

Romans 9

¹ In the presence of Christ, I speak with utter truthfulness--I do not lie--and my conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm that what I am saying is true. ²My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief ³for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed--cut off from Christ!--if that would save them. ⁴They are **the people of Israel, chosen to be God's special children**. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave his law to them. They have the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his wonderful promises.

⁵Their ancestors were great people of God, and Christ himself was a Jew as far as his human nature is concerned. And he is God, who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. ⁶Well then, has God failed to fulfill his promise to the Jews? No, for not everyone born into a Jewish family is truly a Jew! ⁷Just the fact that they are descendants of Abraham doesn't make them truly Abraham's children. For the Scriptures say, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted," though Abraham had other children, too.

⁸This means that Abraham's physical descendants are not necessarily children of God. It is the children of the promise who are considered to be Abraham's children. ⁹For God had promised, "Next year I will return, and Sarah will have a son." ¹⁰This son was our ancestor Isaac. When he grew up, he married Rebekah, who gave birth to twins. ¹¹But before they were born, before they had done anything good or bad, she received a message from God. (This message proves that God chooses according to his own plan, ¹²not according to our good or bad works.) She was told, "The descendants of your older son will serve the descendants of your younger son." ¹³In the words of the Scriptures, "I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau."

¹⁴What can we say? Was God being unfair? Of course not! ¹⁵For God said to Moses, "I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose." ¹⁶So receiving God's promise is not up to us. We can't get it by choosing it or working hard for it. God will show mercy to anyone he chooses. ¹⁷For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, "I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you, and so that my fame might spread throughout the earth."

¹⁸So you see, God shows mercy to some just because he wants to, and he chooses to make some people refuse to listen. ¹⁹Well then, you might say, "Why does God blame people for not listening? Haven't they simply

done what he made them do?" 20No, don't say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to criticize God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who made it, "Why have you made me like this?"

21When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn't he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into? 22God has every right to exercise his judgment and his power, but he also has the right to be very patient with those who are the objects of his judgment and are fit only for destruction. 23He also has the right to pour out the riches of his glory upon those he prepared to be the objects of his mercy-- 24even upon us, whom he selected, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles. 25Concerning the Gentiles, God says in the prophecy of Hosea, "Those who were not my people, I will now call my people. And I will love those whom I did not love before."

26And, "Once they were told, 'You are not my people.' But now he will say, 'You are children of the living God.'" 27Concerning Israel, Isaiah the prophet cried out, "Though the people of Israel are as numerous as the sand on the seashore, only a small number will be saved. 28For the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth quickly and with finality." 29And Isaiah said in another place, "If the Lord Almighty had not spared a few of us, we would have been wiped out as completely as Sodom and Gomorrah."

30Well then, what shall we say about these things? Just this: The Gentiles have been made right with God by faith, even though they were not seeking him. 31But the Jews, who tried so hard to get right with God by keeping the law, never succeeded. 32Why not? Because they were trying to get right with God by keeping the law and being good instead of by depending on faith. They stumbled over the great rock in their path. 33God warned them of this in the Scriptures when he said, "I am placing a stone in Jerusalem that causes people to stumble, and a rock that makes them fall. But anyone who believes in him will not be disappointed."

Romans 10

1Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is that the Jewish people might be saved. 2I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. 3For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Instead, they are clinging to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. They won't go along with God's way. 4For Christ has accomplished the whole purpose of the law. All who believe in him are

made right with God.

⁵For Moses wrote that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. ⁶But the way of getting right with God through faith says, "You don't need to go to heaven" (to find Christ and bring him down to help you). ⁷And it says, "You don't need to go to the place of the dead" (to bring Christ back to life again). ⁸Salvation that comes from trusting Christ--which is the message we preach--is already within easy reach. In fact, the Scriptures say, "The message is close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart."

⁹For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. ¹¹As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who believes in him will not be disappointed." ¹²Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They all have the same Lord, who generously gives his riches to all who ask for them. ¹³For "Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?

¹⁵And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" ¹⁶But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, "Lord, who has believed our message?" ¹⁷Yet faith comes from listening to this message of good news--the Good News about Christ. ¹⁸But what about the Jews? Have they actually heard the message? Yes, they have: "The message of God's creation has gone out to everyone, and its words to all the world."

¹⁹But did the people of Israel really understand? Yes, they did, for even in the time of Moses, God had said, "I will rouse your jealousy by blessing other nations. I will make you angry by blessing the foolish Gentiles." ²⁰And later Isaiah spoke boldly for God: "I was found by people who were not looking for me. I showed myself to those who were not asking for me." ²¹But regarding Israel, God said, "All day long I opened my arms to them, but they kept disobeying me and arguing with me."

Romans 11

1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people, the Jews? Of course not! Remember that I myself am a Jew, a descendant of Abraham and a member of the tribe of Benjamin. **2No, God has not rejected his own people, whom he chose from the very beginning.** Do you remember what the Scriptures say about this? Elijah the prophet complained to God about the people of Israel and said, **3"Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars. I alone am left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."**

4And do you remember God's reply? He said, "You are not the only one left. I have seven thousand others who have never bowed down to Baal!" **5**It is the same today, for not all the Jews have turned away from God. A few are being saved as a result of God's kindness in choosing them. **6**And if they are saved by God's kindness, then it is not by their good works. For in that case, God's wonderful kindness would not be what it really is--free and undeserved.

7So this is the situation: Most of the Jews have not found the favor of God they are looking for so earnestly. A few have--the ones God has chosen--but the rest were made unresponsive. **8**As the Scriptures say, "God has put them into a deep sleep. To this very day he has shut their eyes so they do not see, and closed their ears so they do not hear." **9**David spoke of this same thing when he said, "Let their bountiful table become a snare, a trap that makes them think all is well. Let their blessings cause them to stumble. **10**Let their eyes go blind so they cannot see, and let their backs grow weaker and weaker." **11Did God's people stumble and fall beyond recovery? Of course not!** His purpose was to make his salvation available to the Gentiles, and then the Jews would be jealous and want it for themselves. **12**Now if the Gentiles were enriched because the Jews turned down God's offer of salvation, think how much greater a blessing the world will share **when the Jews finally accept it.**

13I am saying all of this especially for you Gentiles. God has appointed me as the apostle to the Gentiles. I lay great stress on this, **14**for I want to find a way to make the Jews want what you Gentiles have, and in that way I might save some of them. **15**For since the Jews' rejection meant that God offered salvation to the rest of the world, how much more wonderful their acceptance **will be.** It will be life for those who were dead! **16**And since Abraham and the other patriarchs were holy, their children will also be holy. For if the roots of the tree are holy, the branches will be, too.

¹⁷But some of these branches from Abraham's tree, some of the Jews, have been broken off. And you Gentiles, who were branches from a wild olive tree, were grafted in. So now you also receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children, sharing in God's rich nourishment of his special olive tree. ¹⁸But you must **be careful not to brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off. Remember, you are just a branch, not the root.** ¹⁹"Well," you may say, "those branches were broken off to make room for me." ²⁰Yes, but remember--those branches, the Jews, were broken off because they didn't believe God, and you are there because you do believe. Don't think highly of yourself, but fear what could happen. ²¹For if God did not spare the branches he put there in the first place, he won't spare you either.

²²Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is severe to those who disobeyed, but kind to you as you continue to trust in his kindness. But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off. ²³And if the Jews turn from their unbelief, God will graft them back into the tree again. He has the power to do it. ²⁴For if God was willing to take you who were, by nature, branches from a wild olive tree and graft you into his own good tree--a very unusual thing to do--he will be far more eager to graft the Jews back into the tree where they belong.

²⁵ I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud and start bragging. Some of **the Jews have hard hearts, but this will last only until the complete number of Gentiles comes to Christ.** ²⁶**And so all Israel will be saved.** Do you remember what the prophets said about this?" A Deliverer will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel from all ungodliness.

²⁷**And then I will keep My covenant with them** and take away their sins." ²⁸Many of the Jews are now enemies of the Good News. But this has been to your benefit, for God has given his gifts to you Gentiles. Yet **the Jews are still his chosen people because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** ²⁹For God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn. ³⁰Once, you Gentiles were rebels against God, but when the Jews refused his mercy, God was merciful to you instead. ³¹And now, in the same way, the Jews are the rebels, and God's mercy has come to you. But someday they, too, will share in God's mercy. ³²For God has imprisoned all people in their own disobedience so he could have mercy on everyone.

³³Oh, what a wonderful God we have! How great are his riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his methods! ³⁴For who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who knows enough to be his counselor? ³⁵And who could ever give him so much that he would have to pay it back? ³⁶For everything comes from him; everything exists by his power and is intended for his glory. To him be glory evermore. Amen.