

Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome – Part 3 (Winter 54/55)

Romans 9–11

Paul's Anguish Over Israel's Failure to Believe

9:1 I am telling the truth in Christ—I *am* not lying; my conscience bears witness to me in the Holy Spirit—

2 that my grief is great and *there is* constant distress in my heart.

3 For I could wish myself to be accursed from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my fellow countrymen according to the flesh,
4 who are Israelites, *to* whom *belong* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the *temple* service, and the promises,

5 *to* whom *belong* the patriarchs, and from whom *is* the Christ according to human descent, who is God over all, 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 if the word of God had failed. For not all those *who are descended* from Israel *are truly* Israel,

7 nor *are they* all children because they are descendants of Abraham, but “In Isaac will your descendants be named.” [[Gen 21:12](#)]

8 That is, *it is* not the children by human descent *who are* children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants.

9 For the statement of the promise *is* this: “At this time I will return and Sarah will have a son.” [[Gen 18:10, 14](#)]

10 And not only *this*, but also *when* Rebecca conceived children by one *man*, Isaac our father—

11 for *although they* had not yet been born, or done anything good or evil, in order that the purpose of God according to election might remain,

12 not by works but by the one who calls—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 then shall we say? *There is* no injustice with God, *is there?* May it never be!

15 For to Moses he says, “I will have mercy on whomever I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I have compassion.” [[Exod 33:19](#)]

16 Consequently therefore, it does not depend on the one who wills or on the one who runs, but on God who shows mercy.

17 For the scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very *reason* I have raised you up, so that I may demonstrate my power in you, and so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” [[Exod 9:16](#)]

18 Consequently therefore, he has mercy on whomever he wishes, and he hardens whomever he wishes.

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 Therefore you will say to me, “Why then does he still find fault? For who has resisted his will?”

20 On the contrary, O man, who are you who answers back to God? Will what is molded say to the one who molded *it*, “Why did you make me like this?” [[Isa 29:16; 45:9](#)]

21 Or does the potter not have authority over the clay, to make from the same lump a vessel that *is* for honorable use and *one* that *is* for ordinary use?

22 And *what* if God, wanting to demonstrate his wrath and to make known his power, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

23 And *he did so* in order that he could make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory,

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

24 us whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

25 As he also says in Hosea,

“I will call those *who were* not my people, ‘My people,’
and those *who were* not loved, ‘Loved.’ [[Hos 2:23](#)]

26 And it will be in the place where it was said to them, ‘You *are* not my people,’
there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’” [[Hos 1:10](#)]

27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel,

“*Even* if the number of the sons of Israel is like the sand of the sea,

the remnant will be saved,
28 for the Lord will execute his sentence thoroughly and decisively upon the earth.” [\[Isa 10:22–23\]](#)

29 And just as Isaiah foretold,

“If the Lord of hosts had not left us descendants,
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 then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness—even the righteousness *that is* by faith.

31 But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, did not attain to the law.

32 Why that? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as *if* by works. They stumbled over the stone that causes people to stumble,

33 just as it is written,

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble,
and a rock that causes them to fall,
and the one who believes in him will not be put to shame.” [\[Isa 28:16; 8:14\]](#)

Paul Explains Where the Jews Went Wrong

10:1 Brothers, the desire of my heart and my prayer to God on behalf of them *is* for *their* salvation.

2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

3 For ignoring the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ *is the* end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The Law Described the Life to Be Lived by a Righteous People—But Righteousness Itself Comes by Faith

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness *that is* from the law: “The person who does *this* will live by it.” [\[Lev 18:5\]](#)

6 But the righteousness from faith speaks like this: “Do not say in your heart, [\[Deut 9:4\]](#) ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” [\[Deut 30:12\]](#) (that is, to bring Christ down),

7 or “Who will descend into the abyss?” [\[Deut 30:13\]](#) (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

8 But what does it say? “The word is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart” [\[Deut 30:14\]](#) (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim),

9 that if you confess with your mouth “Jesus *is* Lord” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses, resulting in salvation.

11 For the scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” [\[Isa 28:16\]](#)

12 For *there* is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same *Lord is* Lord of all, who is rich to all who call upon him.

13 For “everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” [\[Joel 2:32\]](#)

Israel Cannot Plead Ignorance—the Gospel was Proclaimed to Them by the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles

14 How then will they call upon *him* in whom they have not believed? And how will they believe *in him* about whom they have not heard? And how will they hear about *him* without one who preaches *to them*?

15 And how will they preach, unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How timely *are* the feet of those who bring good news of good things.” [\[Isa 52:7\]](#)

16 But not all have obeyed the good news, for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” [\[Isa 53:1\]](#)

17 Consequently, faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing through the word about Christ.

18 But I say, they have not heard, have they? On the contrary,

“Their voice has gone out to all the earth,
and their words to the ends of the inhabited world.” [\[Ps 19:4\]](#)

19 But I say, Israel did not know, did they? First, Moses says,

“I will provoke you *to jealousy* by *those who are* not a nation;
by a senseless nation I will provoke you *to anger*.” [\[Deut 32:21\]](#)

20 And Isaiah is very bold and says,

“I was found by those who did not seek me;
I became known to those who did not ask for me.” [\[Isa 65:1\]](#)

21 But about Israel he says,

“The whole day *long* I held out my hands
to a disobedient and resistant people.” [\[Isa 65:2\]](#)

God Has Not Rejected True Israel

(there is always a remnant which participates in the promised blessing by grace through faith)

11:1 Therefore I say, God has not rejected his people, has he? May it never be! For I also am an Israelite, from the descendants of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God has not rejected his people, whom he foreknew! Or do you not know, in *the passage about Elijah*, what the scripture says—how he appeals to God against Israel?

3 “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have torn down your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life!” [\[1 Kgs 19:10\]](#)

4 But what does the divine response say to him? “I have left for myself seven thousand people who have not bent the knee to Baal.” [\[1 Kgs 19:18\]](#)

5 So in this way also at the present time, there is a remnant selected by grace.

6 But if by grace, *it is* no longer by works, for otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

7 What then? What Israel was searching for, this it did not obtain. But the elect obtained *it*, and the rest were hardened,
8 just as it is written,

“God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear,
until this very day.” [\[Deut 29:4; Isa 29:10\]](#)

9 And David says,

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,
and a cause for stumbling and a retribution to them;

10 let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see,
and cause their backs to bend continually.” [\[Ps 69:22–23\]](#)

The Gentiles Received Salvation in Spite of Israel’s Rejection of Christ—Paul Wants This to Provoke the Jews to Jealousy

11 I say then, they did not stumble so that they fell, *did they?* May it never be! But by their trespass, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, in order to provoke them *to jealousy*.

12 And if their trespass *means* riches for the world and their loss *means* riches for the Gentiles, how much more *will* their fullness *mean?*

13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Therefore, inasmuch as I am apostle to the Gentiles, I promote my ministry,

14 if somehow I may provoke my people to jealousy and save some of them.

15 For if their rejection *means* the reconciliation of the world, what *will* their acceptance *mean* except life from the dead?

Paul Cautions the Gentiles Not to Be Arrogant of Their Inclusion in the Promised Blessing

16 Now if the first fruits *are* holy, *so also is* the *whole* batch of dough, and if the root *is* holy, *so also are* the branches.

17 Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, *although you were* a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them and became a sharer of the root of the olive tree’s richness,

18 do not boast against the branches. But if you boast against *them*, you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you.

19 Then you will say, “Branches were broken off in order that I could be grafted in.”

20 Well said! They were broken off because of unbelief, but you stand firm because of faith. Do not think arrogant *thoughts*, but be afraid.

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.

22 See, then, the kindness and severity of God: severity upon those who have fallen, but upon you the kindness of God—if you continue in his kindness, for otherwise you also will be cut off.

23 And those also, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, because God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree,

how much more will these who are natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

Paul Reveals a Mystery—The Eschatological Salvation of All Israel

(Israel and the Gentiles take turns on the center stage of God’s salvation-historical drama)

25 For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you will not be wise in your own sight, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in,

26 and so all Israel will be saved, just as it is written,

“The deliverer will come out of Zion;
he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

27 And this *is* the covenant from me with them
when I take away their sins.” [[Isa 59:20–21; 27:9](#)]

28 With respect to the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sake, but with respect to election, *they are* dearly loved for the sake of the fathers.

29 For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable.

30 For just as you formerly were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of the disobedience of these,

31 so also these have now been disobedient for your mercy, in order that they also may now be shown mercy.

32 For God confined them all in disobedience, in order that he could have mercy on them all.

Paul Bursts Into Praise to God for His Great Wisdom

33 Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable *are* his judgments
and *how* incomprehensible *are* his ways!

34 “For who has known the mind of the Lord,
or who has been his counselor? [[Isa 40:13](#)]

35 Or who has given in advance to him,
and it will be paid back to him?” [[Job 41:11](#)]

36 For from him and through him and to him *are* all *things*.
To him *be* glory for eternity! Amen.

Scripture quotations are from the [Lexham English Bible](#) (LEB). Copyright 2012 [Loqos Bible Software](#). Lexham is a registered trademark of [Loqos Bible Software](#).