

IX

Justice and Mercy

ROMANS 9:1–29

I am speaking the truth in Christ — I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit — ² that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴ 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.

⁶ But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, ⁷ and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” ⁸ This means that it is not the children of the

flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.⁹ For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.”¹⁰ And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac,¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad — in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls —¹² she was told, “The older will serve the younger.”¹³ As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means!¹⁵ For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?”²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?”²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for

dishonorable use? ²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory — ²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea,

“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’
and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’”

²⁶ “And in the very place where it was said to them,
‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, ²⁸ for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.” ²⁹ And as Isaiah predicted,

“If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring,
we would have been like Sodom
and become like Gomorrah.”

READ | ROMANS 9:1–29

THINK ABOUT

Chapters 9–11 are often skipped over in reading and studying the book of Romans, but they are extremely important. Not only are they part of inspired Scripture, but Paul is now going to deal with the key subject of Israel.

The Apostle has emphasized that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile (Romans 1:16). But it appears that while the majority of Jews are rejecting the Gospel of Jesus Christ, many Gentiles are believing. So is God going to reject Israel? Has God finished with Israel? Has the church replaced Israel?

The rejection by so many Jews of the Gospel certainly brings great sorrow to Paul. But what about the promises of God and the justice of God?

Is God unjust because some people are saved and others are not? Is God fair?

APPLY

The faithfulness of God to His promises is all important. Isn't it the case that in the difficult circumstances of life, we are apt to question the promises of God? But God's Word never fails (v. 6).

Paul also makes a strong statement that the Christ "is God over all, blessed forever" (v. 5). This is a good verse to mention in conversations with Jehovah's Witnesses.

Think of some of the promises of God which you need to claim today!

ASK

Paul is willing to give his life for the salvation of his fellow Jews. Do you have a similar passion and even sorrow for those in your family and in your sphere of influence who are not yet saved?

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It is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” (v. 13). Does this mean that God is unfair? Was Esau a man of faith? How did he regard his birthright and his father’s blessing (Genesis 25–27)?

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Does the sovereignty of God give you comfort, or is it challenging for you to accept? Do you find yourself answering back to God (v. 20)? Do you personally feel you deserve the mercy of God or the judgment of God?

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Scripture teaches God’s election and also human responsibility. How do you reconcile these? Is reconciliation possible?

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PRAY

Lord give me a heart of compassion for those in my family and at my workplace who do not yet know Jesus Christ as their Savior. Give me the wisdom and the opportunity to tell them about Jesus.

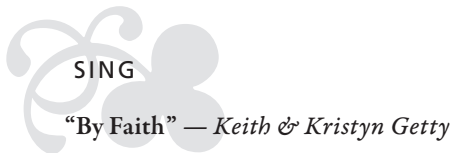
Lord, I am undeserving of your salvation. Thank you for your mercy and your grace which you abundantly pour on me. Help me to live a thankful and fruitful life.

NUMBERS 23:19

“God is not man, that he should lie,
or a son of man, that he should change his mind.
Has he said, and will he not do it?
Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?”

PSALM 51:1–2

“Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!”



“JUSTICE AND MERCY”

Romans 9:1-29

Ruled lines for writing notes.