

V. **Paul’s Gospel and Israel: God’s is Righteous in His dealings with Israel under the Law as they rejected Him but He will deliver a remnant to fulfill His promise (9--11).**

**Contribution to Argument:**

The removal of the Law from effectiveness toward a believer has taken them out of the wrath and put them under the righteousness of God and peace. Those, of course, who do not have the righteousness of the Christ as their propitiatory sacrifice, are still under the wrath (Romans 5:1-11). Thus Paul has incidentally condemned Israel to hell, which is a shock to the Jewish audience, since Israel was mandated as God’s people who were promised the land (Genesis 15). Thus, Paul must explain how it is that Israel are the people of the covenant, yet are not in that position of benefit now.

**Specific Response to Antagonist:**

The connection with the previous is that Israel is the theological antagonists (outside the church), trying to convince the Jewish believers (direct antagonists within the church) that they are under a curse. This impels the Jewish believers to try to include the Law with the gospel. But God indicates that they are the ones not reconciled with God and thus under a curse. So now Paul goes into the subject of God’s treatment of Israel. Thus, they should not rely in Israel as their mentor.

It should be noted that the following three chapters (9—11) are related to 8:7-8 where Paul points out that Israel (in the flesh, i.e., works of the flesh) is not pleasing God, and thus is an enemy of God. While this theological attack will result in attacks toward Paul for not blessing Israel, Paul will defend his view as God’s view. He will point out that he, like God is willing to incur cursing from Christ<sup>121</sup> for the sake of the beloved nation.

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<sup>121</sup> The text literally reads, “accursed . . . from Christ”. It is theologically not allowable that Paul means separation from Christ forever (i.e., hell), since to do so is to wish himself to do God’s will (give himself as a substitute) by rejecting God’s will for him in Christ (by going to hell). The word “separated” is not in the text, and so the likely connection of “from Christ” is with “accursed”. It appears best that Paul is desirous of imitating the love of Christ, that is “accursed from God” as Christ was (i.e., God gave Christ the curse instead of us) for the purpose of displaying his sacrificial love. But this bearing of the curse was not forever, but for a time, doing God’s will so that He could ultimately be rewarded for His sacrificial deed. This appears to be the desire of both David (2 Samuel 18:33), “Oh Absalom my son, my son. O that I had died in your place.” and Moses (Exodus 32:32), “But now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin-- and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written!” The essence of these desires is

This is vindication of God's dealings with Israel, their case, the remnant He delivers, and the inclusion of Gentiles. These are all by the mercy of God through sovereign choice that His mercy might be known (9:1-11:36).

Having now convinced the Jewish believer that he is justified in separating himself from the nation of Israel, and suffering the persecutions that will and have automatically come, Paul now addresses the case of that nation. Note that contextually this would lend credence to the view that it is the Nation Israel that is persecuting them.

- A. The condemnation of Israel and the choice of God is validated by Israel's rejection of God through His gift of righteousness, yet God's faithfulness to keep a remnant of believing Israelites (9:1-33).

In 9:1-5 he affirms that the nation still has the Abrahamic Promise. But in 9:6-12 he shows that all who were born of Abraham were not elect through their birth, but only those who were chosen of God. Both Ishmael and Esau were non-elect persons. In 9:14-18 Paul shows that in the Old Testament passage, God revealed Himself to be a God of infinite mystery as He chose and hardened those He would for His own unfathomable purpose. In 9:19-22 God shows that He allowed many who deserved destruction to have their way, in spite of God's patience toward them, so that those whom He chose to show mercy to, might display His greatness. 9:23-29 shows that God's choice was for a remnant of Israel and even included the Gentiles among His great mercy. But the quotation from Hosea<sup>122</sup> shows that God will raise again Israel and the quotation from

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that their life be taken to spare the lives of those who have sinned. In any case it is not do-able by anyone except Christ.

<sup>122</sup> It is held by most that the reference to Hosea is altered by Paul to make it meaningful to Gentile inclusion. There are several difficulties this presents.

1. The passage in the Old Testament is specifically speaking of Israel. While the sense of the passage is that God is saving a remnant out of a disobedient nation (and thus could save a Gentile remnant out of a disobedient pagan group), the specific reference is not only to a people, but a historic reference to the pronouncement of rejection in a *place*. Thus geographically it is clear to see that this is referring to a geographical place, that is, Israel. Thus, the fullness of this passage would see Israel (Jerusalem) as the place. This occurred on the Day of Pentecost. For the Gentiles, there is no place where the rejection was significant, nor where the acceptance was significant.

2. The context of the passage is regarding the Jewish remnant, not the Gentile remnant. Paul only refers her to a Gentile inclusion as a means of not leaving out Gentiles from the program of Israel. Gentiles' regeneration was revealed through him and is on an equal basis. Thus for him to speak of Israel's resurrection without speaking

Isaiah shows that a remnant still exists<sup>123</sup> from which God will raise a nation. In 9:30-33 God shows that the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles is that the Jews pursued their righteousness by works while the Gentiles pursued it by faith.

9:1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness 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. 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 neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." 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 a word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON." 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, in order that God's purpose according to *His* choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, 12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." 13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED." 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." 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

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of the Gentiles is to leave out the theology for which he is noted and for which this book was written to defend. There is no Old Testament passage for Gentile inclusion (Eph. 3) on an equivalent basis. Also if one notes the conjunctions, this verse begins with "as" and the following ones with "then" or "now" (*de*).

<sup>123</sup> Paul is not saying that the remnant of believers will be the ones whose seed reproduces a nation. He is saying that in the righteous promise of Israel as His son that there are those who are righteous. This indicates that God is still able to produce righteousness from the promised line. This is similar to Genesis 4 where at times there are righteous men on the line of Seth to indicate that the hope is still there in Enoch and Lamech. Thus, God is still working with Israel as he has not destined them to hell. He is still pulling righteous believers from the nation.

YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. 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? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay<sup>124</sup>, 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<sup>125</sup> for destruction? 23 And *He did so* in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand<sup>126</sup> for glory, 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.'" 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. " 27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; 28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD UPON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY. " 29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "EXCEPT THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME AS SODOM, AND

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<sup>124</sup> There may be here an allusion to Jeremiah 18:1-6 where Israel is likened to a lump of clay, made into a vessel, but does not turn out right so the potter remakes it into another vessel. However, this is a common allusion, and is more likely Isaiah 29:16 and 45:9.

<sup>16</sup> You turn *things* around! Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, That what is made should say to its maker, "He did not make me"; Or what is formed say to him who formed it, "He has no understanding "? (Isaiah 29:16 )

<sup>9</sup> "Woe to *the one* who quarrels with his Maker-- An earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' Or the thing you are making *say*, 'He has no hands '? <sup>10</sup> "Woe to him who says to a father, 'What are you begetting?' Or to a woman, 'To what are you giving birth?'" (Isaiah 45:9-10)

<sup>125</sup> This is in the passive voice indicating the vessels were prepared. Elliott Johnson points out that this passive indicates that God is not involved in source of sin (probably as darkness is not created but is absence of light).

<sup>126</sup> This is in the active voice indicating God is the preparer of all good.

WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH." 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."

- B. The only way that the Jews could be delivered is to act in faith, and then apply actions to their belief. However, in their rejection the “whosoever” goes out to Gentiles (10:1-21).

Paul points out now that Israel did not believe in God, but acted on their own works to try to fulfill the Law. Thus the action that the Jewish nation needs to take is that of believing in Jesus as the Christ, and then acting upon that belief. Further Paul's message is to take that simple message of faith to the Gentiles, while the Jews, who have heard, reject.

- C. God has through the Jewish rejection brought forth an opportunity for the Gentiles. But the Jew will be restored in his belief (11:1-36).

Now Paul takes on the practical future of the nation. Since they have fooled themselves, they have become blinded and are blind in this present age<sup>127</sup>. Paul however makes it clear that their rejection is not permanent (11:11-12), and it will be a glorious day when they return to Christ. However, the Gentiles are to be careful, for they could indeed lose their standing as the Jews have. This, of course, is not referring to eternal security of the believer, but is referring to the national priority of Jews and Gentiles in the scheme of God.

The final paragraph in this section reminds the hearers that God will return and remove the sins of Israel and return them to the priority status with God. Paul then stands amazed at the tremendous plan of God and its unfathomable depths.

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<sup>127</sup> This is similar to God giving them over to their reprobate minds in chapter 1.