus is put before all and anyone who does not receive Jesus stumbles and will experience ultimate separation from God. The Jews did not attain righteousness because they trusted in their own righteousness which was of filthy rags (Is 64:6).

The word stumble is Greek is *proskoptō* and means to trip up. The only way for a believer to stand firm is for their feet to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. The gospel is the good news that a believer relates to God based off Jesus' righteousness and not their own and this is what keeps them from tripping up or falling (Gal 5:1-4).

Romans 9:33 *As it is written: "behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes on him will not be put to shame."*

Religious people will always get offended at the message of grace because it is saying that their good works mean nothing and someone who is not seeking God can enter into covenant with God as long as they put faith in Jesus. The only people who get offended are the ones trusting in self.

During Jesus' earthly ministry He dealt with the legalistic Pharisees and Sadducees. One of the most misinterpreted scriptures in the Bible is Matthew 16:24-25. Religion says the cross that a person needs to take up is sickness or some type of burden that every Christian just has to live with. Jesus is saying here to deny himself; meaning deny your self-effort, own ability, and your will power and take up His cross which is His finished works and follow Him. The person that tries to come to God through their own righteousness or trusting in their own works will lose their life.