

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 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 SABAOTH 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.” [\[Isa 28:16; 8:14\]](#)

Paul Explains Where the Jews Went Wrong

10:1 Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation.

2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

3 For not knowing about God’s righteousness 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 that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. [\[Lev 18:5\]](#)

6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: “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 YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART” [\[Deut 30:14\]](#) —that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

11 For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” [\[Isa 28:16\]](#)

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;

13 for “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON 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 on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!” [\[Isa 52:7\]](#)

16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?” [\[Isa 53:1\]](#)

17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

18 But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have;

“THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH,
AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD.” [\[Ps 19:4\]](#)

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

“I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION,
BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU.” [\[Deut 32:21\]](#)

20 And Isaiah is very bold and says,

“I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME,
I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME.” [\[Isa 65:1\]](#)

21 But as for Israel He says, “ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE 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 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in *the passage about Elijah*, how he pleads with 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 is the divine response to him? “I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL.” [1 Kgs 19:18]

5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to *God’s* gracious choice.

6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;

8 just as it is written,

“GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR,
EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT,
DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY.” [Deut 29:4; Isa 29:10]

9 And David says,

“LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP,
AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.

10 “LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT,
AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER.” [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 as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will *their* acceptance be but life from the dead?

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

16 If the first piece of *dough* is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.

17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,

18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you.

19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”

20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;

21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for 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 were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the 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, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

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

“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

27 “THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,

WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.” [[Isa 59:20–21; 27:9](#)]

28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of *God's* choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;

29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,

31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

Paul Bursts into Praise to God for His Great Wisdom

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? [[Isa 40:13](#)]

35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? [[Job 41:11](#)]

36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

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