

The STUMBLING STONE

Lesson Twelve; Romans 9

ROMANS 9

Paul's Sorrow

Romans 9:1 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 [unbelieving Jewish] brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh [i.e. physically].

What Advantage has the Jew?

[Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? (Rom 3:1 ESV)]

⁴ They are Israelites [sons of Jacob], and to them belong the adoption [as sons of God, (eg. Exodus 4:22)], the glory [of revelation of God], the [Abrahamic, Mosaic, Aaronic, Davidic, and new] covenants, the giving of the law [at Sinai], the [Levitical] worship [in Temple and synagogue], and the [Abrahamic] promises.

⁵ To them belong the patriarchs [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob], and from their race, according to the flesh [i.e., physically speaking], is the Christ ~~who is~~ God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Isaac and Ishmael

⁶ But it is not as though the [promise of Israel's redemption in the] word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from [Jacob] Israel belong to [the redeemed remnant of] Israel,

⁷ and not all are children of Abraham [just] because they are his [physically his] offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named" (Genesis 21:12).

⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh [i.e. physical descendants or even legal proselytes] who are [qualified to be] the children of God, but the children of the promise [of the redemption] 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."

Jacob and Esau

¹⁰ And not only so [in the case of Isaac and Ishmael], 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 [yet]—in order that God's purpose of election [choosing] might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—

¹² she was told, "The older will serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23).

¹³ As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Malachi 1:2-3).

God's Justice

¹⁴ What shall we say then? [False Premise:] ~~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" (Exodus 33:19).

¹⁶ So then [justification] depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

Pharaoh

¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh [in Exodus 9:16], "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.

Potter and the Clay?

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?" (Cf. Isaiah 29:16, 45:9)

²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump [i.e., the people of Israel] one vessel for honorable use [i.e. the godly] and another for dishonorable use [i.e., the ungodly]?

The Coming Judgment

²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath [among his people Israel] prepared for destruction [in the coming judgment],

²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy [among his people Israel], which he has prepared beforehand [destined] for glory--

²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

A New Interpretation of Hosea

²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea (2:23), "Those [God-fearing Gentile believers] who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved'" [Cf. 1 Peter 2:10ff].

²⁶ "And in the very place where it was said to them [i.e. the Gentile believers], 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God'" (Hosea 1:10).

A Remnant

²⁷ And Isaiah (10:22-23) 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 (1:9) predicted, "If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah" [Cf. Matthew 10:15].

Another False Premise: Replacement Theology

³⁰ What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith;
³¹ but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law [of righteousness. By no means!]

What Do I Mean Then?

³² Why [and how then do we explain how some Jews have forfeited the redemption while some Gentiles have acquired it]? Because they did not pursue it [the Torah of righteousness] by faith, but as if it were based on works [of legal status of being Jewish]. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone [of Messiah],
³³ as it is written [in Isaiah 28:16], "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

The Stumbling Stone

Isaiah 8:14–15
Then He shall become a sanctuary; but to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, and a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Many will stumble over them, then they will fall and be broken; they will even be snared and caught.

Isaiah 28:16, 13
Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.

That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared and taken captive.

Targum on Isaiah 28:16

Behold, I appoint a king in Zion, a king mighty, powerful, and terrible: I will make him powerful, and I will strengthen him, saith the prophet. But the righteous, who believe these things, shall not be moved, when distress shall come. (Targum Yonatan, Isaiah 28:16)

Prophecy of Rabbi Chiya's Sons

The Son of David cannot appear until the two ruling houses in Israel shall have come to an end: the patriarch over the Babylonian exile and the patriarch over [the Jews in] Israel, for it is written [in Isaiah 8:14], "Then He shall become a sanctuary; but to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over." (b.Sanhedrin 38a)

1 Peter 2

And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Yeshua the Messiah. For this is contained in Scripture [Isaiah 28:16], "Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed." This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, [it says in Psalm 118:22,] "The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone," and [in Isaiah 8:14], "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. (1 Peter 2:4–8)