

The Book of Romans

EDITOR'S NOTE: *THE BIBLE IS LIKE NO OTHER BOOK, FOR IT HOLDS THE VERY WORDS OF GOD, WHICH HAVE POWER TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF ANY WHO READ IT AND PUT THEIR FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. PSALM 34:8 SAYS, "OH, TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD! BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO TAKES REFUGE IN HIM!" THROUGH THE NEBRASKA LIVING TIMES YOU MAY "TASTE" AND SEE THE GOODNESS OF GOD THROUGH HIS VERY OWN WORDS, EACH MONTH, RIGHT HERE. MAY GOD BLESS YOU WITH HIS WORD!*

**(CONTINUED FROM JAN. 2020)
THE BOOK OF ROMANS
CHAPTER 9**

ARE GOD'S SOVEREIGN CHOICE

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 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."

ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF

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. 32 WHY? BECAUSE THEY DID NOT PURSUE IT BY FAITH, BUT AS IF IT WERE BASED ON WORKS. THEY HAVE STUMBLERED OVER THE STUMBLING STONE, 33 AS IT IS WRITTEN, "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."

CHAPTER 10

BROTHERS, MY HEART'S DESIRE AND PRAYER TO GOD FOR THEM IS THAT THEY MAY BE SAVED. 2 FOR I BEAR THEM WITNESS THAT THEY HAVE A ZEAL FOR GOD, BUT NOT ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE. 3 FOR, BEING IGNORANT OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, AND SEEKING TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN, THEY DID NOT SUBMIT TO GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. 4 FOR CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES.

THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION TO ALL 5 FOR MOSES WRITES ABOUT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT IS BASED ON THE LAW, THAT THE PERSON WHO DOES THE COMMANDMENTS SHALL LIVE BY THEM. 6 BUT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS BASED ON FAITH SAYS, "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?'" (THAT IS, TO BRING CHRIST DOWN) 7 "OR 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?'" (THAT IS, TO BRING CHRIST UP FROM THE DEAD). 8 BUT WHAT DOES IT SAY? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART" (THAT IS, THE WORD OF FAITH THAT WE PROCLAIM); 9 BECAUSE, IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH THAT JESUS IS LORD AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED. 10 FOR WITH THE HEART ONE BELIEVES AND IS JUSTIFIED, AND WITH THE MOUTH ONE CONFESSES AND IS SAVED. 11 FOR THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, "EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME." 12 FOR THERE IS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN JEW AND GREEK; FOR THE SAME LORD IS LORD OF ALL, BESTOWING HIS RICHES ON ALL WHO CALL ON HIM. 13 FOR "EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

14 HOW THEN WILL THEY CALL ON HIM IN WHOM THEY HAVE NOT BELIEVED? AND HOW ARE THEY TO BELIEVE IN HIM OF WHOM THEY HAVE NEVER HEARD? AND HOW ARE THEY TO HEAR WITHOUT SOMEONE PREACHING? 15 AND HOW ARE THEY TO PREACH UNLESS THEY ARE SENT? AS IT IS WRITTEN, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS!" 16 BUT THEY HAVE NOT ALL OBEYED THE GOSPEL. FOR ISAIAH SAYS, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED WHAT HE HAS HEARD FROM US?" 17 SO FAITH COMES FROM HEARING, AND HEARING THROUGH THE WORD OF CHRIST.

18 BUT I ASK, HAVE THEY NOT HEARD? INDEED THEY HAVE, FOR "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT TO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD."

19 BUT I ASK, DID ISRAEL NOT UNDERSTAND? FIRST MOSES SAYS, "I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT A NATION; WITH A FOOLISH NATION I WILL MAKE YOU ANGRY." 20 THEN ISAIAH IS SO BOLD AS TO SAY, "I HAVE BEEN FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME; I HAVE SHOWN MYSELF TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME."

21 BUT OF ISRAEL HE SAYS, "ALL DAY LONG I HAVE HELD OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND CONTRARY PEOPLE."

THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL

1 I ASK, THEN, HAS GOD REJECTED HIS PEOPLE? BY NO MEANS! FOR I MYSELF

AM AN ISRAELITE, A DESCENDANT OF ABRAHAM.[FN] A MEMBER OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN. 2 GOD HAS NOT REJECTED HIS PEOPLE WHOM HE FOREKNEW. DO YOU NOT KNOW WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAYS OF ELIJAH, HOW HE APPEALS TO GOD AGAINST ISRAEL? 3 "LORD, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE DEMOLISHED YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY SEEK MY LIFE." 4 BUT WHAT IS GOD'S REPLY TO HIM? "I HAVE KEPT FOR MYSELF SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." 5 SO TOO AT THE PRESENT TIME THERE IS A REMNANT, CHOSEN BY GRACE. 6 BUT IF IT IS BY GRACE, IT IS NO LONGER ON THE BASIS OF WORKS; OTHERWISE GRACE WOULD NO LONGER BE GRACE.

7 WHAT THEN? ISRAEL FAILED TO OBTAIN WHAT IT WAS SEEKING. THE ELECT OBTAINED IT, BUT THE REST WERE HARDENED, 8 AS IT IS WRITTEN, "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES THAT WOULD NOT SEE AND EARS THAT WOULD NOT HEAR, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY."

9 AND DAVID SAYS, "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION FOR THEM; 10 LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED SO THAT THEY CANNOT SEE, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER."

GENTILES GRAFTED IN

11 SO I ASK, DID THEY STUMBLE IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT FALL? BY NO MEANS! RATHER THROUGH THEIR TRESPASS SALVATION HAS COME TO THE GENTILES, SO AS TO MAKE ISRAEL JEALOUS. 12 NOW IF THEIR TRESPASS MEANS RICHES FOR THE WORLD, AND IF THEIR FAILURE MEANS RICHES FOR THE GENTILES, HOW MUCH MORE WILL THEIR FULL INCLUSION MEAN! 13 NOW I AM SPEAKING TO YOU GENTILES. INASMUCH THEN AS I AM AN APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES, I MAGNIFY MY MINISTRY 14 IN ORDER SOMEHOW TO MAKE MY FELLOW JEWS JEALOUS, AND THUS SAVE SOME OF THEM. 15 FOR IF THEIR REJECTION MEANS THE RECONCILIATION OF THE WORLD, WHAT WILL THEIR ACCEPTANCE MEAN BUT LIFE FROM THE DEAD? 16 IF THE DOUGH OFFERED AS FIRSTFRUITS IS HOLY, SO IS THE WHOLE LUMP, AND IF THE ROOT IS HOLY, SO ARE THE BRANCHES.

17 BUT IF SOME OF THE BRANCHES WERE BROKEN OFF, AND YOU, ALTHOUGH A WILD OLIVE SHOOT, WERE GRAFTED IN AMONG THE OTHERS AND NOW SHARE IN THE NOURISHING ROOT OF THE OLIVE TREE, 18 DO NOT BE ARROGANT TOWARD THE BRANCHES. IF YOU ARE, REMEMBER IT IS NOT YOU WHO SUPPORT THE ROOT, BUT THE ROOT THAT SUPPORTS YOU. 19 THEN YOU WILL SAY, "BRANCHES WERE BROKEN

OFF SO THAT I MIGHT BE GRAFTED IN." 20 THAT IS TRUE. THEY WERE BROKEN OFF BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF, BUT YOU STAND FAST THROUGH FAITH. SO DO NOT BECOME PROUD, BUT FEAR. 21 FOR IF GOD DID NOT SPARE THE NATURAL BRANCHES, NEITHER WILL HE SPARE YOU. 22 NOTE THEN THE KINDNESS AND THE SEVERITY OF GOD: SEVERITY TOWARD THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN, BUT GOD'S KINDNESS TO YOU, PROVIDED YOU CONTINUE IN HIS KINDNESS. OTHERWISE YOU TOO WILL BE CUT OFF. 23 AND EVEN THEY, IF THEY DO NOT CONTINUE IN THEIR UNBELIEF, WILL BE GRAFTED IN, FOR GOD HAS THE POWER TO GRAFT THEM IN AGAIN. 24 FOR IF YOU WERE CUT FROM WHAT IS BY NATURE A WILD OLIVE TREE, AND GRAFTED, CONTRARY TO NATURE, INTO A CULTIVATED OLIVE TREE, HOW MUCH MORE WILL THESE, THE NATURAL BRANCHES, BE GRAFTED BACK INTO THEIR OWN OLIVE TREE.

THE MYSTERY OF ISRAEL'S SALVATION 25 LEST YOU BE WISE IN YOUR OWN SIGHT, I DO NOT WANT YOU TO BE UNAWARE OF THIS MYSTERY, BROTHERS: A PARTIAL HARDENING HAS COME UPON ISRAEL, UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN. 26 AND IN THIS WAY ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED, AS IT IS WRITTEN,

"THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL BANISH UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB"; 27 "AND THIS WILL BE MY COVENANT WITH THEM WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." 28 AS REGARDS THE GOSPEL, THEY ARE ENEMIES FOR YOUR SAKE. BUT AS REGARDS ELECTION, THEY ARE BELOVED FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR FOREFATHERS. 29 FOR THE GIFTS AND THE CALLING OF GOD ARE IRREVOCABLE. 30 FOR JUST AS YOU WERE AT ONE TIME DISOBEDIENT TO GOD BUT NOW HAVE RECEIVED MERCY BECAUSE OF THEIR DISOBEDIENCE, 31 SO THEY TOO HAVE NOW BEEN DISOBEDIENT IN ORDER THAT BY THE MERCY SHOWN TO YOU THEY ALSO MAY NOW RECEIVE MERCY. 32 FOR GOD HAS CONSIGNED ALL TO DISOBEDIENCE, THAT HE MAY HAVE MERCY ON ALL.

33 OH, THE DEPTH OF THE RICHES AND WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD! HOW UNSEARCHABLE ARE HIS JUDGMENTS AND HOW INSCRUTABLE HIS WAYS!

34 "FOR WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO HAS BEEN HIS COUNSELOR?"

35 "OR WHO HAS GIVEN A GIFT TO HIM THAT HE MIGHT BE REPAID?"

36 FOR FROM HIM AND THROUGH HIM AND TO HIM ARE ALL THINGS. TO HIM BE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN.

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