

# “SORROW THAT NOT ALL ISRAEL IS ISRAEL.”

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**Scripture Texts: Romans 9:1-6**

## **Introduction.**

We are halfway through Paul’s great letter to the Christians in the church in Rome. We have gone through eight chapters of some of the highest and holiest deep truths of God. Paul has proclaiming as clearly as he can the Gospel of Jesus Christ that eternal salvation comes through God’s grace alone by faith alone in Jesus, not our own works, efforts or righteousness.

Eight chapters of glorious doctrine, deep truth, real truth. Now if you know anything about Paul’s letters you know that when he gets done writing about the deep truths of God he always turns to practical matters that flow out of the doctrine and applies it to us.

So that is what we would expect at this point in Romans, but that doesn’t happen until chapter 12. In between we have three chapters, sort of bridge chapters.

One of the problems with taking an eight-week break after finishing Romans 8 is we don’t feel the intensity of Paul’s sudden shift in his thinking.

Paul had just concluded one of the greatest chapters in all the Bible with soaring words.

**Romans 8:31-35, 38** If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of

Christ? ... [nothing] else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Then how do you explain God's elect people, the Jews being accursed and cut off from Christ? Has the Word of God failed? It would appear Paul had painted himself into a corner. Paul has to deal with a problem he sort of created at the end of Romans 8.

How do we go from such high celebration to such sorrow and anguish in two verses? What is going on here?

If the Jews were once God's beloved people and now they are rejected, separated from the love of Christ, then what's to say that can't happen to you and me?

In chapters 9-11 Paul is going to address the problem of the Jews. He starts here in sorrow, but by the end of chapter we hear there is more to the story, not all is lost, and there will be cause again for rejoicing.

### **Romans 9:1-3, Paul's anguish.**

Paul starts off chapter 9 getting very personal and emotional. He is burdened to the point of deep sorrow and grief for the eternal salvation of his own people. It is a great scandal in his mind that the Jews have rejected their own Messiah, Jesus Christ, a tragedy of epic proportions.

Paul knows this scandal personally. He participated in the rejection. He stood holding Stephen's cloak when fellow Jews stoned him to death as the first Christian martyr. Paul tried to silence the truth about Jesus until Jesus knocked him off his horse on the way to Damascus to kill more Christians. From that time on Paul has been trying to convince the Jews to see the truth.

Paul is a true pastor, he loves his people with a great love.

It is not unnatural to love your own tribe or clan. We have a special place in our heart for the Dutch, or for Washington or Lynden, or your school or team. There was a lot of love in the Lynden Lions gym last night, love for your team.

We have a certain patriotism for our country. No it's not perfect, but it is our country.

Paul loved his people. "I am telling the truth, I am not lying. I have great sorrow, unceasing grief, for my kinsman. A great heaviness of heart. I could wish myself accursed."

Paul wishes his name could be erased from the Lamb's book of life in place of the Jews. He would be willing to go to hell for the sake of the salvation of his people.

What a pastor Paul, willing to lay down his life, willing to sacrifice his soul for the sake of the souls of his people. Moses once said the same thing to God after the Israelites great sin.

Do you feel the intensity of this and what the real tragedy is? The Jews are in the greatest trouble you can be in. They have rejected and killed their own Messiah, and as a result they are cut off from Christ and His salvation and they are accursed.

Nothing in the world matters more than being united to Jesus Christ by faith, and nothing in the world is more serious than to be cut off from Christ, to be outside of Christ. You know what it is like to be praying for the salvation of a loved one, a family member or a friend. It's real, it's personal.

For whose salvation do you most earnestly plead with God in prayer? For whose lost soul do you most grieve? Do you love your enemies and desire and pray for their eternal salvation?

**Romans 10:1** Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

**Romans 9:4-5, the Jews advantages.**

The pain Paul feels for his lost brethren is all the more severe when he considers the enormity of the incredible privileges and gifts that God had given

to the Jews all through history. God in His mercy had given the Jews the very path to salvation.

The Jews had advantages over everyone else in the world. If life was a marathon, they had a twenty-mile head start over everyone else on the planet. It was like the difference between being born the son of a king and the son of a slave.

Israel utterly failed to take advantage of their spiritual opportunity.

**9:4-5** They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. 5 To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

They are *Israelites*, members of the chosen people of God. A race set apart from the rest of humanity. They were the people God loved, protected, gave a special land to. And out of this flows seven more privileges.

**Adoption.** God declared, “Out of Egypt have I called my son,” a people belonging to God as sons of God. He rescued and redeemed them through the waters of the Red Sea to be His people and He their God.

**Glory.** They saw and experienced the shekinah glory of God in the fiery cloud in the wilderness, on mountain at Sinai, and the glory that fell and filled the tabernacle and the temple above the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. This was the sign of His presence, that He dwelt among them and met with them. They had tangible, visible encounters with the glory of God.

**Covenants.** The covenants were exclusive to Israel, a permanent bond in blood ratified with a sacrifice. How many times did God reveal His covenant promises and love to Israel when He said, “You will be my people and I will be your God.” He said it to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and David. And through Jeremiah He promised a new covenant.

The *giving of the Law*. The revelation of God Himself and His character. They were privileged to receive the very Words of God. God spoke to them like no others. The goal of the law was salvation.

The *worship*. Intimate, personal fellowship with God. They had the whole system of the tabernacle and temple, the priesthood, the sacrifices, the festivals and feasts, the Holy of Holies. All of this God gave them so that a sinful people could dwell in the presence of a holy God.

The *promises*, and the *patriarchs* through whom they received those promises. God's actions on behalf of Israel. They had Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, they had Moses, David and Solomon, they had Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah and Jeremiah. All the prophetic promises of God delivered through Israel's patriarchs and prophets.

And if all of this was not enough, there was the greatest privilege of all. From the Jews comes the *Christ, the Messiah*, the Son of God who is God over all. Born a Jew, of the tribe of Judah, of the royal line of David, living in Israel. Born under the law to redeem those under the law.

The Jews completely missed that all of their blessings and privileges were partial until they found their fulfillment in Christ. Christ personally fulfills every one of these privileges.

Through faith in Jesus comes the Spirit of adoption. Jesus is the presence of the glory of God on earth. The Word became flesh and we have seen His glory.

Jesus fulfills all the covenants and ushers in the New Covenant. My covenant in my blood poured out for you. Jesus is the goal, purpose and fulfillment of the law. Christ is the end of the law (10:4).

Jesus is the fulfillment of the priesthood and the sacrifices, He is the great High Priest. Christ performed the final and decisive atonement on the cross, our sins are forgiven and God welcomes us into His fellowship.

Jesus is the confirmation of all the promises to the patriarchs. All the promises of God find their yes in Jesus (II Cor 1:20).

All the blessings and benefits and privileges given to the Jews pointed to Jesus and they are nothing if they are not joined to Christ by faith.

This reveals the scandal and tragedy of the religious unbeliever. They have all the privileges and benefits, but they don't take advantage of any of them.

They have all the privileges that point to Christ, but they don't have Christ. There is no greater disaster than to be cut off from the blessings of Jesus Christ.

**John 1:11** He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

**Romans 2:28-29** For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Not all Jews are Jews. Not all Israel is Israel. To be a Jew outwardly is not to be a true Jew.

Faith was the instrument by which they could turn their gifts and privileges to real and eternal profit. Otherwise they become a curse.

### **Implications and application.**

The Jews had huge advantages. Do you know who that is today? It is covenant families and covenant children.

**I Corinthians 10:6** Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

### ***What benefit is there of being a child of the covenant?***

Let's ask the same question of us. What benefit is it to be baptized as a baby or what benefit is it to be a kid raised in a Christian home? Is there a benefit in

being a part of the covenant community? And the answer is yes. What are those benefits?

As a child of the covenant you have the privilege of having the living Word of God, and hearing it sung, read, taught and preached week after week. You hear the faithful promises of God over and over. You hear life-giving, soul-directing truth. The Church we are a part of has been entrusted to preserve this word, live by this word, and teach it. What a great blessing to have oracles of God.

As a child of the covenant, you see the sacraments celebrated. In every baptism, not only is the individual being baptized being offered promises by God, the whole church participates in the promises which are theirs if they are received by faith.

In the Lord's Supper, with its promises and warnings call us to faith and self-examination. It is a visible proclamation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Covenant children get to observe and are taught its meaning.

As a child of the covenant raised in a covenant home you have been taught from birth the promises and commands of God, receiving godly instruction from your parents, pastors, elders, and other godly men and women in the church. You have received godly examples from the great cloud of witnesses surrounding you, whether from the saints who have gone on before or from others in the covenant community.

As a child of the covenant, you have been prayed for by your parents, by your pastors, and even better Jesus Christ praying for His church. You have experienced the love and fellowship of God's People. There is no sweeter fellowship on earth.

As a child of the covenant, you have been disciplined by your parents and the Church, and while painful in the moment it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness for those trained by it.

You have observed forgiveness being given and received. Covenant children see sinners being forgiven and sinners forgiving others, surrounded by a community of grace.

All the blessings and privileges of the Jews have been given to us in complete fulfillment.

The Book of Hebrews shows God's blessings of Christians under the New Covenant surpass His blessings of Israelites under the Old Covenant. These privileges belong to all Gentiles who trust Christ and are grafted into the true Israel by faith.

It is a better covenant, with better promises, based on a better sacrifice, offered by a better high priest, in a better sanctuary, and guaranteeing a better hope, endless glory with God in “a better country—a heavenly one.”

"To whom much is given much is expected." With these blessings come great responsibility. Covenant children have the responsibility to make the best use of these gifts by receiving them all by faith. We must believe in Jesus. Faith is the instrument in which we can turn these gifts to real and eternal profit. Otherwise these same gifts may be a curse, as they were to the Jews. Without faith in Jesus, not all those in the church are the Church.

All our blessings and benefits are wonderful, but they are no substitute for our faith in Jesus. You have all the outward benefits, you have done all the outward things, but are you born again? Do you believe the Gospel and love the Gospel and practice the Gospel? Do you trust Jesus alone for the forgiveness of all your sins? Do you love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? Do you show that love by your love to one another?

**John 1:11** He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

**I John 3:1** How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!