

Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome – Part 11 (Winter 54/55)

Romans 9

Paul's Anguish Over Israel's Failure to Believe

1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,
 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.
 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,
 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises,
 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

God's Word Has Not Failed—His Promise Was to the Israel of Faith, Not Ethnic Israel (physical descent does not equal participation in the promised blessing)

6 But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel;
 7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." [[Gen 21:12](#)]
 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.
 9 For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON." [[Gen 18:10, 14](#)]
 10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac;
 11 for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,
 12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." [[Gen 25:23](#)]
 13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED." [[Mal 1:2-3](#)]

God Is Not Unjust—He Is Free to Grant Mercy as He Chooses (participation in the promised blessing has nothing to do with human effort)

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!
 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." [[Exod 33:19](#)]
 16 So then it *does* not *depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.
 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." [[Exod 9:16](#)]
 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

God Is the Creator—We are Accountable to Him (the fact that we cannot merit participation in the promised blessing does *not* mean that we are not accountable for our sin)

19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"
 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? [[Isa 29:16; 45:9](#)]
 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?
 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

23 And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

God has Called Both Jews and Gentiles to Participate in the Promised Blessing

24 *even* us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

25 As He says also in Hosea,

“I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, ‘MY PEOPLE,’
AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, ‘BELOVED.’” [[Hos 2:23](#)]

26 “AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, ‘YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,’
THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD.” [[Hos 1:10](#)]

27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;

28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY.” [[Isa 10:22–23](#)]

29 And just as Isaiah foretold,

“UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY,
WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH.” [[Isa 1:9](#)]

Participation in the Promised Blessing Is through Faith, Not Works

30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;

31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law.

32 Why? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

33 just as it is written,

“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE,
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” [[Isa 28:16; 8:14](#)]