

## EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

### Message #34

### Romans 9:1-5

It has been estimated that four fifths of the Bible pertains to Israel; in fact, almost all of it was written by the Jews.

Let us remember, when Paul wrote this letter to the Romans, he was writing to a people who, for the most part, were non-Jewish. But he never wanted non-Jewish people to forget about Jewish people. Paul had a deep burden for Israel and any person who truly understands God's Word will have the same burden.

**THE GOSPEL OF GOD IN THE GRACE AGE DOES NOT ELIMINATE GOD'S PROGRAM WITH ISRAEL; IN FACT, A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL OF GOD WILL DEVELOP A DEEP BURDEN FOR ISRAEL.**

Some people do not see the value of history in this world, but there is tremendous inspired value of studying history in God's Word. One area of history that God demands we understand is His program as it relates to Israel.

There are at least four reasons why God gave chapters 9-11 in Romans:

- (Reason #1) - To give N.T. non-Jewish believers a deep burden for Israel.
- (Reason #2) - To show that God is sovereignly working out His program with all people and He will sovereignly finish His program with Israel.
- (Reason #3) - To educate believers as to their relationship with Israel.
- (Reason #4) - To demonstrate the infinite wisdom of God and the sovereignty of God.

Now in this passage there are two specific stated reasons why we should never forget Israel:

**REASON #1** – Because of an apostolic example. **9:1-3**

In **verse 1** he emphatically makes the point that what he is about to say is true - "I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying." This does not mean that he has been previously not telling the truth; this is an idiomatic literary device which emphasizes the intense reality of something.

Now Paul was deeply concerned that people realize that what he was about to say was absolutely true, this was not emotional hype and he offers three witnesses to what he is about to say concerning Israel: 1) Jesus Christ; 2) His conscience; 3) The Holy Spirit.

Paul had a very real passion and burden for Israel. In fact, in **verse 3** he explains how burdened he is. Actually, in this verse he wishes for something that is both grammatically and theologically impossible.

Grammatically what he wishes for is impossible because of the force of the Greek text. This is an imperfect indicative, which places the wish in past time while always remaining in unfinished reality. We could understand it, "I was continually wishing" even though this isn't reality.

Theologically his wish is impossible. He was actually wishing that he could be a substitute for Israel - have himself condemned and have Israel saved. The preposition “for” (for my brethren) is the preposition hyper. It is the same one used in Romans 5:8, “Christ died for us.” What that means is He was our substitute, He took God’s wrath.

Paul is saying here, I am so burdened for Israel, I would be willing to be condemned in order that she could be saved.

## **REASON #2 – Because of Israel’s privileges. 9:4-5**

Paul understood the blessings and privileges that belonged to the nation Israel. No other group of people in all of the world had seen God do so many wonderful things like Israel.

### **Privilege #1 - Israel had the adoption as sons. 9:4a**

Adoption, in the Roman world, was a legal act which gave the adoptee full rights as a legal son and canceled his previous debt.

Israel, as a nation, was entitled to all of the riches and wealth of a legal son of God. In fact, God called her in Exodus 4:22, “His firstborn.”

### **Privilege #2 - Israel had the glory. 9:4b**

Israel literally had the visible glory of God. Paul is referring to the cloud which gave Israel direction and protection.

### **Privilege #3 - Israel had the covenants. 9:4c**

The word “covenant” is a Greek word which means to make a legal pact between two parties. God has made a special legal pact with Israel. It primarily centers on three promises:

1. Land ; 2. King ; 3. Kingdom

Now you will notice that the noun “covenants” is plural, which causes us to see that Paul believed there was more than just one covenant connected specifically to Israel. In other words, true Biblical covenant theology is related to Israel, not the church.

There are five main covenants that God has made with Israel, four of which are unconditional and use the formula “I WILL” and one of which is conditional and uses the formula “IF YOU WILL.”

The covenants are:

- 1) Abrahamic covenant - Genesis 12:1-3 - deals with specific Jewish people and specific land
- 2) The Palestinian covenant - Deuteronomy 30:1-10 - deals with Jewish people and all of their land matters
- 3) The Davidic covenant - II Samuel 7:10-16 - deals with Jewish Kingdom land and their King
- 4) The New covenant - Jeremiah 31:31-40 - deals with Jewish people in a blessed land forever

5) The one “IF YOU WILL” covenant is the Mosaic covenant - Deuteronomy 28:1-68, which has to do with Israel living in the land prior to her permanent residency.

The covenants, for the most part, clearly show us that God’s promises to Israel are unconditional, which means God has promised to give Israel these blessings in spite of her unfaithfulness.

**Privilege #4** - Israel had the Law. **9:4d**

Israel was a privileged nation in that she was given the O.T. Law with all of its commandments, ordinances and laws. His law in writing revealed His moral and ethical character and it should have caused Israel to realize she could not possibly keep it.

**Privilege #5** - Israel had the services. **9:4e**

The services refer to the O.T. temple activities. These activities include three major elements:

1. The tabernacle; 2. The priesthood; 3. The offerings.

There has never been, nor will there ever be, such a people with such a remarkable, God -ordained liturgy.

**Privilege #6** - She had the promises. **9:4f**

The promises included direct statements concerning her coming Messiah:

1. Moses said He would bruise the head of Satan (Genesis 3:15).
2. David said He would have His hands and feet pierced (Psalm 22:16).
3. Micah said He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
4. Isaiah said we would be healed with His stripes (Isaiah 53:5).

**Privilege #7** - Israel had the fathers. **9:5a**

When we read the Bible and see the people who were Jewish, it is like reading a “Who’s Who Journal.” No other group of people has ever had important names like Israel - Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon.

**Privilege #8** - Israel had the Christ. **9:5b**

Here is the ultimate privilege - Israel had the Anointed One, the Christos, the Messiah.

If we take the Greek text and grammar just as it is written, this subordinate clause modifies Jesus Christ, “who is over all, God blessed forever.”

Paul is saying that Israel had the ultimate blessing in that she had God in the flesh come to her. Think of it, the blessed God came to Israel and she rejected Him. She would not respond.

Could it be that there are those here who are in the same condition as Israel? You own a Bible, you know the worship hymns, you understand the liturgy, you have had exposure to great teaching and books, but you refuse to respond? Come to Christ today. Do not reject Him anymore.