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- II. Credenda: "The Righteous by Faith" Shall Live (1:18-11:36)
 - A. No justification by our own righteousness (1:18-3:20)
 - B. Justification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone (3:21-4:25)
 - C. All those that God justifies, He shall also glorify (5-8)
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A Heart for the Lost

Romans, Part XLIII

Romans 9:1-5

Stuart W. Bryan

I. John and the Smyrnan Youth (Book 3:23)

Romans 9:1-5

¹I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, ²that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, ⁴who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; ⁵of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

II. Unceasing Grief

A. Introduction to Romans 9-11 (cf. Rom 1:16)

Romans 9 introduces a new section in Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul sets himself to address a potential objection. If God's purposes are so certain and His promises so sure, then what are we to think of His working with those Israelites who had not believed? Have God's _____ failed?

B. Paul's grief (9:1-3)

The Apostle Paul longed for others, and especially his kinsmen, to know Jesus as their Messiah. Jesus had come to seek and save the lost – a reality Paul had experienced. What troubles Paul is that so many of his kinsmen are "*accursed from Christ.*"

C. Israelites' privileges (9:4-5 cf. 2:17ff; 3:1-2)

Paul highlights his grief by listing the immense privileges that God had bestowed upon his kinsmen. Earlier Paul had asked the question, "*What _____ then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God*" (3:1-2). Paul returns to that same theme and lists numerous other advantages that the Jews possessed:

- *The adoption –*
- *The glory –*
- *The covenants –*
- *The giving of the law –*
- *The service of God –*
- *The promises –*
- *The fathers –*
- *The Christ –*

How could a people so blessed, so privileged, despise those blessings and reject the very God who had chosen them and blessed them? "*He came to His own,*" the Apostle John wrote, "*and His own did not receive Him*" (Jn 1:11).

III. A Heart for the Lost Among the Visible People of God

Though Paul could write of Jewish opponents of the Gospel, *“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh...”* (Phil 3:2-3), nevertheless his heart was toward them. He longed for them to know the grace of God just as he had.

A. The Privilege of Being an Israelite (Rom 10:1, 4; Phil 3:4-7)

Paul could wish this because he thought so highly of being _____. He considered it an honor and privilege to have been born of the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; to number himself an ethnic Israelite. He wrote to the Philippians:

⁴... *If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

Paul considered his heritage something to boast about. Consequently, like Paul, our heart attitude toward unbelieving Jews should be one of compassion and longing for them to know Christ. We ought to be able to say, with Paul, *“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved”* (Rom 10:1).

B. The Danger of Being an Israelite (Ro 11:19ff; 1 Cor 10:1ff; Eph 2:11ff)

While we are not physically descended from the fathers and while the Christ has not come from our lineage, in Christ we are inheritors of these other privileges. To those in Christ pertain *the adoption* (Rom 8:15), *the glory* (Rom 8:17), *the covenants* (Eph 2:12-13), *the giving of the law* (2 Tim 3:16-17), *the service of God* (Heb 12:28), and *the promises* (2 Cor 1:20). As Paul wrote to the Galatians, *“if you are Christ’s, then you are _____ seed, and heirs according to the promise”* (3:29). So Paul writes to the Ephesians:

¹¹*Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹²that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

Like the Israelites before us, we are an incredibly privileged people. So should we boast? Should we despise those Israelites who have now been cut off? Certainly not!

¹⁹*You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.” ²⁰Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²²Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. (Rom 11:19-22)*

C. The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Lost Son (Lk 15:1-31)

Remembering this, what should be our attitude toward those among the visible people of God who abuse their privileges and rebel against God? Should it not be the same as Paul’s? Should we not long for them to repent and to return to Christ?

IV. Conclusion