

ROMANS 9:1-8 "For They Are Not All Israel, Who Are Descended From Israel."

Paul ended the last part of his letter, (chapter 8), speaking of how the love of Jesus Christ was not some fickle love which He would take from His people.

The love of Jesus Christ given to men is a love that not only sees their need of salvation but actually demonstrates itself in a way that actively acknowledges that our Lord gave Himself for our sin, and paid that penalty in full by dying on the cross and then raising from the dead to secure that love relationship with us forever.

Rom 8:38-39 "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

These words should comfort every believer in Christ Jesus and prompt our love for Him. We are new creations in Christ. The old things have passed away, behold all things have become new. This new life, and the love of Christ which secured this life, cannot be taken away, nor will it fade.

And yet, as we approach chapter 9 Paul gives us the sobering truth of how a people, chosen by God, are in fact cut off from His blessings and love to the degree that they no longer share in His salvation.

I speak of the Jewish nation. But the point that Paul is about to make is that if a child of God cannot be cut off from God's love, then what in fact constitutes a real child of God?

Paul has contended with the Jews and their vindictive stubborn hearts as he has been on the receiving end of their persecution and hate. It seems everywhere he goes to tell people about this Messiah Jesus, the Jews are there to greet him with anger and hatred as they openly reject this Messiah for whom Paul, a Jew, has devoted his life.

We might think that Paul's attitude towards the Jews would be one of mutual disdain. In fact, on one occasion when Paul and Barnabas were at Pisidian Antioch, Paul delivered a sermon that

was directed toward the Jews in such a way that it seemed that it might be construed as that.

Act 13:44-46 "On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles."

Has Paul's love and patience grown cold towards the Jews? Has he completely given up on them? As necessary as it was for Paul to turn from the Jews, as a whole, to serve the Gentiles according to God's plan, Paul never gave up hope for the Jews, because God didn't.

Don't ever forget that not all Jews rejected the Messiah. In fact the entire early church was comprised almost exclusively of Jews. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost was directed primarily towards Jews.

Act 2:5 "Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven."

And then as Peter ended his exhortation to the Jews he said this.

Act 2:36-39 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Some of the most zealous people for Christ were the Jews who, in many cases, gladly gave their lives for the Messiah Jesus. Paul's love for the Jews had not grown cold and as he begins chapter 9 he makes this quite clear.

Rom 9:1-4 "I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-- 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel...."

What's interesting here is that Paul is not pleading with the nation of Israel to turn to Christ, but his brothers, those of his own race, the people of Israel. These are individuals who are part of the whole and as Paul continues in this letter we'll find out who those individual Jews are in relationship to the whole of the nation Israel upon whom Christ will place His love and mercy.

Paul knows that he could never be cut off from the love of Christ, but he emphatically states that if it were possible, he would give up that eternal love relationship with his Savior if that would bring Jews back to the Messiah and put an end to their rejection of the One true God and His plan of salvation.

But as if to remind the Jews of the favor from God they enjoyed and have now rejected, he turns their thoughts back to the grace of God in their lives which was designed to direct them to Jesus.

Rom.9:4-5 ..... "Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen."

Paul reminds the Jews of what God has given them. "The adoption as sons." We read in Exo 4:22 "Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son,...'"

As a people, God called them out and gave them the covenant rights of sons and daughters who belong to Him as He has gone after them to bring them to Himself. Collectively they shared in this adoption as well as the glory which Paul speaks of in verse 4 of Romans 9..... This glory was a token of God's very presence in the midst of Israel.

Exo 40:34 "Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."

No other people on the face of the earth enjoyed such a blessing from the Creator of the Universe Who showered Israel with such a glorious presence.

Paul goes on to say that Israel also had the covenants from God. These covenants were promises and arrangements which gave Israel the assurance that God would act in accordance with His nature to make sure that He would be their God and they would be His people as long as they sought the promise fulfilled in those covenants which is found in the coming Messiah.

What a blessing to know that of all the people in the world God gave Israel these promises which assured them that they would have a special relationship with Himself. Such promises and covenants were numerous, but there were some main ones. We start with Abraham.

Gen 17:4-7 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you."

Then we have God's covenant with Moses.

Exo 34:10 "Then the LORD said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the LORD, will do for you."

Of course with all of the covenants God made with His people there were things that God expected of them which we see in the covenant with Moses.....

Exo 34:11-14 "Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 12 Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. 13 Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. [That is, symbols of the goddess Asherah] 14 Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."

There was also the covenant with Joshua and of course the covenant made with David which David spoke of in 2Sa 23:5 "Is not my house right with God? Has he not made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part? Will he not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire?"

All of these wondrous promises from God were given to this called out people known as Israel. And as Paul shows how these special blessings were lavished upon Israel he continues to remind them in verse 4 of how God gave to them the giving of the law and the temple service which was the means by which the people could

enter God's presence through the High Priest who was a type of our High Priest Jesus Christ.

To them also were given the fathers or patriarchs who were chosen by God to lead and direct the nation of Israel as God gave them direction. But also from these fathers or patriarchs came the blood line of the Messiah.

And in verse 5 Paul reminds the Jews that from the fathers came the Christ according to the flesh. In other words, the genealogy of the Messiah which we see in Matthew chapter one was to show that the Messiah was to come into this world born of a woman.

But to demonstrate that this Messiah was not just a man who would lead like the others, who previously came to lead Israel; this One would be different, because this One would be the fulfillment of all that God had promised Israel.

And remember, that the Messiah Jesus Himself, reminds us that all that God gave Israel in the form of these promises and covenants were to find their fulfillment in Christ Jesus.

After our Lord's resurrection as He approached the city of Emmaus He spoke with two of the disciples and explained to them precisely why He gave the promises and the covenant to Israel.

**Luke 24:25-27** <sup>25</sup> And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

And so Paul shows in verse 5 that this One sent from God "is God over all, forever praised!" This is where the Jewish nation as a whole missed the point of who Jesus was. It was not as though Jesus was like the fathers or patriarchs who were in line to bring about the Messiah, but this One is God Himself in the flesh who came through the blood line of the patriarchs.

The One promised has arrived to fulfill all of the covenants and promises which were given to Israel. That's was Peter's point in his sermon on the day of Pentecost when he said Act 2:36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

The word Lord in the Greek is *kurios* and it literally means supreme in authority. F.F. Bruce in his commentary on Romans tells us that "when Paul gives Jesus the title 'Lord', he does so because God the Father has bestowed this title on Him as the name which is above every name (Phi.2:9-11). This title 'Lord' given to Jesus by Paul is the equivalent of Yahweh..... [and so] "Jesus Christ is Lord" is the equivalent to "Jesus Christ is Yahweh."

When Paul wrote this in Romans 9:5 he knew that the Jews would understand exactly what he was saying. Like Peter's audience, they would have either humbled themselves and repented and embraced this Lord Jesus or like many of the Jews, cringed at such a notion and reject Jesus as Lord and Savior.

If Jesus is not Lord or Yahweh, then He is no Savior. As it is, all of the blessings given to Israel pointed to this Lord and Savior and this is why Paul pleads with the Jews to consider their heritage and their special relationship with God found in all of the things mentioned in verses 4-5 of Romans 9, because all of those things point to Jesus Christ.

But, after having mentioned all of the ways in which God was revealing Himself to Israel, and how He was always pointing them to His Son, why is that Israel missed it all? That's the question Paul anticipates. And that's why he says in Rom 9:6 "It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel."

It's not as though God somehow failed, it's that many of those who heard did not have ears to hear. And the reason they didn't hear is because were not of God.

In fact, Jesus addresses this issue and goes so far as to say that many of the Jews who claimed God as their heavenly Father, simply because they have Abraham as their physical forefather, were deceiving themselves.

Joh 8:39-47 "Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. 40 As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. 41 You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. 43

Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! 46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? 47 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

But how can this be since they are Israel? Didn't every Jew believe the promises of God? This is the whole point Paul makes. Simply being part of the covenant community of Israel didn't automatically make you a child of God any more than being a part of the church automatically makes you a Christian.

Rom.9:6-8 ..... "For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." [Gen. 21:12] 8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring."

"For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel." Keep in mind that Israel was not just the name of an entire people it was the name of an individual. That individual was Jacob. Jacob was the son of Isaac. Jacob had a twin brother named Esau.

And you'll remember that Jacob, according to God's promise to Rebekah in Gen.25:23, who was the younger brother, would be above the older brother Esau. God said the older will serve the younger.

What ended up happening was that Jacob tricked Esau out of his birthright. And later Jacob tricked Isaac into blessing him instead of Esau with this birthright blessing.

When Esau found out what Jacob did he set out to kill him and so Jacob fled. Pastor Chuck Smith recounts the rest of the story. "After many years, Jacob decided to return home. He had only traveled partway then he received news that Esau was coming to him with a large company of men. Fear gripped Jacob's heart and he really prayed!" .....

..... That night an angel of the Lord wrestled with Jacob. When the angel saw that he couldn't prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip and it slipped out of joint. In this crippled condition Jacob cried, "I won't let you go until you bless me!" .....

.... What is your name? the angel asked. Heel-Catcher said Jacob. The angel replied, 'Your name will no longer be Heel-catcher, but Israel' (Gen.32:2-28). Jacob's new name meant Governed by God." Paul said, "For they are not all Israel, who are descended from Israel." In other words, not all the descendants of Jacob are governed by God."

To simply be born into the nation of Israel did not mean that a person's life would be governed by God whereby that person would come to God and obey God on God's terms, which means that simply being identified with Israel did not make you part of the true Israel which Paul defines for us.

Those terms are clearly spelled out when Paul, in this same letter, says in Rom 4:3 "What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

What was Jesus asking the Jews of His day to do? Believe on Him that they may have eternal life. What did Jesus ask of Abraham to do? Believe on Him that he may have eternal life. And what does Jesus ask of people, including the nation of Israel, to do today? Believe on Him that they may have eternal life.

To believe means to embrace whole-heartedly by faith. What Paul was saying of Israel in his is that they were a people of God in name only. They were not governed by God as they submitted to His Son who is the only Messiah.

This is why Paul says that "through Isaac your descendants will be named." Ishmael was just as much a son of Abraham as was Isaac. But the promised seed, according to God's plan, would not come through the fleshly attempt to have an heir, but through the spiritual miraculous seed of Abraham who was 100 years old at the time and Sarah was 90.

A fleshly attempt to come into a spiritual relationship with God will never happen, and that's exactly what the nation of Israel did when they felt they could enter into a relationship with God simply through their good works.

A spiritual relationship with God must have at its core a spiritual source. God Himself is that source, nothing fleshly will ever do.



And that's Paul's point in Rom 9:8 "In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring."

Even those in the church today cannot boast in their church affiliation as a means of favor with God. Not all who are in the Christian church are Christians.

The true spiritual seed, the seed of Abraham, are those who come to God the same way Abraham did; by faith, humbling themselves before the God who said, 'I will be your God and you will be MY people.'

The end result is always to be the same; a relationship with the living God. Does this mean that Israel is never to have the opportunity to have this relationship? Of course not. They are given the opportunity to come to Christ as the gospel goes out.

But to suggest that Israel has some special privilege simply because the covenants and promises were given to her is to miss the point of which Israel God always had in mind regarding eternal life. It is the Israel that bears that name associated with the true Israel.

That true Israel is the name of the Son who was protected by the Lord after Herod tried to destroy all the young males in and around Bethlehem. The Son, born of a woman, fled to Egypt and would later be called out of Egypt.

**Matthew 2:14-15** <sup>14</sup> So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. <sup>15</sup> He remained there until the death of Herod. *This was* to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."

That prophet was Hosea and that prophet foretold of the one called Israel, and individual who was identified as the Son of God.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Hosea 11:1** When Israel *was* a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

This is the true Israel and only those who are associated with the Son by faith alone can be called sons and daughters of Israel. This is precisely why Paul could say, "For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel;" (**Romans 9:6**)

In the book of Galatians Paul would make clear who belonged to the true Israel.

**Galatians 6:14-16** <sup>14</sup> But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. <sup>15</sup> For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. <sup>16</sup> And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, *and upon the Israel of God*.

The Israel of God is made up of both Jew and Gentile believers, those who boast in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But, whether we be a Jew or a Gentile, all of us must never forget our roots which go back to the promises given to Israel by God, and the responsibility to be governed by God, not by the flesh.

Paul is going to expand on this problem with Israel. In fact, for the next 3 chapters he deals with national Israel and their responsibility to embrace Jesus and be governed by God. But in leaving today let me give you the encouragement that a relationship with Christ is one of great promise, but also one of great responsibility.

We are new creatures in Christ, but we're new creations to serve the Creator. That service involves desiring to be governed by the living God who says to us, 'to love our God with all our hearts, souls, and minds.'

Every fiber of our beings is what God wants. And by His power and grace, through the Holy Spirit, we can give Him our all. Let's demonstrate to the world that we who have been called by Christ, in fact belong to Christ, and that we're not Christians in name only.

My prayer for us is what Paul prayed for the Ephesians.

Eph 3:16-19 "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."