**Romans Chapter 9**

Romans nine is one of the most controversial chapters in the entire Bible. It speaks of the sovereignty of God and the condition of man in relation to that sovereignty. Paul begins the chapter by appealing to the Jews and a great privilege, but states that such a privilege does not guarantee salvation. Instead, it is up to the sovereignty of God.

* + Appeal to Israel, Rom. 9:1-5
  + The flesh and the spirit, Rom. 9:6-8
  + The sovereignty of God, Rom. 9:9-26
  + The remnant saved, Rom. 9:27-29
  + Righteousness by faith, Rom. 9:30-33

# I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

* 1. Paul speaks from his position of being in Christ, from experiencing the revolutionary grace of God.
  2. Not only is he in Christ, but he uses the phrase "in the Holy Spirit" to try and convey his conviction of the testimony of the truth that he is going to address.
  3. He is writing to the Jews (vv. 2-5; Rom. 2:17, '…if you bear the name Jew…") and is trying to prepare them for what he's going to teach regarding the sovereignty of God.

# that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

* 1. Paul has great grief for his nation (v. 3-4) as he speaks from his heart, which represents the deepest part of what a person is.

# For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

* 1. Paul's love for his nation is so deep that he says he could wish himself accursed, even damned, for the sake of his people.
  2. Such great love is uncommon. How many would utter words that imply one's own damnation for the sake of saving others?
  3. Some could use this verse to suggest that a person's salvation could be lost. But, the intensity of his words and love for his people have brought him to such powerful language.
  4. As Jesus became a curse for us, Paul emulates this truth by speaking of being cursed for the sake of others.

# who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,

* 1. The Israelites were the ones who had been entrusted with so much from God. Their privilege was exceedingly great. They had privileges and advantages.
  2. God did not communicate to any other nations the covenants, Law, temple service, and promises. It was to the Jewish nation alone.
  3. This stands in contrast to the deception and blindness of so many of the Israelites who could not see what all the covenants, Law, temple services, and promises revealed concerning the person of Christ.

# whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

* 1. Whose are the fathers
     1. the Jews had the holy patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the prophets, etc.
  2. From whom is the Christ
     1. It was from the Jews that the Christ had been revealed.
     2. All that had been given to them by God pointed to Jesus. But they missed Him.
  3. It is interesting to note how people who were given so much from God can misuse it and blind themselves to the ultimate purpose that God has for them.
  4. We ought not to be so quick to judge the Jews. They had so much from God and failed to recognize who Christ was. How much are we failing in our own lives after having been given even more: Jesus in our hearts?

# But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;

* 1. Paul introduces the distinction among Israelites.
  2. Some are Israelites only with respect to their biological heritage. They are covenantal children of the promise, but not covenantal in their hearts. They rely on the externals, legality, an pedigree for their salvation.
     1. Note: this is the same thing done by the Roman Catholics in the Eastern Orthodox.

# nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac, your descendants will be named."

* 1. Ishmael had been born before Isaac. But it was Isaac through whom the descendants would be named.
     1. Gen. 16:11-12, "The angel of the LORD said to her further, 'Behold, you are with child, And you will bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael Because the LORD has given heed to your affliction.' 12 He will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of all his brothers."
     2. Gen. 17:19, "But God said, 'No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.'"
  2. So Ishmael was not considered the same way as Isaac. They represent two kinds of people in the Jewish context: those of God and those not of God.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TOPIC** | **ISAAC** | **JESUS** |
| Only begotten Son | Gen. 22:2 | John 3:16 |
| Offered on a mountain, hill | Gen.22:2 | Matt. 21:10 |
| Took donkey to place of sacrifice | Gen.22:3 | Matt. 21:2-11 |
| Two men went with him. | Gen.22:3 | Mark 15:27,  Luke 23:33 |
| Three-day journey. Jesus: three days in the grave | Gen.22:4 | Luke 24:13-21 |
| Son carried wood on his back up the hill | Gen.22:6 | John 19:17 |
| God will provide for Himself the lamb | Gen.22:8 | John 1:29 |
| Son was offered on the wood | Gen.22:9 | Luke 23:33 |
| Ram caught in thicket of thorns | Gen.22:13 | John 19:2 |
| The seed will be multiplied. | Gen.22:17 | John 1:12, Isa. 53:10 |
| Abraham went down, the son didn't, "not mentioned." | Gen.22:19 | Luke 23:46 |
| Servant gets bride for son. | Gen.24:1-4 | Eph. 5:22-32,  Rev. 21:2, 9, 22:17 |
| The bride was a beautiful virgin. | Gen.24:16 | 2 Cor. 11:2 |
| Servant offered ten gifts to bride (10 Charismatic gifts) | Gen.24:10 | Rom. 6:23, 12;  1 Cor. 12:4-31 |
|  |  |  |

# That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

* 1. Paul speaks of the distinction between people: fleshly and spiritual.
  2. It is not pedigree that makes someone spiritual or saved.
  3. The children of the promise are those who are of the faith, not just the flesh. They are born after the spirit of God.
     1. Gal. 3:8, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations will be blessed in you.'" (A quote from Gen. 12:3)
     2. Gal. 4:29, "But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also."
  4. This applies to both Jews and Gentiles.

# For this is the word of promise: "At this time, I will come, and Sarah shall have a son."

* 1. This is a prophecy spoken by God in Genesis 18:10.
     1. Gen. 18:10, "He said, 'I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah, your wife will have a son.' And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him."

# And not only this but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;

* 1. Paul speaks about Rebekah having Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:21). Historically speaking, Esau was born first, then Jacob. Through a series of interesting events (Gen. 25:19-34), the older served, the younger, an unusual arrangement in those days. Paul then adds, "Just as it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'" This was by God's choice, as is stated in verse 11.

# for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

# it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger."

# Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

* 1. The twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad
     1. Paul is laying down the condition for God's choice.
     2. It has nothing to do with their lineage or their works.
  2. So that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,
     1. Some believe that the reason God loved Jacob and hated Esau (vv. 12-13) was because of their foreseen behavior, that one would be good and the other bad. But this would be wrong for at least two reasons.
        1. It would mean that God's decisions are based on something in Jacob and Esau. This is unscriptural. There is nothing in us that merits any favor with God. We are, after all, by nature, children of wrath (Eph. 2:3), do not seek God (Rom. 3:10-11), and are slaves of sin (Rom. 6:16). Also, God shows no partiality (Rom. 2:11).
        2. It circumvents the cross. The only reason that God would look favorably upon us is because of what has been done by Jesus on the cross. It is only through Jesus, and by Jesus, and because of Jesus, that any of us have any standing before God at all.
     2. This section of Scripture clearly shows that God is sovereign. Sovereignty means that God is supreme in authority and power, is independent of all others, and does as He wishes. He can love whom He chooses and hate whom He chooses. His sovereignty means that He has the right to be merciful or not based according to His own will. The question is, "Is that what He is doing?"
  3. "The older will serve the younger" is a quote from Genesis
     1. Genesis 25:23, "The LORD said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples will be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger.'"
  4. "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" is a quote from Malachi.
     1. Malachi 1:2, "'I have loved you,' says the LORD. But you say, 'How have You loved us?' 'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' declares the LORD. 'Yet I have loved Jacob.'"
  5. Background Information.
     1. Esau came home famished from a hunting trip and sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew (Gen. 25:29-34). This demonstrated Esau's lack of regard for his spiritual position. Later at the time of Isaac's death, Jacob, with Rebecca's help, tricked Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing instead of the firstborn Esau (Gen. 27:1-29). Esau then threatened to kill Jacob (Gen. 27:41-46). Jacob fled to his uncle Laban's home, married, and had children (Gen. 29:1-35). He eventually returned to his homeland and reconciled with Esau (Gen. 33:4).

# What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

* 1. Paul asks about the injustice of God because of what he just taught. This is critical to understanding the text.
  2. If you do not ask the same basic questions that Paul raised, then you do not understand what he is teaching.
  3. Remember, we all tend to judge things by what we think is fair, according to our reasoning and standard. This is humanism.

# For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

* 1. Paul is referring to Exodus 33:19.
     1. Exodus 33:19, "And He said, 'I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."
  2. One of the objections to this section of Scripture is that God is not selecting individuals. Instead, he is selecting people groups. This is because Jacob and Esau both became the fathers of many. Therefore, some will say that individuals freely choose to follow or reject God within those groups of people.
  3. But, in Greek, the word "whom" is ὅς hós. It is in the singular, not plural.
  4. This demonstrates God's election of individuals.
     1. Acts 9:15, "But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he [Paul] is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.'"
        1. Chosen is ἐκλογή eklogḗ. It means to choose, select, election, choice, selection. It is used seven times in the New Testament: Acts 9:15; Rom. 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Pet. 1:10. For example…
     2. Rom. 11:7, "What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened."
     3. 2 Peter 1:10, "Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

# So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

* 1. The man
     1. Notice that Paul speaks of individuals: "the man."
     2. This further refutes the idea that God is speaking of people groups.

# For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."

* 1. This is a reference to Exodus 9:16, "But, indeed, for this reason, I have allowed you [Pharaoh] to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth."
  2. For this very purpose, I raised you up
     1. To demonstrate God's power So God raised Pharaoh in order to demonstrate his power in him. This power was demonstrated through the plagues upon the people of Egypt. Furthermore, Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 9:34-35). Yet, God also hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 4:21).
     2. To proclaim God's name
        1. Exodus 7:3–5, "But I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 "When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5 "The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst."
        2. Exodus 9:16, "But, indeed, for this reason, I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth."
        3. The Egyptians and those around the nation of Egypt, would hear of the great work of Yahweh.

# So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

* 1. The word "whom" is in the singular. It is not speaking of people groups.
  2. The context deals with Pharaoh, an individual. God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the people of Israel go.
     1. Exodus 4:21, "The LORD said to Moses, 'When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go."

# You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

* 1. The natural question arises. If God hardened Pharaoh's heart, then why does God still find fault in Pharaoh? That doesn't seem to be fair.
  2. So again, if you ask this basic question, then you understand what Paul is teaching. If you do not assess basic question you do not understand what he's teaching.

# On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

* 1. Paul responds to the objection by giving an analogy dealing with pottery.
  2. Paul doesn't go through a huge justification for God's actions. Instead, he gives a simple illustration.
  3. The maker has the right to form the clay as he desires. Via personification, the clay cannot complain.

# Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

* 1. The Potter (God) has the right to make different people for different uses.
     1. Prov. 16:4, "The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil."
  2. Vessel - σκεῦος skeúos. It occurs 23 times in the New Testament. When it is used of people in the singular, it means an individual. But, it has other meanings in different contexts.
     + 1. Container – Luke 8:16, John 19:29
       2. Goods – Luke 17:31
       3. Instrument (Paul) – Acts 9:15
       4. Merchandise – Mark 11:16
       5. Property – Matt. 12:29; Mark 3:27
       6. Sea anchor - Acts 27:17
       7. Vessel (object) – Acts 10:11, 16; 11:5; 2 Cor. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:20; Heb. 9:21; Rev. 2:27; 18:12.
       8. Vessel (person) – Rom. 9:21, 22, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Thess. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:21; 1 Pet. 3:7

# What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

* 1. Does the "what if" mean that God did not really use individuals as He chooses? If that is the case, then why the objections raised earlier? And, for clarification, the next verse (v. 23) says that God *did it*.
     1. Prov. 16:4, "The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.”
     2. 1 Peter 2:8, "and, “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.

# And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

* 1. "He did so" is not in the Greek. It is literally, "and to make." Different translations render it as…
     1. "He did so" NASB, LEB,
     2. "in order to" ESV, RSV
     3. "he might make known" KJV, NKJV, Douy Rheims; ASV
  2. But the actuality of God doing this is logically necessary because if the 'if' means it really didn't happen in verse 22, then "what if" would also apply to 'make known the riches of His glory.' But that would not make sense because God had already stated that the reason He was doing what He was doing was to show His glory
     + 1. Exodus 9:16, "But, indeed, for this reason, I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth."
       2. Col. 3:12, "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."
       3. 2 Thess. 2:13-14, "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
  3. Notes:
     1. Election is the sovereign act of God where, from before the foundation of the world, he chose those whom he would save (Eph. 1:4). This election to salvation is not conditioned upon any foreseen faith (Rom. 9:16) or good works of any individual (Rom. 9:11; 2 Tim. 1:9). The election is based completely on God's sovereign choice according to the kind intention of his will (Eph. 1:11), the criteria, of which, he has not revealed to us. God elected people because he decided to bestow his love upon them (John 3:16; Eph. 2:4) based solely on his sovereign grace (Gal. 1:15) and for his glory (Isa. 43:7).
     2. Does God elect and choose people and individuals? Yes, he does. The Greek word "eklektos" (elect) occurs many times in the N.T.
        1. Jacob - Rom. 9:10–13
        2. Witnesses - to Christ’s Resurrection Acts 10:41
        3. Matthias - Acts 1:24, 26
        4. Paul - Acts 9:15; Acts 22:13–14
           1. Acts 9:15, Paul is a chosen vessel.
           2. Rom. 9:11, God chose to love Jacob and hate Esau
           3. Rom. 11:5, God has remnant of believers due to his choice.
           4. Rom. 11:7, Those who were chosen obtained salvation.
           5. Rom. 11:28, God chose Israel to love.
           6. 1 Thess. 1:4, God chose the brethren.

# even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

* 1. Election
     1. “election (Gr. eklogē, Lat. electio, “a choice”) God’s choosing of a people to enjoy the benefits of salvation and to carry out God’s purposes in the world (1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Pet. 1:10). This doctrine has been of particular importance in Reformed theology.”[[1]](#footnote-1)
     2. “Election is an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign good pleasure.” [[2]](#footnote-2)
     3. “The Order of Salvation (From Grudem’s Systematic Theology)
        1. Election (God’s choice of people to be saved)
        2. The gospel call (proclaiming the message of the gospel)
        3. Regeneration (being born again)
        4. Conversion (faith and repentance)
        5. Justification (right legal standing)
        6. Adoption (membership in God’s family)
        7. Sanctification (right conduct of life)
        8. Perseverance (remaining a Christian)
        9. Death (going to be with the Lord)
        10. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)”[[3]](#footnote-3)
     4. Election, Choosing
        1. “ἐκλογή eklogḗ; gen. eklogḗs, fem. noun from eklégō (1586), to choose, select. Election, choice, selection.”[[4]](#footnote-4) It occurs seven times in the NT: Acts 9:15; Rom. 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Peter 1:10.
  2. God has elected people not just for the Jews but also among the Gentiles.
     1. Eph. 1:4, "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”
     2. 2 Thess. 2:13, "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”

# As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' And her who was not beloved, 'beloved.' "

* 1. Hosea 2:23, "I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, And I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they will say, ‘You are my God!’ ”

# "And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'you are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."

* 1. Hosea 1:10, "Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And in the place Where it is said to them, “You are not My people,” It will be said to them, “You are the sons of the living God.”

1. **Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be like the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved;**
   1. Isaiah 10:22, "For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, Only a remnant within them will return; A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.”

# for the Lord will execute His word on the earth, thoroughly and quickly."

* 1. Isaiah 10:23, "For a complete destruction, one that is decreed, the Lord GOD of hosts will execute in the midst of the whole land.

# And just as Isaiah foretold, "Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become like Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah."

* 1. Isaiah 1:9, "Unless the LORD of hosts Had left us a few survivors, We would be like Sodom, We would be like Gomorrah.”

# What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;

* 1. Gentiles…attained righteousness
     1. The Gentiles were able to obtain with the Jews could not: salvation and complete forgiveness. They obtained it by faith.
        1. Rom. 4:3, "For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”
  2. The righteousness which is by faith
     1. Rom. 3:28, "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."
     2. Rom. 4:1-5, "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? ‘ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.’ 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness."
     3. Rom. 5:1, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
     4. Gal. 2:16, "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."
     5. Gal. 3:8, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the nations shall be blessed in you.’"
     6. Gal. 3:24, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."
     7. Phil. 3:9, "and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith."

# but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that Law.

# Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

* 1. That Law
     1. Israel, as a people, could not attain righteousness by the Law. This is because the Law demands perfection and reveals our imperfections. It demands sinlessness but shows us our sin.
        1. 2 Cor. 3:6, "…for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”
     2. The Law
        1. Through the Law comes knowledge of sin (Rom. 7:7).
        2. The Law is what gives sin’s power to kill (1 Cor. 15:56).
        3. The Law leads us to Christ (Gal. 3:24).
        4. Those under the Law will be judged by the Law (Rom. 2:12).
        5. By the works of the Law no flesh no flesh will be justified (Rom. 3:20)
        6. The Law brings about wrath (Rom. 4:15).
        7. The Law arouses sinful passions (Rom. 7:5).
        8. The Law made nothing perfect (Heb. 7:19).
  2. As though it were by works
     1. It is as though they were unbelieving Jews who sought righteousness by their deeds rather than by the faith necessary to please God. This is because we cannot keep that Law. Its requirements are beyond us.
        1. Deut. 27:26, "Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this Law by doing them. And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’”
        2. Gal. 3:10, "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.”
        3. James 2:10, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.”
        4. Gal. 5:2–4, "Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by Law; you have fallen from grace.”
  3. They stumbled over the stumbling stone
     1. The Jews stumbled over Jesus because He did not fit their image of what the Law was supposed to do for them.
     2. 1 Peter 2:6–8, "For this is contained in Scripture: “BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” 7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone,” 8 and, “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.”

# just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."

* 1. He who believes in Him will not be disappointed
     1. Our faith is only as good as who we put it in. Our faith is in Christ and what He did in His death, not what we do in our lives.
        1. God grants that we have faith (Phil. 1:29)
        2. God’s work of faith is that we believe in Jesus (John 6:29)
        3. The faith that God grants us, is in Jesus. It is sufficient to justify us before Him because all of it is from God, not us. It is His work, not ours.
     2. By contrast, all who teach that they can attain, maintain, or regain salvation based on their ability to be good before God, are arrogant and lost. Therefore, it is the arrogance of Law-keeping, versus the humility of trusting in Christ’s work.
        1. Islam “Then when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no more relationships between them that Day, nor will one ask after another! 102 Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy, they will attain salvation: 103 But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls, in Hell will they abide,” (Surah 23:101-103).
        2. JWs Watchtower, Feb. 15, 1983, p. 12, “There are four requirements for salvation: “Many have found the second requirement more difficult. It is to obey God’s laws, yes, to conform one’s life to the moral requirements set out in the Bible. This includes refraining from a debauched, immoral way of life. 1 Cor. 6:9,10; 1 Pet. 4:3, 4.”
        3. LDS 2 Nephi 25:23, “For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.”
        4. Catholicism “…so that all men may attain salvation through faith, Baptism and the observance of the Commandments,'” (CCC 2068).”
        5. Eastern Orthodoxy “Justification is accomplished at baptism, the point where a person is granted forgiveness of sins and placed in a right relationship with God, and it is maintained through a life of obedience to God and confession of sins.”…It is accomplished at baptism, the sacramental instrument by which sins are forgiven, and is maintained by confession of sins.” (https://orthodoxbridge.com/2015/02/09/what-do-orthodox-christians-believe-about-justification)
     3. In Christ
        1. We are complete in Christ (Col. 2:10).
        2. We are perfected in Christ (Heb. 10:14).
        3. We are alive to God in Christ (Rom. 6:11).
        4. We are sanctified in Christ (1 Cor. 1:2).
        5. We are forgiven by God in Christ (Eph. 4:32)
     4. For the Christian, salvation is found in what God does, not what we do in combination with his work. We are not good enough and never will be good enough to merit any favor from God. This is why we are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9).

1. McKim, Donald K.. The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms, Second Edition: Revised and Expanded (p. 100). Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Kindle Edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Grudem, Wayne A.; Grudem, Wayne A.. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine (p. 670). Zondervan. Kindle Edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid., Grudem. P. 670 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Zodhiates, Spiros. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)