

Paul's Concern for the Souls of Others

Romans 9:1-5

1 I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

Last year we left off at the end of chapter 8 of the book of Romans.

Paul has meticulously laid out that all men stand before God equally. Romans 3:23 says, for there is no difference for all his sin and fallen short of the glory of God.

But there is a problem with that. The problem is that the Jews had always been God's chosen people. So how is it that they have been sidestepped through the presentation of this new gospel?

Paul himself had been heavily involved in the Jewish faith and had even persecuted the believers in the gospel. But then it seems that Paul abandoned of that in order to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

So in the first part of the book of Romans Paul has declared everyone guilty before God Jews and Gentiles.

He has made salvation based upon grace through faith and not by works of righteousness in any sense of the term.

But in the next three chapters Paul is going to answer the Jewish question.

As one person said, in the first part of the book of Romans Paul shows how man is justified but in these next three chapters he is going to justify God's actions concerning the Jews.

“A survey of the movement of thought in these chapters warrants the conclusion that Paul, who has written so penetratingly on the justification of sinners, now turns to write on the justification (vindication) of God himself”, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*

So today we just begin this section with Paul reaching to his innermost soul in order to show his true feelings about his Jewish brethren.

I. To Tell the Truth. V-1

A. What is the purpose in verse 1.

1. I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,
2. Paul uses these words to show the sincerity of what he is saying.
3. For most Jews Paul was a traitor. To them he had denied the faith that he

once supported.

4. When we look at the end of the book of Acts we see the hatred of the Jews for Paul in that a number of them had sworn to not eat or drink until they had killed him.
 - a. Too well aware that he was regarded as a traitor to the dearest interests of his people (Ac 21:33 22:22 25:24), the apostle opens this division of his subject by giving vent to his real feelings with extraordinary vehemence of protestation. *JFB*
5. So of course they are not willingly going to believe much of what Paul has to say.

B. Paul's life had underwent a total change.

1. The lion had become a lamb, and he who breathed out threatenings breathed out prayers! He who seemed to burn with enmity became a flame of love. Dear friends, before we go any further, pause and answer this question, - "Has such a change as this been accomplished in you?"
Spurgeon
2. So although the Jews hated Paul yet he loved them and had a great desire to see them saved.
 - a. Romans 10:1 ¶ Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.
 - b. Jeremiah 9:1 ¶ Oh, that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!
 - c. Luke 19:41-44 (NKJV) 41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."
 - d. 1 Corinthians 9:20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; 22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win

the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

- II. Paul has a heavy heart because of the unbelief of the Jews.
 - A. V-2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart.
- III. Paul would trade places with them if they would come to Christ.
 - A. V-3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh
 - 1. Now this statement has caused a lot of problems for some people.
 - 2. Paul has taught that it is impossible for one to lose their salvation but here he says he would be anathema or cursed or doomed if that would bring his Jewish brethren to faith.
 - 3. Murray puts it like this, "Furthermore, the expression does not mean that he actually wished or prayed that he would be anathema from Christ. The tense used in the Greek is well expressed by the version in the words "I could wish". It is hypothetical to the effect that if it were possible and of avail for the salvation of his kinsmen he would be willing to be accursed on their behalf. The intensity of the apostle's love for his own people is hereby disclosed. It is love patterned after the love of the Saviour who was made a curse and sin for the redemption of men." *Epistle to the Romans, The - The Epistle to the Romans – Volume II.*
 - B. But the idea is to express Paul's deep desire for the salvation of Israel.
 - 1. Then he turns the discussion to the Jews' mistake in trying to establish their own righteousness before God in terms of meritorious obedience to law instead of responding to the gospel of Christ by faith. *Expositor's Bible Commentary*
 - 2. Like so many religionist today, Israel turned the law into a means of salvation rather than a means of conviction.
 - 3. And Paul had been caught up in that earlier in his life until Jesus met him on the road to Damascus.
- IV. Despite special privileges they had missed the Messiah.
 - 4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.
 - A. Israelites he says instead of Jews
 - 1. In saying Israelites he goes back to the first Israelite which was Jacob since Jacob's name was changed from Jacob to Israel.

2. This connects him with the covenant that God had made to Abraham Isaac and Jacob.
- B. To whom pertain the adoption
1. Adoption has the idea of placing as a son.
 2. Paul has used this term for the saved Gentiles and now he uses it for the nation of Israel as a whole.
 3. Adoption is a very special privilege in that it is not a natural birth but it reflects God's choice of a son.
- C. The glory
1. Glory here refers to the Shekinah glory seen in the Old Testament.
 2. It is the same thing that we talked about a few weeks ago that appeared to the shepherds along with the Angels.
 3. It was that brilliant light that became known as the manifestation of God, a light so bright that we cannot look upon it.
 4. There is no record of this glory ever appearing to the Gentiles.
 5. It was something that was specifically reserved for Israel.
 6. Term used of Jesus.
 - a. James 2:1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.
 - b. John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
- D. The covenants
1. This first refers to Abraham and the covenant that God made with him.
 - a. Genesis 12:2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
 2. But then got also renew this covenant with Isaac and also Jacob.
 3. God is a covenant making God.
 4. And we are partakers in the greatest covenant of all, the everlasting covenant.
 - a. Hebrews 13:20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our

Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant

E. The giving of the law

1. What a blessed privilege it was that God broke into human history and laid down his standards by which man should live.
2. For the rest of humanity they were guided only by their own morals and their own sinfulness.
3. We have experienced this somewhat in our own nation. Our forefathers came to this country and held as the law the Bible. It was that guiding principle that brought us to where we were when I was a child. But since that time "greater minds" have pushed forward a different agenda. Today we live in a society where the great moral issues laid down in the Bible are abandoned.

F. The service of God

1. The service of God refers to the worship system as given through Moses to the children of Israel regarding the sacrifices and offerings, holy days and festivals.
2. All of these things were beneficial to the nation of Israel in and of themselves by keeping God constantly before the eyes of the Israelites.
3. Their ultimate purpose was to show that man cannot please God and therefore the law would be a sign that the people needed to come to Jesus.

G. The promises

1. Promises here referred to those made in the Abraham a covenant, the Mosaic covenant, the Palestinian covenant, the Davidic covenant.
2. It also refers to the various promises that God made throughout the history of Israel to people individually and the nation in general.
3. Many of these are found throughout the Psalms and the book of Proverbs.
4. Hundreds if not thousands of promises were also made through the prophets.

H. Of whom are the fathers

1. The Jews were very proud of their heritage.
2. In arguing with Jesus they were constantly referring to Abraham as their father.
3. Your heritage can be a special blessing to be enjoyed or it can be a curse to be overcome.

4. Some children are lifted up by their fathers and grandfathers to achieve greater things than they did.
5. While other children must overcome being trampled underfoot in order to achieve greatness.
6. So Israel had the best heritage, the heritage of people whom God had chosen and with whom God had communicated.

V. Of whom is Christ,

- A. The Israelite was the earthly family from whom the Messiah was to come and He did.
 1. What a blessed privilege, to be that close, so close that your people it would seem could not miss Him when He came to earth.
 2. But they did.
 3. We all did except for God's grace.
- B. Who is over all, God blessed for ever (ο ον επι παντων θεος ευλογητος). A clear statement of the deity of Christ following the remark about his humanity. This is the natural and the obvious way of punctuating the sentence. To make a full stop after *σαρκα* (or colon) and start a new sentence for the doxology is very abrupt and awkward. See #Ac 20:28 Tit 2:13 for Paul's use of *θεος* applied to Jesus Christ. *Robertson's Word Pictures*

So why all this caution in bringing us this chapter.

It is because of the animosity of the Jews for the Gentiles. One of the times the Jews attempted to kill Jesus was when He pointed out in the days of Elisha there were many lepers but only Naaman the Gentile was healed. And in the days of Elijah there were many widows in Israel but it was to a Gentile woman that God sent Elijah to preserve her life and the life of her son.

And as we will see in the coming weeks, that God has now rejected Israel and has turned to the Gentiles with the Gospel and Paul's ministry was to the Gentiles.

More and more Gentiles will come to Christ while fewer and fewer Jews will come to Jesus.

So in chapters 9-11 Paul is explaining what God is doing and he is trying to set the Jews mind in such a way to be able to receive it.