

## Chapter 9:1-33

v 1,2 “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart”.

We now come to a division in the book of Romans, where it speaks more as to the effect of the Gospel upon men’s lives, rather than the doctrine of the Gospel. With Paul, the reception of the gospel had the effect of bringing him into sorrow concerning his kinsmen after the flesh—Israel. They, as a nation, had rejected Christ as their Messiah, and Saviour. All believers in Christ have in some measure at least, a sorrow of heart for their unbelieving relatives.

vv 3-5 “For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom [pertaineth] the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service [of God], and the promises; Whose [are] the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ [came], who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”

For Paul, this sorrow was great. He, at least, momentarily could wish himself accursed from Christ for Israel, if that could save them. Of course it couldn’t. We do see however faith in the gospel makes a believer’s love for his natural family increase. For the first time in our lives we learn the true meaning of love.

All of the things Paul speaks of here, adoption, glory, (earthly) covenants, the law, service of God, (the tabernacle, and Temple) and national promises, all pertained to Israel. While they were known as God’s earthly people.

During that time, we Gentiles “at that time”... “were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12).

This was the Gentiles portion, as long as God owned the nation of Israel as His own people. This was not so, however, before God chose Jacob, and called him Israel. Enoch, for instance was not an “Israelite” but neither was he a nation, or a Gentile. Nations came into existence at the time of Babel (Gen.10,11).

Abraham would become a great nation, “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:” (Gen. 12:2), and also, “Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?” (Gen 18:18). So we do find even “at that time” of Israel’s day, many individual Gentiles were blessed, but the blessing was not as belonging to Gentile nations, but rather, as brought into blessing by means of Israel. Israel alone had the covenants, Law, etc. given to them as a nation.

vv 6,7 “Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they [are] not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, [are they] all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.”

Israel, after the flesh (the natural dependents of Jacob, (Israel) who of course was of Abraham) were not all of Israel. Esau, also was as much of Abraham, as Jacob. But promises were made to Isaac (by means of Rebecca) before Jacob or Esau were born, “And Jehovah said to her, Two nations are in thy womb, And two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels; And one people shall be stronger than the other people, And the elder shall serve the younger” (Gen. 25:23). Esau was born first. But God had already chosen Jacob. A sovereign act. Abraham was grandfather of both, blessing from God does not come though natural birth, but through the sovereignty of God. Israel had nothing to boast in, nor trust in save this sovereignty, for this was decided before Israel, (Jacob) was ever born.

vv 8 “That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these [are] not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”

All depended upon promise—unconditional promise—from God. The Apostle Paul connects this promise to Christ. by faith. “Know then that they that are on the principle of faith, these are Abraham’s sons” (Gal. 3:7). “But to Abraham were the promises addressed, and to his seed: he does not say, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed; which is Christ” (Gal. 3:16).

v 9,10 “For this [is] the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son. And not only [this]; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, [even] by our father Isaac” .

Naturally Sarah, Abraham’s wife was too old but she had promise from God, she would bare a son. “By faith also Sarah herself received strength for [the] conception of seed, and [that] beyond a seasonable age; since she counted him faithful who promised” (Heb. 11:11). Then the promise to Isaac.

v 11-14 “(For [the children] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? [Is there] unrighteousness with God? God forbid”.

We, as men, tend to fault God for His sovereignty, but insist on it for our own decisions of life. We daily choose things for ourselves. Election, is a sovereign act of God. We do not determine whom He can, or cannot bless. But we know that apart from His “election” we all would be eternally lost. He does not “elect” to damnation, but rather to blessing. He did not create man as a lost being. Rather, man chose to disobey God.

v 15-18 “For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then [it is] not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will [have mercy], and whom he will he hardeneth”.

While the “doctrine” of the gospel ended with chapter 8, the question of God’s sovereignty is taken up. The Jew needed to know, as we Gentiles need to know, all is of sovereign grace. Ishmael and Esau descended from Abraham as well as Isaac and Jacob. But God placed His blessing upon Isaac, the son of promise, instead of Ishmael. He chose Jacob for blessing instead of Esau. In reality, the Jews had no more reason to boast than the Gentile. Both are objects of Mercy.

By “doctrine” ending in chapter 8, I simply mean our Christian position as given in Romans is established, “Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Chp.8:39).

The security of the believer has been accomplished by faith in Christ. It will be well to remember this when considering the subject of the olive tree branches. This will not be a “gospel” subject.

v 19 “Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?”

While man insists on the “rights” he perceives he has, he does not think God should express His will in any thing pertaining to him. Another has said, “God is the only One Who has a right to do as He pleases, and He always pleases to do right”. Scripture says : “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25). Israel resented mercy being shown sovereignly to the Gentile. Paul shows God has to resort to His own sovereign rights to bless man—any man. As far as regards the “whole family” of Israel, the Word records, “For they know not to do right, saith the Lord” (Amos 3:1-10). The truth is, man has a will set against God’s. “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (Jn. 5:40).

vv 20,21 “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed [it], Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?”

It is good for us to remember that none of us have made ourselves. It is good also to recall that we all come from “the same lump”. What we do with what we are, we are responsible for. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16). God’s sovereignty, and man’s responsibility, do not negate the truth of each other.

vv 22 “[What] if God, willing to shew [his] wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction”.

God does have wrath and warns us of it. “Because [there is] wrath, [beware] lest he take thee away with [his] stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee” (Job 36:18). We do see here though His exercise of longsuffering even towards those who seem to be determined to heap wrath unto themselves.

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Rom.2:5).

vv 23,24 “And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”

God is a God of grace, and has chosen vessels upon whom to display it. “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7). This will be to His glory. “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6).

God, however, does not need our justification for what He does. He is God, not us, though we may act as though we are at times, thinking we can pass judgment upon Him.

vv 25,26 “As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, [that] in the place where it was said unto them, Ye [are] not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God”.

It is remarkable Paul quotes from the book of Hosea in reference to God bringing in the Gentiles through His sovereignty “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, [that] in the place where it was said unto them, Ye [are] not my people, [there] it shall be said unto them, [Ye are] the sons of the living God” (Hosea 1:10). The Jew needed this type of mercy as much as the Gentile.

Peter in 1 Peter chp. 2 verse 10 also quotes from Hosea, but uses the second chapter for them. “And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to [them which were] not my people, Thou [art] my people; and they shall say, [Thou art] my God” (Hosea 2:23).

The dear Jew had to admit, from their own law, they existed before God, on the principle of mercy as much as the Gentiles needed it.

v 27 “Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:”

Israel is called by Isaiah a numerous people. “For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, [yet] a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness” (Isaiah 10:22).

Their disobedient ways have required a just righteous judgment from God. However

here Paul points out God in mercy with them, shall save a remnant.

v 28,29 "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then [it is] not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God th Ye [are] not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God".

"For he will finish the work, and cut [it] short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha."

Had God not manifested Himself as a God of Grace, all would be lost. Israel included. Israel had sought righteousness by works, but failed to attain to it. How then shall Gentiles obtain righteousness?

V 30 "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith."

All must be by faith, and this by grace, not of works. (Eph. 2:8-9) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" All come to God by this means.

v 31, 32 "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because [they sought it] not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;"

The "Stumblingstone" was Christ. All stumbling upon Him, shall be broken" "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." (Luke 20:18)

To "fall upon Him," is to make Him the Object of our judgment "but on whomsoever it shall fall," makes that person, an object of His judgment, thus grinding him to powder. (an expression of judgment).

This stumbling is an act of disobedience to the Word, which prophesied of Him. "And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, [even to them] which stumble at the word, being disobedient" (1Peter 2:8)

v33 "As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed"

We notice in chapters 9-10-11 of Romans, many quotations from the old testament Scriptures. Paul is showing to the us the relationship of the Jews as a nation, to the Gospel, or Christ, by means of their own Scriptures. Gentiles were to be brought into God's blessing. And that on the same principle the Jew will be. That is, mercy. Also in chapter 11 he gives a warning to the Gentiles. In that warning however, we must not substitute, "believer" as meaning "Gentile."

In our verse (33) we are taken from the sphere of Sion, where the stumblingstone was "lay," to the sphere of "whosoever." All may now believe on Him, and if they do they will not be ashamed.

In chapter 10, we shall see how the gospel was presented to the Jews, and rejected by that nation. Thus, it is now presented to we who are of the Gentiles, or as stated above, "Whosoever."