

## 4 rejection of Israel

### JUSTICE

I tell the truth in Christ. I am not lying, my conscience testifying with me in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brothers' sake, my relatives according to the flesh who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service, and the promises; of whom are the fathers, and from whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God, blessed forever. Amen.

But it is not as though the word of God has come to nothing. For they are not all Israel that are of Israel. Neither, because they are Abraham's offspring, are they all children. But, "your offspring will be accounted as from Isaac." That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as heirs. For this is a word of promise: "At the appointed time I will come, and Sarah will have a son."

Not only so, but Rebekah also conceived by one, by our father Isaac. For being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him who calls, it was said to her, "The elder will serve the younger." Even as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? May it never be!

For he said to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I caused you to be raised up, that I might show in you my power, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then, he has mercy on whom he desires, and he hardens whom he desires.

You will say then to me, "Why does he still find fault? For who withstands his will?" But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed ask him who formed it, "Why did you make me like this?" Or hasn't the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel for honor, and another for dishonor?

What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on vessels of mercy, which he prepared beforehand for glory— us, whom he also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles?

As he says also in Hosea,

"I will call them 'my people,' which were not my people; and her 'beloved,' who was not beloved."

"It will be that in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'"

Isaiah cries concerning Israel,

"If the number of the children of Israel are as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant who will be saved;

for he will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth."

As Isaiah has said before,

"Unless the Lord of Armies had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, and would have been made like Gomorrah."

### CAUSE

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who didn't follow after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith; but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, didn't arrive at the law of righteousness. Why? Because they didn't seek it by faith, but as it were by works of the law. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

even as it is written,

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offense; and no one who believes in him will be disappointed."

Brothers, my heart's desire and my prayer to God is for Israel, that they may be saved. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they didn't subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the fulfillment of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

For Moses writes about the righteousness of the law, "The one who does them will live by them." But the righteousness which is of faith says this, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down); or, 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.)" But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart;" that is, the word of faith which we preach: that if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes resulting in righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich to all who call on him. For, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in him whom they have not heard? How will they hear without a preacher? And how will they preach unless they are sent?

As it is written:

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!”

But they didn't all listen to the glad news.

For Isaiah says,

“Lord, who has believed our report?”

So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, didn't they hear? Yes, most certainly,

“Their sound went out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

But I ask, didn't Israel know?

First Moses says,

“I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation. I will make you angry with a nation void of understanding.”

Isaiah is very bold and says,

“I was found by those who didn't seek me. I was revealed to those who didn't ask for me.”

But about Israel he says,

“All day long I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

## NOT REJECTED

I ask then, did God reject his people? May it never be! For I also am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

God didn't reject his people, whom he foreknew. Or don't you know what the Scripture says about Elijah? How he pleads with God against Israel: “Lord, they have killed your prophets. They have broken down your altars. I am left alone, and they seek my life.” But how does God answer him? “I have reserved for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” Even so too at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

What then? That which Israel seeks for, that he didn't obtain, but the chosen ones obtained it, and the rest were hardened.

According as it is written,

“God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, to this very day.”

David says,

“Let their table be made a snare, a trap, a stumbling block, and a retribution to them.

Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see. Always keep their backs bent.”

I ask then, did they stumble that they might fall? May it never be! But by their fall salvation has come to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

For I speak to you who are Gentiles. Since then as I am an apostle to Gentiles, I glorify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh, and may save some of them. For if the rejection of them is the reconciling of the world, what would their acceptance be, but life from the dead?

If the first fruit is holy, so is the lump. If the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the root and of the richness of the olive tree, don't boast over the branches. But if you boast, remember that it is not you who support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, “Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.” True; by their unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by your faith. Don't be conceited, but fear; for if God didn't spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.

See then the goodness and severity of God. Toward those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in his goodness; otherwise you also will be cut off. They also, if they don't continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more will these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

For I don't desire you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you won't be wise in your own conceits, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and so all Israel will be saved.

Even as it is written,

“There will come out of Zion the Deliverer, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

This is my covenant with them, when I will take away their sins.”

Concerning the Good News, they are enemies for your sake. But concerning the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For as you in time past were disobedient to God, but now have obtained mercy by their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that by the mercy shown to you they may also obtain mercy. For God has bound all to disobedience, that he might have mercy on all.



Please read the above text and complete the below in preparation for class. Give priority to the text!

1. Paul refers to a "stumbling stone", what is it and how do you know? (this question is carry over from last week)
2. Why does Paul bring up the story of Elijah?
3. This text mentions how we "will be saved" a number of times,
  - a. What answers does Paul give?
  - b. How do they fit within what we have studied so far? **Note: Please spend some time on this one. Think through how *grace* and *works* fit. Also consider *Jesus*, *faith*, and *obedience*.**
4. Paul uses a grafting analogy, describe the application of his analogy in the text.