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By Dan Maines

Romans 9

Romans 9:1-2

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

† Paul opens with a solemn statement, expressing deep grief for Israel. Though privileged, many of his kinsmen had rejected Christ.

† Jeremiah also wept over Israel's disobedience (Jeremiah 9:1). Paul continues this prophetic lament for covenant unfaithfulness.

Romans 9:3

For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my countrymen, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

† Paul's love for Israel is profound. He even declares he would accept being cut off for their sake. This echoes Moses in Exodus 32:32, who offered himself for Israel.

† Josephus describes the zeal of Jews for their nation in Wars 2.17.10. Paul's zeal is spiritual, rooted in Christ.

Romans 9:4-5

who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and daughters, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the temple service, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

† Israel had unique privileges: adoption, glory, covenants, Law, worship, promises, patriarchs, and even Christ's lineage. Yet privilege without faith led to judgment.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (CD 3.12-15) remind us that Israel often relied on privilege without obedience. Paul insists Christ is the true goal of all these blessings.

Romans 9:6

But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel.

† God's word did not fail. True Israel is defined not by flesh but by promise.

† Hosea 1:10 foretold that those not called God's people would be called His people. Paul applies this to the nations and believing remnant of Israel.

Romans 9:7-9

nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants shall be named." 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. For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah will have a son."

† Covenant descent is not through flesh but promise. Isaac, not Ishmael, was the child of promise. So also, Christ fulfills the covenant promise.

† Philo noted that Isaac symbolized divine promise. Paul applies this to Christ as the seed.

Romans 9:10-13

And not only that, but there was also Rebekah, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 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, it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written: "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

† God's election is demonstrated in Jacob over Esau. Choice was not based on works but on God's purpose.

† Malachi 1:2-3 shows this was national, not individual. Israel was chosen for covenant purpose, while Edom was rejected.

Romans 9:14-15

What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is

there? Far from it! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I have mercy, and I will show compassion to whomever I show compassion."

† God's sovereignty is defended. His mercy is His to grant. Exodus 33:19 showed this truth during Israel's rebellion with the golden calf.

Romans 9:16

So then, it does not depend on the person who wants it nor the one who runs, but on God who has mercy.

† Covenant blessing is not earned by will or effort. It depends solely on God's mercy.

Romans 9:17-18

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very reason I raised you up, in order to demonstrate My power in you, and in order that My name might be proclaimed throughout the earth." So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

† Pharaoh is used as an example. God raised him to display His power. Hardening was God's judicial act, confirming Pharaoh's rebellion.

† Josephus (Antiquities 2.14.3) recounts Pharaoh's stubbornness, which Paul ties directly to God's sovereign purpose.

Romans 9:19-21

You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" On the contrary, who are you, you foolish person, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does the potter not have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one object for honorable use and another for

common use?

† Paul rebukes human arrogance in questioning God. The potter and clay image from Jeremiah 18 shows God's right to shape nations for His purpose.

Romans 9:22-24

What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with great patience objects of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon objects of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, namely us, whom He also called, not only from among Jews, but also from among Gentiles.

† God's patience with unbelieving Israel demonstrated His glory when He revealed mercy to Jew and Gentile alike. The objects of wrath were covenant breakers, culminating in AD 70.

Romans 9:25-26

As He also says in Hosea: "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' and her who was not beloved, 'beloved.' 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."

† Hosea foretold covenant expansion. What applied to Israel's restoration also pointed to the nations' inclusion.

Romans 9:27-29

Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel may be like the sand of the sea, only the remnant will be saved; for the Lord will execute His word on the earth, thoroughly and quickly." And just as Isaiah foretold: "If the Lord of armies had not left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, and would have been like Gomorrah."

† Isaiah predicted judgment and remnant salvation. Though Israel was numerous, only a remnant was preserved.

† Josephus (Wars 6.9.4) described Israel's near total destruction, sparing only a remnant. Paul interprets this as Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled.

Romans 9:30-32

What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, but the righteousness that is by faith; however, Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though they could by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone.

† Gentiles attained righteousness by faith, while Israel stumbled by seeking it through works. Christ was the stumbling stone.

Romans 9:33

just as it is written: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and the one who believes in Him will not be put to shame."

† Isaiah 28:16 is applied to Christ. Those who believed were secure. Those who rejected Him stumbled into destruction.

How it applies to us today

† Covenant privilege without faith is worthless. Like Israel, churches today cannot rely on heritage or ritual.

† God's promises never fail. True Israel is defined by faith, not flesh.

† God's mercy and sovereignty assure us that His purpose will stand. Our trust is not in human will but in His calling.

† The remnant principle applies today. God always preserves a faithful people, even when many reject Him.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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