

Romans 9

Paul's heart for Israel

9 ¹ I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—² that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵ To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

God's Sovereign Choice

⁶ But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, ⁷ and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” ⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. ⁹ For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁰ And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—¹² she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” ¹³ As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” ¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” ²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is moulded say to its moulder, “Why have you made me like this?” ²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honourable use and another for dishonourable use? ²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea,

Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’
and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’

²⁶ And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved,²⁸ for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.”²⁹ And as Isaiah predicted,

If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring,
we would have been like Sodom
and become like Gomorrah.

Israel’s Unbelief

³⁰ What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith;³¹ but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law.³² Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone,³³ as it is written,

Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

Cross References

Verse 3 – Exodus 32 v 30 to 32: The next day Moses said to the people, “You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will, forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.”

Verse 3 – Galatians 3 v 13: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”...

Verse 3 – John 15 v 13: “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

Verse 3 – Acts 20 v 22, 23: “And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me...”

Verse 5 – John 4 v 22: “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”

Verse 6 – Romans 2 v 28: For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.

Verses 6 and 7 – Matthew 3 v 8, 9: “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father’...”

Verses 6 and 7 – John 8 v 31 to 59 (not printed)

Verse 8 – Galatians 4 v 23, 28: But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise... Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise...

Verse 9 – Genesis 17 v 21: “But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.”

Verse 13 – Malachi 1 v 2, 3: “I have loved you,” says the LORD. But you say, “How have you loved us?” “Is not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares the LORD. “Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated...”

Verse 15 – Exodus 33 v 19: And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name The LORD. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”

Verse 17 – Exodus 9 v 16: Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me... But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth...’”

Verse 17 – Exodus 7 to 12 (not printed)

Verse 20 – Isaiah 29 v 16:

You turn things upside down!
Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker,
‘He did not make me’;
or the thing formed say of him who formed it,
‘He has no understanding’?

Verse 25 – Hosea 2 v 23:

And I will sow her for myself in the land.
And I will have mercy on No Mercy,
and I will say to Not My People, ‘You are my people’;
and he shall say, ‘You are my God.’

Verse 26 – Hosea 1 v 10: “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ it shall be said to them, ‘Children of the living God.’”

Verses 27, 28 – Isaiah 10 v 22, 23: “For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness. For the Lord GOD of hosts will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth...”

Verse 29 – Isaiah 1 v 9:

If the LORD of hosts
had not left us a few survivors,
we should have been like Sodom,
and become like Gomorrah.

Verse 30 – Romans 3 v 21, 22: But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

Verse 33 – Isaiah 28 v 16: Therefore thus says the Lord GOD,

Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion,
a stone, a tested stone,
a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation:
'Whoever believes will not be in haste'.