



**The Problem with Nepotism Today
Having the Right Pedigree Does Not Save You!
Romans 9:1-18**

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Usually, when we talk about nepotism, we are talking about advantages that some one enjoys simply because of who they were born too. We have seen this over the centuries expressed in royal dynasties globally. But we have also seen it in the day to day where the children of certain political figures believe they have an advantage over “normal” folks just because of who their parents are.

This is incredibly toxic in the workplace as well as in the church. When a church hires one of the pastor’s kids, are they called or not? I have seen cases where, yes, they are called. But I have also seen cases



where fully 28% or more of the staff is family and they are paid well, just for who their daddy is. And no one is called.

That attitude, that birth trumps calling and worse, because of that, it doesn't matter how I live since I am a child of the boss; well, that became a problem for the nation of Israel.

There is this idea that because I was born into the tribe, how I live is immaterial and whether I have any true faith in what I am outwardly doing becomes a real issue. Numerous prophets were sent to Judah and Israel and both nations went into exile.

Paul has had to deal with this attitude over and over again. Most recently, for him as he writes Romans, in Galatia as well as in the Jerusalem church. Now, it is part of a question he must answer. What about the Jew?

Grace, it is all about God's grace and what He has done for us that drives us to believe. Most of the Jews had moved away from that idea. The Holy Spirit introduces us to Jesus, and we learn that we have a problem that we inherited from our parents, sin. But Jesus took care of that problem on the cross, all we must do is believe. And for those of us who know Him, we did.

There is another group, even more privileged than those of us who came from a gentile background, in that they knew about the grace of God far longer than the rest of us. It was, in fact, their job to live before Him in obedience and as a result, draw the nations to the Lord.

They failed at that job.

God fully intended for His people, the Jews to be a Kingdom of Priests pointing the nations to YAHWEH and He told them that, prior to a problem they had with a golden calf.

Exodus 19:5-6

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.'" (ESV)

Due to the sin of the nation, Aaron and his sons became priests and the Levites were appointed to oversee Temple operations. The rest of the nation was no longer in the equation.

Being visited by prophets did not change them. Even being kicked out of the land into exile was not a sufficient enough of a jolt to convince the majority that thought, that they had an in, simply because of who their ancestors were. This attitude had become so ingrained and part of the culture of this people that they were, still in the process of doing outreach to the nations, reaching a few but Jesus tells us what the results were. Jesus pointed the following out to the pharisees.

Matthew 23:15

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For **you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.**" (ESV)

That indeed would be a problem. The attitude of the Sanhedrin towards those who the nation were tasked to reach is also reflected in not just the blatant racially oriented bigotry and discrimination that they practiced, but also in signage around the Temple.



The outer court of the temple was called the Court of the Gentiles. At the gate from that one to the inner courts was a low barrier and a sign warning that any Gentile who entered had himself to blame when he was instantly killed. The Romans permitted this death sentence just as they upheld the holiness of other religions' sanctuaries. (The Navigators 2012, 183)

Craig Evans tells us of the lengths their bigotry went. "We actually have the entire inscription, which says that no Gentile (or no person of foreign birth) may go any closer, move past this barrier; if he does, then he's responsible for his own death, his own thanatos, which will immediately follow. So they were pretty serious about that, and it reflects the political and religious reality of the time." (Evans 2017)

Hosea, a prophet of God, was sent to the nation prior to the exile to point out to them, by example, that just being born a Jew, does not make you a Jew inside.

Hosea 1:2

"When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD."" (ESV)

Hosea reflected to the nation, by example, what the nation was doing prior to going into exile. The nation did not take their relationship seriously so what was promised in terms of curses they would see, took place. It did not get any better after they returned.

Malachi 4:1–3

"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts." (ESV)

We begin to see in the prophets, a dividing that would take place. Those who truly fear the Lord, versus those who do not and are classified as evildoers.

Are they still Jews? Yes, but in name only as there is no true faith, belief or obedience behind it. When you sacrifice lame animals intentionally (Malachi 1:8), you do indeed have a problem.

We saw how Jesus had to deal with it. In our study of the book of Acts, we also saw the continuous unrelenting pressure, persecution and murder imposed by the Jewish leadership not only on the gentiles, but also on those who were Jews but had turned towards Jesus Christ.

They hired Paul as their inquisitor and hunter/killer of Jewish Christians. And he did that until being confronted by Jesus Christ personally on the road to Damascus.

Acts 9:3–6

"Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."" (ESV)

And with that, Saul became Paul and a follower and servant of Jesus Christ. Yet he never forget where he came from, because the Jewish leadership would not let him forget as they now wanted him dead as well. This was still seriously on his mind as he is writing to Rome just prior to returning to Jerusalem and being subjected to serious persecution at the hands of the Sanhedrin, enabled by the Roman government.



The result of this is what we now begin to see here in Romans 9, and it will continue to be a topic for Paul all the way to Romans 11. What we will learn, above everything else, is that God still has a plan for the nation of Israel. They really still are His people. If you have ever heard or been taught that the church has replaced Israel, that is not true. That is not what the Bible teaches and as such, it is heresy as it misrepresents the heart of God towards His people.

What is this so-called replacement theology all about? Barry Leventhal tells us it is “sometimes called Supersessionism, it is the doctrinal position that teaches that when Israel rejected her own Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, God replaced the Jewish people with the church. Although known also as the theology of displacement, some, desiring to put a more positive connotation on this position, prefer calling it an extension or continuation of the Old Testament people of God into the New Testament church. Be that as it may, replacement theology takes all of God’s ancient promises to Israel, originally pointing forward to a literal messianic kingdom on the earth (i.e., the millennial reign of Christ), and applies them spiritually or allegorically to the church, the so-called “New Israel” (a term never used in the Bible). So, according to replacement theologians, Israel—which, in its primary biblical sense refers to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as an ethnic, national, and political entity—has no theological future in the plan of God.” (Leventhal 2008, 283)

This teaching of hate or contempt began with Tertullian in the late second century and includes Martin Luther who wrote, “The Jews and their Lies” in 1543. It is all antisemitism which was approved by Constantine and continues to today. It was indeed a contributing factor if not a part of the cause for the holocaust.

William Shirer lays the holocaust right at the feet of the German church and its antisemitism. He says “It is difficult to understand the behavior of most German Protestants in the first Nazi years unless one is aware of two things: their history and the influence of Martin Luther. The great founder of Protestantism was both a passionate anti-Semite and a ferocious believer in absolute obedience to political authority. He wanted Germany rid of the Jews and when they were sent away he advised that they be deprived of “all their cash and jewels and silver and gold” and, furthermore, “that their synagogues or schools be set on fire, that their houses be broken up and destroyed ... and they be put under a roof or stable, like the gypsies ... in misery and captivity as they incessantly lament and complain to God about us”—advice that was literally followed four centuries later by Hitler, Goering and Himmler.” (Shirer 1961, 235) Or so the people were told.

The thing I find concerning today, it is the same “progressive Christian” that is now pushing the same direction that took Germany into the abyss. Yes, there are indeed way too many common factors seen in the German churches of the 1930’s and the Laodicean or progressive and dead churches we see today.

There is no such thing as becoming a “spiritual Jew” upon salvation. That is nowhere in the Bible. Dr. Charles Ryrie tells us that there are three factors that come into play, and none of this makes a Gentile Jewish, or a Jew into a Gentile. But we are indeed all one in Christ.

“Genuine spirituality involves three factors. The first we have already mentioned—regeneration. No one can be spiritual in the biblical sense without having first experienced the new life that is freely given to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Spirituality without regeneration is reformation.

Second, the Holy Spirit is preeminently involved in producing spirituality...The ministries of the Spirit involve teaching (John 16:12–15), guiding (Rom. 8:14), assuring (Rom. 8:16), praying (Rom. 8:26), the exercise of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:7), and warring against the flesh (Gal. 5:17). All of these depend for their full manifestation on the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). To be filled with the Spirit means to be controlled by the spirit.



The third factor involved in spirituality is time. If the spiritual person judges or examines or discerns all things (1 Cor. 2:15), this must involve time in order to gain knowledge and to acquire experience for discerning all things...Here is a proposed definition of spirituality which attempts to be concise and at the same time to keep these above-discussed factors in mind. Spirituality is a grownup yet growing relation to the Holy Spirit.” (Ryrie 1994, 12-13)

A saved Jew under the control of the Spirit is a spiritual Jew just as a saved Gentile under the control of the Spirit is a spiritual Gentile.

And into this we now have Paul taking the time to let us know, thanks to the Holy Spirit and His leading, how bogus all this so-called theology really is. Replacement Theology is a heresy and must be rejected by all who know Jesus Christ.

What we believe here at Calvary Chapel is that after the Pretribulation Rapture of the Church, God will once again turn His attention to the nation of Israel, just as Daniel 9:27 prophesied. Based on the scriptures, we see that there will be a seven-year Tribulation period (Revelation 6-19) that takes place to judge the world for its rejection of Jesus Christ and to prepare Israel to receive her King, the Messiah.

At the end of the Tribulation, Jesus Christ will return with His church with Him as well as all of the Heavenly Host and the surviving remnant of Israel, all of them, will be saved. Jesus Christ will establish the seat of His global Kingdom in Jerusalem and numerous Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled.

Paul, after conveying to us the importance of grace and the need we all have for Christ, no matter what racial group we have been born into, now focuses on his own heritage. A heritage he has already alluded to prior to this point. And, as he has in the past, he anticipates and is answering another question that detractors would throw at him, especially since he has already been so negative about aspects of Judaism.

Paul, you have just taught then when God saves, He saves completely and He does indeed bring us all the way home to Himself. You made a few jabs at the Jewish people, so now the real question Paul. What about the Jewish people. Timothy Keller points out “God called them and came to them but most Jews have rejected Christ at the present time. So maybe God’s calling and purpose can be rejected! If God promised that Israel would be his people, yet the majority did not believe in Christ, does that mean God’s promise, power, or mercy is failing?” (Keller 2015, 57) And yes, it was and still is an important question for today.

Romans 9:1–5

“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. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my countrymen, my kinsmen according to the flesh, 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.” (NASB 2020)

Sorry, I know there are some who think this may be Paul adding or piling on in his earlier discussion on predestination. Nope. Not the case.

This begins, as David Stern points out, “the New Testament’s most important and complete discussion of the Jewish people. In them God promises that “all Israel will be saved” (11:26) and commands that Gentile Christians show the Jews God’s mercy (11:31). In the face of what these chapters teach, every form of Christian antisemitism stands condemned; and every claim, whether by Jews or Christians, that the Gospel is not for Jews must collapse.” (Stern 1996, Ro 9:1)



Paul will talk of himself in the next three chapters. He is Jewish, today he would be called a completed Jew or a Messianic Jew. Dr. Fruchtenbaum, himself a Messianic Jew, defines this for us. "If a Jew is a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which we believe to be the proper definition, then a Messianic Jew is a Jew who believes that Yeshua/Jesus is his or her Messiah. By faith Messianic Jews align themselves with other believers in Yeshua/Jesus whether Jews or Gentiles, but nationally they identify themselves with the Jewish people. A Messianic Jew therefore acknowledges that he is both a Jew and a believer." (Fruchtnbaum 2011, 15)

Because Paul was teaching and preaching predominately in Gentile communities, he was considered an enemy by the Jewish leadership. He made that clear to the church in Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 2:14–16

"For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last!" (ESV)

They hated him and in fact, shortly after Paul completes this letter and returns to Jerusalem, will try to assassinate him. But he loved them.

How much? He, just as Moses was in Exodus 32:32, was willing to be considered accursed if it would mean the Jews would be saved. There is someone who already did that, His name is Jesus Christ. When Moses said it, he was operating as a type or picture of Jesus.

Exodus 32:31–32

"So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written."" (ESV)

God reminded Moses that each person is responsible for their own sin. Jesus died on the cross for us all to take care of that problem but each of us must accept His free gift of salvation for ourselves, we can't inherit it either. Each generation must confront their own sin and be held accountable for it or accept the salvation freely given in Christ.

Paul though remembers what he was like before Jesus and what he is saying in verse 3 is coming from that background. Dr. Kurtaneck helps us understand it.

In a very true sense the closing thoughts of Paul in chapter eight influenced his introduction in chapter nine, for the conclusion in chapter eight declares the wonderful truth that there is no separation from Christ for the believer. Evidently this fact shaped the leading thought in the opening of chapter nine because Paul was confronted immediately by the heartbreaking realization that his people were not able to share in his exultation and confidence since they were separated from Christ.

This separation was of their own choosing evolving from their rejection of Christ, which appears to be expressed in the wish of Paul...He reflects the true spiritual condition of his kinsmen at the time of writing by referring to his own former state of unbelief. What he himself wished in the past, while hurling blasphemies upon Christ and His followers as a bigoted Pharisee and devotee of the Mosaic Law, is in reality the present status of Israel. The sudden confrontation by this fact undoubtedly accentuated the already existing sorrow in Paul's heart for his Jewish brethren. (Kurtaneck 1964, 20)



Paul knew that prior to coming to Jesus, that was him, cursed. Here he is recalling and making reference to it, “recalling it to explain the presence of constant sorrow in his heart for Israel, which was brought forcefully to the forefront of his consciousness by the glorious truth that there is no separation from Christ for the redeemed.” (Kurtaneck 1964, 21)

Paul though, as part of his answer, presents what it is the majority of the nation has decided to squander in favor of thinking they are in solely because of who they are related to. This is what they have and have basically, rejected.

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.” (NASB 2020)

What his own people have turned away from is profound in light of the special relationship they have with God. Paul lists out six specific blessings the nation has enjoyed. The first blessing goes all the way back in the history of the nation to Abram. They have been adopted by God. The word used for adopted here is υιοθεσία (huiothesia).

We see this reflected in what God told Moses as he was returning to Egypt at God’s direction.

Exodus 4:22–23

“You must say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the LORD has said, “Israel is my son, my firstborn, and I said to you, ‘Let my son go that he may serve me,’ but since you have refused to let him go, I will surely kill your son, your firstborn!” ’ ” (NET 2nd ed.)

Zane Hodges points out that “the national privilege of Israel is thus analogous to the individual privilege of Christian believers (see 8:15: Pneuma huiothesias, “a spirit [or, Spirit] of adoption as sons”).” (Hodges 2013, 258)

The next blessing that Paul references is δόξα (doxa). The glory. As the nation was leaving Egypt, God not only showed up in a big way on behalf of His people, but they were eyewitnesses to His glory.

Exodus 13:20–22

“They journeyed from Sukkoth and camped in Etham, on the edge of the desert. Now the LORD was going before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel day or night. He did not remove the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people.” (NET 2nd ed.)

The glory of God remained with His people until He had to leave due to the unending sin of the people. Ezekiel witnessed that event.

As the presence of the Lord departs the Holy of Holies, you get a sense of His need to depart, yet His longing for His people who had fallen so far.

Ezekiel 10:18–19

“Then the glory of the LORD moved out from the entrance of the Temple and hovered above the cherubim. And as I watched, the cherubim flew with their wheels to the east gate of the LORD’s Temple. And the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them.” (NLT)



The Shekinah Glory of God left via the eastern gate also known as the Beautiful Gate and was not in the second Temple. But the second Temple had God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ come in via the same gate facing the east, called then the Shushan Gate.

This gate is in a direct line with the Mount of Olives and it is the gate that, when He returns in His Second Coming, that Jesus Christ will enter. "The Arabs sealed this gate when they learned that the Messiah would return through the Eastern Gate. They also put a cemetery in front of it to prevent the Messiah from entering it, lest he be defiled by the dead." (Mattoon 2008, 50)

But the glory of the Lord will indeed return, and through this gate which will remain closed until then.

Ezekiel 44:1–5

"Then the man brought me back to the east gateway in the outer wall of the Temple area, but it was closed. And the LORD said to me, **"This gate must remain closed; it will never again be opened. No one will ever open it and pass through, for the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered here.**

Therefore, it must always remain shut. Only the prince himself may sit inside this gateway to feast in the LORD's presence. But he may come and go only through the entry room of the gateway." Then the man brought me through the north gateway to the front of the Temple. I looked and saw that the glory of the LORD filled the Temple of the LORD, and I fell face down on the ground. And the LORD said to me, **"Son of man, take careful notice. Use your eyes and ears, and listen to everything I tell you about the regulations concerning the LORD's Temple. Take careful note of the procedures for using the Temple's entrances and exits."** (NLT)

Rod Mattoon does report there have been a couple of attempts to open the gate. "In the twentieth century, the Muslims tried to open this gate twice after twelve centuries of being sealed, but were miraculously foiled by God's intervention both times. The first time was in 1917, and the second time was in 1967. Muslim leaders in control of Jerusalem tried to break the prophecy and open the gate. Each time they attempted to do this, the hand of God intervened on the exact day the workmen were preparing to demolish the ancient stone in the gate. In 1917, Muslim control of Jerusalem passed into the hands of the British and in 1967, it passed into the hands of the Israeli soldiers during the Six Day War. (Mattoon 2008, 51)

This brings us to the third blessing, the covenants διαθήκαι (diathekai) and yes, it is in the plural in the Greek here.

Why plural? Isn't there just the covenant with Israel made at Mount Sinai it?

Deuteronomy 5:3

"Not with our fathers did the LORD make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today." (ESV)

What other covenants are we talking about here? I believe we are also including the Noahic as well as the Davidic.

The fourth blessing is the giving of the law. The nation of Israel was given the law. That shows the uniqueness of their relationship. The problem though is they forgot who gave the Law and held the Law in that place instead.

The fifth blessing is the service, λατρεία (latreia) and with the term following the giving of the law, this points to the Tabernacle and Temple worship as outlined in the law. The word means "service/worship (of God), regulations for worship." (Arndt, et al. 2000, 587)



The final blessing that Paul refers to here is all of the promises ἐπαγγελίαι (epangeliai) made by the Lord to His people. This is to include the promise of the Messiah as well as the land and the eternal kingdom. Paul may also be talking about the gospel as well since Jesus Christ came from and was presented to and rejected by His own people, the Jews.

All six of these blessings were given to the nation, and they have essentially squandered all of them.

Then Paul moves to some fact statements which could also on their own, be considered blessings. You see, they have a distinct historical legacy of the patriarchs. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

Considering just that alone should be sufficient to know that the entirety of the nation exists only because God intervened in the life of Abraham and Sarah allowing her to have a boy at an advanced age. Paul and all who are Jews are there solely because of a miracle of God.

The primary fact statement and blessing to all of mankind is what Paul says next. Messiah came from the nation of Israel by the flesh. God incarnated as a man in the person of Jesus Christ and did so in a direct descendant of Abraham, who was of the tribe of Judah and a descendant of David himself.

Not only was the nation produced in a miracle, but a miracle in the nation on one of the members of the nation has produced the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. And their response to all of this? MEH. Total and complete indifference.

Paul has clearly shown that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is from Israel in terms of his descent as well as his ethnicity. Nad the Jewish nation predominately does not care. Who is this Christ?

First, He is over all. Paul tells us what that means in Colossians.

Colossians 1:15–20

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.” (NKJV)

Jesus Christ is over all because He is God. I think the NIV got this translated right.

Romans 9:5

“Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.” (NIV)

Romans 9:6–7

“But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: “THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE NAMED.”” (NASB 2020)

As it stands at present, even though the majority of the Jewish nation has rejected their own Messiah, and they have indeed failed due to unbelief, God’s word has not failed.



Not everyone who says Abraham is our father can claim to be Jewish. They would be the first to tell you that. If that was the case, then all the descendants of Ishmael would be Jewish today. They are not.

Dr. Gaebelein puts it this way, “if God had called the Gentiles and they received now the blessing of righteousness, it does not mean that the Word of God has come to naught. God’s purpose concerning Israel cannot fail. But they prided themselves that they were of the seed of Abraham and therefore exclusively entitled to the promises. “We have Abraham to our father” (Luke 3:8), was their boast, and the Lord had told them “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham” (John 8:39). They forgot in their blind antagonism to the Gospel that the Scriptures showed that blessing had its source with the choice of God, that blessing is the result of elective mercy and the title to it must be of faith. (Gaebelein 2009, 58)

Abraham and Sarah tried to take the short cut and it did not work. The child of promise was to be through Sarah and only through Sarah.

Paul is making a distinction here, there are those who are physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Just because that is your heritage does not guarantee you salvation.

There have always been those who are not only Jewish but also believe. There has always been a remnant. David reflected the truth connected with that in Psalm 51 which he wrote after repenting of his sin with Bathsheba. In this psalm, he talks about what God prefers, the ritual of the Temple, or the heart attitude.

Psalm 51:10–17

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (ESV)

Earlier here in Romans, Paul was stressing the same point.

Romans 2:28–29

“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But **he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter**; and his praise is not from people, but from God.” (NASB 2020)

That is the exact difference between the remnant and the rest of the nation. God did not fail, God’s word did not fail, God’s people are the ones who failed. Their continuous problem with unbelief is why this discussion here in Romans 9 is now taking place. Here is his argument.

Romans 9:8–18

“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.” 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.**” 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.” So then, it does not depend on the person who wants it nor the one who runs, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “FOR THIS VERY REASON I RAISED YOU UP, IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE EARTH.” So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.” (NASB 2020)

I really do not want to rehash our conversation we had the omniscience of God and that because He does indeed know everything, there are things He already knows about the character of those who are yet to be born or even to act.

He knew the lifestyle choices that Esau would make and He also knew that Jacob was indeed a serious scam artist in need of salvation.

He knew whose heart would be soft and whose heart would not be soft. Our problem is our finite little brains trying to put all of this together. The bottom line is this, God is sovereign.

You and I cannot command God. There are indeed those today to teach and act as if they can. They are lying to you.

The picture we are being drawn here by Paul is that there are those who are Jewish, but do not believe and never will. There are also those who are Jewish who believe. Conversely, there are those who are not Jewish and they believe.

God is sovereign. Zane Hodges relates that “No man can lay a legitimate claim on God for His mercy. It is man’s need, inadequacy, or failure that calls forth mercy in the first place. To make it a human entitlement is to destroy its gracious character and turn it into a divine obligation. Thus if God acts in mercy/grace toward Isaac or towards Jacob, there is no unrighteousness in doing so. Neither Ishmael nor Esau was deprived of anything he had a right to claim.” (Hodges 2013, 270-271)

The key we are seeing here is the same we have seen in the past, choice and decision. We have free will, no matter how much you want to twist around some of what we are studying here in Romans, we still have free will and can yes to the Lord or no. Not only for salvation but even how we choose to live everyday. As followers of Jesus, are we leaving it in His hands or are we calling the shots.

That is getting down to the basics of what we are reading here.

What about you, have you made a decision that changes everything and decided to follow Jesus? If the Holy Spirit is talking to you about that, don’t say no, say yes and follow Him.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives



generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”
(NLT)

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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