

Parson to Person

ROMANS 9 PART 1

"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen" (Romans 9:1–5 NKJV).

Having covered the depravity of man, justification by faith alone, and the sanctification of the believer, Paul makes a definitive case for Israel.

It is certain that God has both promised and brought forward the salvation of the Gentiles—in and of the Church Age. This mystery (those things earlier hidden from full understanding) develops a natural question regarding Israel. The first question is, "Has God replaced Israel with or by the Church?" Secondly, a question regarding the saved Jews from the Old Covenant begs for an answer to the question, "Are the Jews who trusted the Lord throughout the Old Covenant dispensation a part of the Church?" These two questions need answered—and Paul knew it. This is the address of the next three chapters of Romans: chapters 9–11.

Inasmuch as the Jews who were faithful to the Lord throughout the Old Covenant were saved by faith—and are to be included with all the redeemed from all the ages—they are not part of the Church. This fact (being disputed by those who embrace Covenant Theology) needs to be brought into focus. Moreover, those who have a muddy or unclear view of the distinction between Israel and the Church seem to also see a distinction between the Church and the Bride. The Church and the Bride of Christ are one and the same. This must be addressed.

One of the distinctives of Dispensational Theology is that God has a past, present, and *indeed* future plan for Israel. This fact has deep and lasting implications for believers from all dispensations. For, *"Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The LORD of hosts is His name): 'If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever'"* (Jeremiah 31:35–36 NKJV). God has not replaced Israel; Israel is not the Church; and the Church is not Israel.

All men from all dispensations were/are saved by grace through faith. However, those redeemed from the Church Age are not to be understood as Jews, nor should Gentiles saved from the Church Age to be thought of as "the Israel of God" (see Galatians 6:16). National Israel is and has always been made up of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The "Israel of God" are genetic descendants of Israel and have trusted the Lord.

All the redeemed who have trusted Jesus for salvation from the Day of Pentecost and up until the Rapture are the unique entity called the Church. The Church is made up of both Jews and Gentiles. The Church is made up of the persons, who during the present age, are redeemed to be the Bride of Christ.

Paul makes a point of showing that in the sovereign elective purposes of God, He chose to allow some Jews to be part of the Church, but nonetheless likewise purposes to redeem future Israel to Himself and thus show Himself to Israel as their God and redeemer. He said, *"For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will deliver you from all your uncleanness"* (Ezekiel 36:24–29a NKJV). Moreover, He said, *"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went'"* (Ezekiel 36:22b NKJV).

We can see why Paul makes a point of showing that God has not replaced Israel, that the Church is a unique entity, that the Church is the Bride of Christ, that God has a future purpose and plan for the full restoration of Israel, and that all He has done, is doing, and is yet to do is designed for His glory.

A careful study of the next few chapters will be a delight to all.

I love you all,

Pastor Paul