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Paul's Anguish for His Fellow Jews

Romans 9:1-5

I. The Cause of Paul's Anguish: "My Kinsmen are Accursed!"

A. Paul's Intensely Personal Revelation

Martyn Lloyd-Jones: "This is a unique statement in many ways, a very personal statement, and one of the most remarkable which the Apostle ever made concerning himself."

Paul opens himself up and bares his soul for all to see... he speaks very personally and very emotionally, he shows the cry of his soul. He invites us into the private chamber of his heart, into his prayer closet

1. Paul's Intensely Fervent Nationalism

- a. Lived in an age when the hatred between Jew and Gentile was at a very high pitch
 - i) Romans had dominated Promised Land as yet another Gentile overlord
 - ii) Seemed to be no end to that domination
 - iii) Weary of seeing the Romans plunder the best of the lands they conquered... weary of seeing the threat of Roman military silence all opposition; weary of seeing their Jewish brothers condemned to hang on Roman crosses
 - iv) Events like this forge a deep-seated resentment and hatred, along with a powerful nationalism

b. Very proud of his status as a Jewish man

Galatians 1:13-14 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

c. Brags about it in Philippians 3 when he gives his "resume"

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Philippians 3:4-6 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

d. Identifies himself repeatedly as a Jew, even in this section

Romans 11:1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.

e. Was originally adamantly against the gospel and almost certainly an ardent hater of all things Gentile

f. He despised the message preached by Stephen about the end to the temple sacrifices in Christ's final and perfect work on the cross

2. Paul's Amazing Gospel Call: Apostle to the Gentiles

a. On the Road to Damascus, everything changed

Acts 9:3-6 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

b. Paul was given the gift of eternal life through faith in the Resurrected Christ

c. Christ also gave him his life's marching orders

Acts 9:15-16 This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

d. These marching orders were greatly clarified as time went on

Galatians 2:9 James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.

What an incredible thing!! Paul seemed perfectly trained and prepared to be "Apostle to the Jews" ... he years of expert training in the school of Gamaliel had

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honed his knowledge of Judaism, and would have put him in a perfect position to be their dedicated missionary

But God's ways are not our ways!!! Paul was given the task of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles... so that he was called "The Apostle to the Gentiles"

Romans 11:13 I am the apostle to the Gentiles

- e. Paul's call to preach to the Gentiles so that they would be saved was intensely opposed and hated by his own countrymen

Acts 22:17-22 "When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸ and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'
¹⁹ "'Lord,' I replied, 'these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. ²⁰ And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'
²¹ "Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"
²² The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, "Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!"

3. Paul's Evangelistic Experience: Constant Jewish Opposition

- a. Everywhere Paul went he preached the gospel
- b. He always began in the synagogues, "To the Jews first, and also to the Gentile"
- c. Inevitably the Jews would begin to argue against Paul and make his life miserable

Acts 13:45-48 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" ⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

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Acts 18:5-8 Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶ But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. ⁸ Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

d. The pattern was clear in every city: begin by preaching Christ from the Law and the Prophets in the synagogues; the Jews would resist and rebel; Paul would turn to the Gentiles and they would believe in LARGE NUMBERS; whereupon the Jews would openly oppose the gospel and privately plot and scheme to destroy Paul and stop his ministry

e. The way Acts ends... on the exact same note

Acts 28:23-28 [The leaders of the Jews in Rome] arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. ²⁴ Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. ²⁵ They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: ²⁶ "'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." ²⁷ For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' ²⁸ "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"

B. Paul's Spiritual Understanding: Jewish Rejection of Christ

1. Paul knew what was going on... this was not just a localized phenomenon
2. For the most part, in every city Jews were opposing the gospel and rejecting Christ
3. This is the very thing the Lord Jesus had spoken of in his statement and parable about the Vineyard

Matthew 21:33-45 "Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. ³⁴ When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. ³⁵ "The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶ Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. ³⁷ Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. ³⁸ "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' ³⁹ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰ "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹ "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time." ⁴² Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? ⁴³ "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴ He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed." ⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them.

4. This is the very thing John wrote about in John 1:

John 1:11-13 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

5. This was not a matter of culture or of local situation... this was a spiritual phenomenon of the greatest significance
6. The Jewish nation, prepared for centuries by God to receive their Messiah were now consistently and aggressively rejecting Christ
7. Not only were they not believing in the Savior, they were hating Him... despising Him, blaspheming His holy name, killing His messengers
8. Paul remembered his own days as a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man... and his heart went out to the Jews

C. The Cause of the Anguish: The Eternal Consequences of Jewish Unbelief

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1. This was not an idle issue, one of merely theological debate
2. This was not a matter of haggling over dietary laws or figuring out Sabbath regulations
3. Jews dying in unbelief were perishing eternally in hell

Matthew 3:12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Matthew 23:33 "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?"

4. Paul's own countrymen were accursed and cut off from Christ
 - a. Note that Paul doesn't say this directly but turns it around on himself
 - b. But it was true... they were rejecting the gospel
 - c. If they persist in unbelief, they would be condemned to eternity in hell

II. The Depth of Paul's Anguish

Romans 9:2-4 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, ⁴ the people of Israel

A. Overpowering Emotions

"I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart."

B. Astonishing Desire: "I could wish to be accursed"

1. The depth of Paul's anguish measured in this one statement
2. Having come to understand the eternal consequences of unbelief
3. Having tasted a foretaste of heavenly glory in seeing the resurrected Christ
4. Perhaps by now had been caught up to third heaven and seen a heavenly vision he was unable even to put into words

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5. **CUT OFF FROM CHRIST:** Willing never to see Christ again... never to see the heavenly glory of Jesus the love of his life

John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

6. **ACCURSED:** Understanding the eternity of torment that awaited the damned in hell...

7. Willing to trade it all for their salvation... to exchange places, to stand accursed on Judgment Day and hear Christ speak those terrifying dreadful words:

"Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

8. Willing to stand on the brink of the Lake of Fire, knowing that he was about to lose his soul forever... his SOUL; about which Jesus spoke

***Mark 8:36-37 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?
37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?***

9. Astonishing what Paul is saying here!!

C. Impossible Desire

1. But it is impossible!!

Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 6:39-40 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. 40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

2. Grammar is very strong, and all the translations have it the same: "I COULD WISH"
3. A sense of what can NEVER be

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Luke 16:23-26 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' ²⁵ "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

John Piper: God has not designed a world where a person can be damned because of Christ-exalting love. If there were such a world, then the Biblical standards of the world that exists would not apply, and Paul stands ready to take Israel's place in hell. But he can't. God does not send people to hell because they love others enough to sacrifice for them. So Paul cannot take the place of Israel; he can only grieve.

4. Very much like Moses here: after the sin with the golden calf

Exodus 32:30-33 The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." ³¹ So Moses went back to the LORD and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. ³² But now, please forgive their sin-- but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written." ³³ The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.

But neither Moses nor Paul can offer up themselves as a substitution for the sins of their people, no matter how much they loved them

D. Christlike Desire

1. What Paul was willing to do for Israel generally, Jesus did for His sheep particularly
2. He was willing to be cursed and cut off from His Father on the cross, and it was precisely what He did... He drank the cup of God's wrath for people who hated and reviled and reject Him
3. Paul also is willing to do this... but He can't... only the perfect Substitute, Christ could... and He did it once for all

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4. How marvelous when Christ has a hold of our hearts, how He makes us like Him, to imitate Him both in heart attitude and lifestyle

III. The Authenticity of Paul's Anguish

Romans 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ-- I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit--

A. Repeated Solemn Statements

1. Seems like he's taking a solemn vow
2. Reminds me of people "swearing on a stack of Bibles"... or saying "I swear to God"
3. People who need to buttress their statements with these kinds of oaths are usually liars
4. What does he say
 - a. "I speak the truth in Christ"... his status as a Christian is the evidence of his truthfulness
 - b. "In Christ" there can be no lying, and certainly not about something so serious
 - c. Then he repeats and emphasizes this same thing: **I AM NOT LYING**
 - d. Then he calls his own conscience forward as a witness... conscience is that innate attribute of human beings that screams against us when we do what it perceives to be wrong
 - e. Paul says: my conscience confirms this statement
 - f. Even more: confirms it **IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

B. Why? Paul's Attitude Supernatural

1. Psalm 116:11 "All men are liars" These words seem necessary because people lie
2. What Paul is saying about his heart attitude toward his bitter enemies seems astonishing and totally unreal

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3. Someone reading this says: “Come on, Paul! These are the people who are seeking your very life! Who are pursuing you from town to town! Who are breathing out murderous threats against you! Taking oaths that they won’t eat until you are dead!”
4. For these people you would be willing to be sent to hell if they could be saved??
5. It actually is supernatural... to be so conformed to Christ that you can join him in saying of your bitter murderers and sworn enemies: “Father, forgive them, they don’t know what they’re doing”
6. What could prove this heart attitude?
 - a. Tears? NO... they can be faked
 - b. Quavering and breaking voice? There are some amazing actors out there

C. Genuine Compassion for the Lost Is Rare

1. I know very few people who even approach this level of concern for the lost
2. Few people regularly shed tears for the lost
3. Most of us are selfishly caught up in our own lives, and couldn’t care less about whether some unreached people group ever comes to faith or not

IV. The Shock in Paul’s Anguish

Romans 9:4-5 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵ To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen

A. Contrary to All Expectations

1. Humanly speaking which is more likely
2. Jews prepared for centuries to receive Christ
3. Gentiles prepared for centuries to reject Christ
4. BUT Jews reject, Gentile flood into the church

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B. Amazing Spiritual Advantages for Israelites

1. "Israelites"

- a. Connecting with Jacob, who was renamed Israel
- b. This name used throughout Israel's history
- c. They are the physical descendents of Jacob, who was called by God

2. "The Adoption"

- a. Essential not to misunderstand
- b. This is not the same as the eternal and divine adoption in Romans 8

Romans 8:14-15 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

If you make a mistake here you'll miss the whole point of Romans 9 in light of the Jews... if God can adopt an individual person as His son, can that son be lost eternally? Would not God's word be rendered empty, His promises like vapors?

- c. This rather is the national adoption spoken of in the Old Testament

Exodus 4:22-23 Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son, ²³ and I told you, "Let my son go, so he may worship me."

Hosea 11:1 "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son."

Deuteronomy 1:31 "There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place."

3. "The Glory"

- a. Again, this is not the promise of personal glory made in Romans 8
- b. Rather this is the consistent record of the experience national Israel had with the glory of God at key moments in their history

Exodus 24:15-18 When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, ¹⁶ and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered

the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. ¹⁷ To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. ¹⁸ Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Exodus 33:18-23 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." ¹⁹ And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." ²¹ Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²² When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

Exodus 40:34-38 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁶ In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; ³⁷ but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out-- until the day it lifted. ³⁸ So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.

Leviticus 9:22-24 Then Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them. And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, he stepped down. ²³ Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. ²⁴ Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.

c. BUT seeing the glory of God did not guarantee personal salvation!! Quite the opposite in some cases

Numbers 14: The people rebelled against Moses and Aaron, and spoke angry words against God. They wanted to choose leaders for themselves and go back to Egypt. As they were shouting and talking about stoning Moses and Aaron, at that moment the glory of the Lord appeared:

Numbers 14:10-11 But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the Tent of Meeting to all the Israelites. ¹¹ The LORD

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said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?"

Numbers 14:22-23 not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times--²³ not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it.

4. "The Covenants"

- a. This refers to the covenants God made with Israel...
- b. The Abrahamic covenant: "Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed"... and "I will make your descendents as numerous as the stars and the sand" and "To your descendents I will give this land"
- c. The Mosaic covenant: "If you obey me and keep all my commandments, then I will preserve you in the land and you will be my people and I will be your God."
- d. The Davidic covenant: "You will never lack a son to sit on the throne. I will build the house of your son and His Kingdom will never end."
- e. BUT NOTE: The unconditional covenants made to Abraham and David were fulfilled... but neither of them guaranteed eternal life to every Israelite; the conditional covenant made with Moses was not kept, because the people sinned

5. "The Giving of the Law"

- a. Clearly this refers to the Law of Moses
- b. A tremendous blessing to have the Laws of God dictated directly through Moses for the people to have, to hold, to read, to cherish, and to try to live

Deuteronomy 4:8 And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

Psalm 119:97 Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

- c. However, simply having the Law did not guarantee personal salvation to all the Israelites

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Romans 2:23 You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?

Romans 3:20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

6. "The Worship"

- a. This refers to the temple sacrificial system
- b. An incredible blessing, one of the greatest teaching tools for the person and work of Christ ever
- c. Every time an animal was sacrificed, it pictured what Christ would do one day on the cross... laying down His life as a substitute for sinners
- d. BUT the prophets consistently showed how much Israel abused the temple worship... they offered diseased or lame animals, they sniffed at it and said "What a burden!" or they arrogantly assumed that because God had given them the sacrificial system that they were safe from all harm

Isaiah 1:10-18 Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah! ¹¹ "The multitude of your sacrifices-- what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. ¹² When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? ¹³ Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations-- I cannot bear your evil assemblies. ¹⁴ Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; ¹⁶ wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, ¹⁷ learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

Jeremiah 7:2-11 "Stand at the gate of the LORD's house and there proclaim this message: "Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the LORD. ³ This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. ⁴ Do not trust in deceptive words and say, "This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!" ... ⁹ "Will

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you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, ¹⁰ and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, "We are safe"-- safe to do all these detestable things? ¹¹ Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you?

7. "The Promises"

- a. God made many promises to Israel throughout their history
- b. I have already mentioned the promises He made to Abraham to give him many descendents and to give him the Promised Land
- c. He made promises to Israel to bring them back into the Promised Land from Exile
- d. He made hundreds of lesser promises and fulfilled them
- e. BUT never did He promise that all of the physical descendents of Abraham would be saved eternally

8. "The Patriarchs"

- a. The example of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was of immense spiritual advantage to Israel
- b. The godly heritage of these men, and other fathers of their faith: Joseph, Samuel, David
- c. But as Paul is about to prove, this spiritual advantage would not guarantee salvation for all their descendents

9. "The Human Ancestry of the Christ"

- a. Paul finishes by pointing out that the Christ was sent to them
- b. Their own nation was the physical tribe through which God blessed the whole world
- c. Jesus said "Salvation is from the Jews"
- d. To have the human ancestry of Christ is an incredible blessing

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- e. BUT if anything this seemed to be a stumbling block to the Jews, hindering their faith

Matthew 13:54-58 *Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. ⁵⁵ "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶ Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" ⁵⁷ And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor." ⁵⁸ And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.*

Summary: The Jews had an extreme advantage over every other tribe and language and people and nation on the face of the earth... it seems astonishing that those nations would be flooding into the Kingdom, while blessed Israel did not

C. BUT **KEY CONCEPT**: These Advantages Do Not Promise Individual Salvation

D. Therefore God's Word Has Not Failed

V. The Fruit of Paul's Anguish

Romans 10:1 *Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.*

A. Emotion Alone Accomplishes Nothing

1. Paul's tears and anguish cannot save a single soul
2. It was not enough for Paul merely to be in intense anguish over the spiritual state of the Jews
3. It had to flow out into action... and it did

B. Heart Desire for Salvation of Jews

1. Paul says again in Romans 10: His deepest heart desire is for the salvation of the Jews
2. He yearns for it, it is what he wants with every breath
3. How beautiful is this, and how perfect!

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4. Rather than harboring a bitter heart of revenge for these people who have crushed him in city after city, he wants to share eternity with them!

C. Prevailing Fervent Prayer for Salvation of Jews

1. Romans 10:1 says his first action is prevailing and intense, heartfelt prayer for Jews to be saved
2. Never for a moment let anyone tell you that we are not commanded to pray for the lost
3. Never let anyone tell you that God's eternal decrees in salvation, His eternal predestination before the foundation of the world (which Paul will teach in Romans 9) makes fervent intercessory prayer for the lost meaningless
4. Paul starts in the prayer closet, never giving God a day of rest concerning the salvation of his kinsmen according to the flesh, the Jews

D. Tireless Evangelistic Labor for Salvation of Jews

1. Paul's whole life was devoted to the tireless proclamation and modeling of the gospel message
2. Every city he went to, he was willing to pay the ultimate price for the salvation of the elect
3. He was willing to be beaten, stoned, imprisoned, publicly humiliated, stripped, even killed if it meant salvation for the elect

2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

And some of those elect were Jews!!!

Romans 9:23-24 What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory-- ²⁴ even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

VI. The Significance of Paul's Anguish

A. Status of Unbelieving Jews

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1. Simply put: despite being “God’s chosen people,” Paul’s astonishing grief and outpouring here in Romans 9:1-5 means one thing
2. Apart from faith in Christ, Jews will be eternally damned
3. If not, why would Paul carry on so?
4. Some evangelicals actually advocate that Christians should not evangelize the Jews, because they are already God’s chosen people
5. Some in the extreme dispensational camp

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement Monday saying that Catholics should evangelize non-Christians—but not Jews. "The command of the Resurrected Jesus in Matthew 28:19 to make disciples 'of all nations' means that the Church must bear witness in the world to the Good News of Christ so as to prepare the world for the fullness of the kingdom of God," says [*Reflections on Covenant and Mission*](#).

However, this evangelizing task no longer includes the wish to absorb the Jewish faith into Christianity and so end the distinctive witness of Jews to God in human history. Thus, while the Catholic Church regards the saving act of Christ as central to the process of human salvation for all, it also acknowledges that Jews already dwell in a saving covenant with God. The Catholic Church must always evangelize and will always witness to its faith in the presence of God's kingdom in Jesus Christ to Jews and to all other people.

Rabbis from the National Council of Synagogues (representing Reform and Conservative groups) also joined in the statement. "It should be obvious that any mission of Christians to the Jews is in direct conflict with the Jewish notion that the covenant itself is that mission," the document says.

6. Paul’s overwhelming grief in Romans 9:1-5 totally crushes this false notion
7. Jews need the gospel as much as Gentiles

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

B. Status of All Unbelieving People

1. Paul’s particular grief for the Jews here should be extended to all people everywhere

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2. If Jews, with all their spiritual advantages are lost without Christ, how much more the countless millions of people in unreached people groups all over the world who have none of these spiritual advantages and don't know the name of Christ?
3. Would not Paul grieve over them just as much?
4. Shouldn't we?

C. The Terrors of Hell

1. The driving force of Paul's agony and anguish is the irrefutable Biblical fact: unbelievers will perish eternally in the agony of hell
2. Hell is no mere metaphor, nor is hell a myth
3. Hell will be an agonizing reality of eternal torment for the majority of human beings who have ever lived

Mark 9:47-48 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."

Revelation 14:10-11 he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those

D. Display of Evangelist's Heart

1. Paul's deep, heart-felt agony is a role model for the evangelistic compassion of all Christians
2. Paul shows us what we should feel about the lost
3. Just as Jesus also did in weeping over Jerusalem:

Luke 19:41-42 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace-- but now it is hidden from your eyes."

E. Understanding Limits of Old Covenant's Blessings

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1. Paul's list of Old Covenant blessings at the head of Romans 9 is immensely significant
2. If these incredible spiritual blessings of the Jews were sufficient to save them, why does Paul weep and wail for them
3. How much less are the natural blessings of pagans out in Irian Jaya enough to save them
4. We needed a New Covenant in order to be saved... without it, we would have had no chance for salvation

F. Understanding Power of the Gospel

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ alone has the power to turn Paul's wailing into dancing
2. By the simple message of Christ crucified, our sins can be washed away forever
3. What immense power the gospel of Jesus Christ has, so much more power than all the inadequate blessings of the Old Covenant

G. Possible to Rejoice in God Greatly While Sorrowing Greatly

1. Paul goes from heights of soaring joy to depths of grieving sorrow immediately
2. Romans 8 ends with a note of majestic triumph that is designed to bring all of us to our feet in exultant and confident joy
3. Romans 9 begins with immense sorrow and unceasing anguish over the lost
4. Romans 11 will end again with soaring praise for the infinitely deep and complex plan of God
5. Christians then, while looking up at our sovereign and triumphant God will rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory
6. But while Christians look around at the ravages of sin and devastating consequences of rank unbelief that will come upon our neighbors and friends and coworkers and ever FAMILY members, we have reason to weep as bitterly as Paul did

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7. How is this possible? Could FBC be the kind of church characterized by immense joy AT THE SAME TIME AS overwhelming sorrow?
8. This is commanded to us!!

2 Corinthians 6:10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing

H. Possible to Believe in God's Sovereignty While Sorrowing Greatly

1. Romans 9 is the meatiest chapter in the Bible
2. Soon Paul will explain why some Israelites are saved and others are not
3. He will unfold the incredibly difficult doctrine of God's sovereign rights and freedoms to have mercy on whom He will have mercy and to harden whom He wants to harden
4. He will say that God made this determination before the foundation of the world in predestination
5. Some would say that we should just stoically accept God's will and feel nothing concerning the damnation of the reprobate
6. Paul does not do that! He is filled with unceasing sorrow and anguish in his heart
7. Neither does Paul shrug and say "What will be will be" and leave it at that, but he pours out his heart in prayer and pours out his life in unceasing toil for the lost

Question: If we are to be unceasingly filled with sorrow here on earth for the lost, will we not also be unceasingly weeping in heaven once we know that specific people are most certainly damned and there is nothing that can be done for them? Will we not weep even more bitterly in heaven than ever we did on earth? How then could we enjoy eternity that way?

Answer: Simply put, the Bible says this:

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

Jonathan Edwards:

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With respect to any affection that the godly have had to the finally reprobate, the love of God will wholly swallow it up. And cause it wholly to cease" (The Works of Jonathan Edwards [Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust], Vol. 2, p. 899).

John Piper: Those who die in their sinful rebellion – we say it with tears now – will not have the power to hold heaven hostage with their own misery. Here we groan and weep. There we are consumed with the glory of Christ.

VII. Application

A. Spiritual EKG: Do You Have Great Sorrow for the Lost?

1. Do you resonate with Paul's anguish?
2. How many times have you cried for a lost loved one, relative, friend, son, daughter, coworker
3. Extend it out: how many times have you cried and prayed most fervently for unreached people groups in the world
4. How about for the obviously lost people we see in our news: the gay activists, or the militant abortion rights demonstrators; or the drug pushers, or the Islamic terrorists who blow people up for political gain
5. To my shame I find Paul's attitude a great source of conviction

B. If Not, How Do You Get It?

1. First, take the EKG... see if your heart is as soft and tender and compassionate as Paul's
2. If you find your heart to be calloused, begin to pray to God to change your heart
3. Read descriptions of heaven and hell... the terrors of Judgment Day... the cries of shock when people who thought they were fine find out they are eternally lost
4. Labor on your heart... load it up with biblical truths and images, with spiritual realities
5. Pour out these realities to God in prayer
6. Take time to change to hurt to cry

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7. Even better, by faith get involved in ministry to the lost... in outreach, in the inner city, or in short term work overseas

8. It's hard to feel compassion for people you don't know

C. How Do You Act On It?

1. Paul: intense prevailing prayer

2. Paul: consistent, sacrificial ministry and evangelism