

## **Romans Session 131**

### **The Tragic Unbelief of Israel 2**

**Romans 9:1-5 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> *I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,*

<sup>2</sup> *that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.*

<sup>3</sup> *For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,*

<sup>4</sup> *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,*

<sup>5</sup> *whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.*

We need to remind ourselves that the individual Jew has never been saved on any other basis than personal faith in God, no matter how pure and well documented his physical descent from Abraham:

**Romans 3:28-30 (NASB)**

<sup>28</sup> *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.*

<sup>29</sup> *Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,*

<sup>30</sup> *since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.*

God created Jews and Gentiles alike, and He saves them alike, in faith, apart from works and rituals.

The Jews were not saved because the barriers of ceremonies, traditions, and legalism in general blocked their way.

The Apostle later asks rhetorically,

**Romans 11:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> *I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.*

In other words, Israel's failure to come to Jesus Christ in faith, tragic as it has been, is not permanent or irreversible.

In fact, because Israel's failure opened the door of the gospel to the Gentiles, Jealousy of the Gentiles eventually will have a part in leading Israel to turn to the Savior God through faith in Christ, to receive at last the Messiah they rejected at His first coming.

Not only that, but Paul says;

**Romans 11:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> *Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!*

In other words, if Israel's unbelief brought so many Gentiles to the Lord, how many more will be brought to Him when Israel finally believes.

John reveals that the number will be incalculable.

**Revelation 7:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes*

*and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;*

This question could be state another way:

“If Abraham is the father of those who are truly saved by faith, how can his descendants largely reject God’s way of salvation as set forth in the gospel of Jesus Christ?”

Paul had answered that question in chapter 4, saying,

***Romans 4:1-5 (NASB)***

<sup>1</sup> *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?*

<sup>2</sup> *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.*

<sup>3</sup> *For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."*

<sup>4</sup> *Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.*

<sup>5</sup> *But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,*

***Romans 4:11 (NASB)***

<sup>11</sup> *and he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,*

What he is saying here is that a large number of Jews reject the gospel of Christ because they trust in the outward rite of circumcision and, as already mentioned, in their physical descent from Abraham, rather than in the unqualified faith in God that brought salvation to Abraham and made him “*the father of all who believe without being circumcised,*” Gentile as well as Jew.

Paul knew that a third and closely related question would also arise in the minds of Jews:

“*Granted that individual Jews must be saved by personal faith, what about the nation of Israel? Has God discarded His ancient chosen nation?*”

Paul’s response to that question is given in Chapter 9;

***Romans 9:4-5 (NASB)***

<sup>4</sup> *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,*

<sup>5</sup> *whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever.*

*Amen.*

It has always been a unique blessing and privilege to be a Jew, and the nation of Israel has always held, favored status before God among the nations of the world.

But that favored position has not prevented God from disciplining that nation or from temporarily putting it aside,

***Romans 11:25c (NASB)***

<sup>25</sup> *until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;*

Ok once that has occurred, the Lord ;

***Zechariah 12:10 (NASB)***

<sup>10</sup> ***"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.***

***Daniel 7:27 (NASB)***

<sup>27</sup> ***'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'***

So, in this sections Paul shows that the nation of Israel was temporarily set aside by God because of her continued impenitence and unbelief, most especially for her rejections of the Messiah.

In His gracious sovereignty, however, and with divine certainty, God will preserve for Himself a remnant of Israel. That nation, in the form of an ordained remnant of its people, will be brought by faith not only into the purified and restored kingdom of "David's greater Son", but into the eternal kingdom of God.

Paul also reminds his readers that, just as Isaiah prophesied,

***Isaiah 10:22 (NASB)***

<sup>22</sup> ***For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, Only a remnant within them will return; A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.***

***Romans 9:27 (NASB)***

<sup>27</sup> ***Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;***

Through His prophets God had made clear that only a remnant of the nation would ultimately come to Him in genuine faith.

Through Isaiah He had promised;

***Isaiah 11:11-12 (NASB)***

<sup>11</sup> ***Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea.***

<sup>12</sup> ***And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.***

***Isaiah 11:16 (NASB)***

<sup>16</sup> ***And there will be a highway from Assyria For the remnant of His people who will be left, Just as there was for Israel In the day that they came up out of the land of Egypt.***

Through Jeremiah He promised:

***Jeremiah 23:3 (NASB)***

<sup>3</sup> ***"Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply.***

And then;

**Micah 2:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> *"I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold; Like a flock in the midst of its pasture They will be noisy with men.*

And,

**Micah 2:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> *"I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold; Like a flock in the midst of its pasture They will be noisy with men.*

And so, because the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, Israel has the divine guarantee that this remnant, representing the nation, will be saved. God's plan from eternity past has always been that Israel's rejections of Him would be both partial and temporary.

Now in his answers to fellow Jews, Paul also answered a question he knew would arise in the minds of many Gentile believers.

*"If God did not keep His promises to His chosen people Israel," they wondered, "how can we expect Him to keep His promises to us as Gentle believers?"*

The problem, of course, is in the question.

God did not fail in His promises to Israel and to faithful believing Jews, to those who were spiritual, not simply physical, descendants of Abraham.

Because he was such a model of faithfulness, Abraham not only was the father of the faithful who lived after him but, in a prevent sense, the father even of the faithful who lived before him.

Abraham's faith reached forward, as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself tells us'

**John 8:56 (NASB)**

<sup>56</sup> *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."*

And going forward we shall learn that these questions and many more are answered with profound wisdom and holy reason.

So overwhelmed is he with what the Lord has given him to write, Paul ends this three-chapter sections on Israel (Rom 9-11) with a majestic, triumphant doxology of praise and thanksgiving to God;

**Romans 11:33-36 (NASB)**

<sup>33</sup> *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!*

<sup>34</sup> *For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?*

<sup>35</sup> *Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN?*

<sup>36</sup> *For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.*

In the first of these three chapters, Paul focuses first on the tragedy of Israel's unbelief (Rom 9:1-5)

He then declares that this unbelief is part of God's eternal plan of redemption (vv 6-13) and demonstrates that this divine plan of Israel's unbelief is not capricious or unfair but is perfectly just (vv 14-29)

In expressing his deep sorrow over Israel's spiritual condition, the apostle first declares his love for her people as fellow Jews.

And so next time we will look at Paul's Personal Connections with Unbelieving Israel