

# Romans

## Chapter 9

### A Parenthetical Shift

- The logical continuation of the thought started in **Chapter 8**, **to be conformed to the image of His Son** would be to go to **Chapter 12**, and see how **to be transformed by the renewal of your mind**.
- Chapters **9-11**, are parenthetical in that they reroute our thoughts away from the Gentiles and lean in towards Israel.
- The Holy Spirit wants to teach us and reassure believers that God's faithfulness to Israel is still in force.
- Paul wants believers to rest in the full assurance of God's steadfast love and salvation.
- Israel it appears was once loved and saved but now seems to be rejected and cursed by God.

- There are some who truly believe that God has rejected Israel and that the Church has now **replaced** Israel as the apple of God's eye.
- They are sorely mistaken and those people do not understand the character of God.
- The Lord described His nature and character to Moses on mount Sinai.
- “The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and **proclaimed the name** of the LORD. The LORD passed before him and **proclaimed**, “The LORD, the LORD, God **merciful** and **gracious**, **slow to anger**, and **abounding in steadfast love** and **faithfulness**, keeping **steadfast love** for thousands, **forgiving** iniquity and transgression and sin...”-**Exodus 34:5-7a**

- The word for steadfast love is, “the word **hesed**...the description par excellence of God in the Old Testament. The word speaks of a completely undeserved kindness and generosity done by a person who is in a position of power. This was the Israelites experience of God. He revealed Himself to them when they were not looking for Him, and **He kept His covenant** with them long after their **persistent breaking** of it had **destroyed any reason for His continual keeping of it**...Unlike humans, this deity is not fickle, undependable, self-serving, and grasping. Instead He is faithful, true, upright, and generous. Always!”-Oswalt, John
- God's **steadfast love** can be counted upon day after day, decade after decade, generation after generation.
- It is not about any romantic feeling of being loved or about our performance. It's about God's **steadfast love** and **faithfulness**.

- For both Israel and the Church the foundation has always rested upon God's **steadfast love** and **enduring kindness**!
- It's about Him and His performance to show Himself to be faithful not man's skill or strength.
- "They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God **ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger** and abounding in **steadfast love**, and did not forsake them."-**Nehemiah 9:17**

- Out of God's His **steadfast love** He will not forsake Israel because He is true to His Word.
- His unfailing **faithfulness** and **steadfast love** to Israel is an assurance that His faithfulness and steadfast love is for believers as well.
- The **steadfast love** of God is what **sets Him apart** from every other fear mongering god.
- Our Father **delights** in being kind and offering forgiveness and **steadfast love** to those who have **no right to expect** anything from Him.

- “Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he **delights in steadfast love**. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show **faithfulness to Jacob** and **steadfast love to Abraham**, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.”-**Micah 7:18-20**
- “Whatever despair may whisper or doubt may suggest, one text of Scripture is worth fifty fears and doubts, or fifty thousand either... All objections to the delight of God in mercy are but illusions of your brain, or delusions of your heart”-Spurgeon, Charles

## Romans 9:1-3

“I am speaking the truth in Christ I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 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.”

## Paul's Anguish

- Paul was tormented by **great sorrow and unceasing anguish** for his lost countrymen, **according to the flesh**.
- He says his **conscience** along with the **Holy Spirit bear witness** that He is speaking the **truth**.
- Paul demonstrated the length in which he was willing to go to see Israel come to know Christ.
- If he could he wished he was **accursed and cut off from Christ**.
- Ouch! That is true dedication to his fellow countrymen. Die maybe, but go to hell for eternity so that Israel would be saved that's a level of commitment of which I cannot understand.

- The word for **accursed** is ***anathema***, which means, a thing devoted to God **without hope of being redeemed**; therefore a person or thing **doomed to destruction**.
- Paul may have had Moses in mind who prayed: "So Moses returned to the LORD and said, 'Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin—**but if not, please blot me out of your book** that you have written.'"-Exodus 32:31-32
- Maybe Moses understood the **steadfast love** of God's character so deeply that he was willing to be **blot out** of God's book so that Israel's sins would be forgiven, and yet, receive nothing in return for himself.
- "It is not easy to estimate the measure of love in a Moses and a Paul. For our limited reason does not grasp it, as the child cannot comprehend the courage of warriors!"-Bengel, John

## **Romans 9:4-5**

“They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.”

## **Eight Things Special to Israel**

- Israel and despite their unfaithfulness and disobedience they belong to the Lord, Who is faithful beyond measure.
- “Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar the LORD of hosts is his name: If this **fixed order** departs from before me, declares the LORD, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever. Thus says the LORD: If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the Lord.”-**Jeremiah 31:35-37**

- **#1 Adoption:**

- “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, **Israel** is my **firstborn son.**’-**Exodus 4:22**
- “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has **chosen** you to be a people for **his treasured possession**, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples...”-**Deuteronomy 7:6**
- “You only have I known of **all the families** of the earth...”-**Amos 3:2**
- “For just as the **new heavens** and the **new earth**, which I will make, **will remain** before me—this is the **LORD’s declaration**—so your **offspring [Seed]** and your **name [Israel]** will remain.-**Isaiah 66:22**

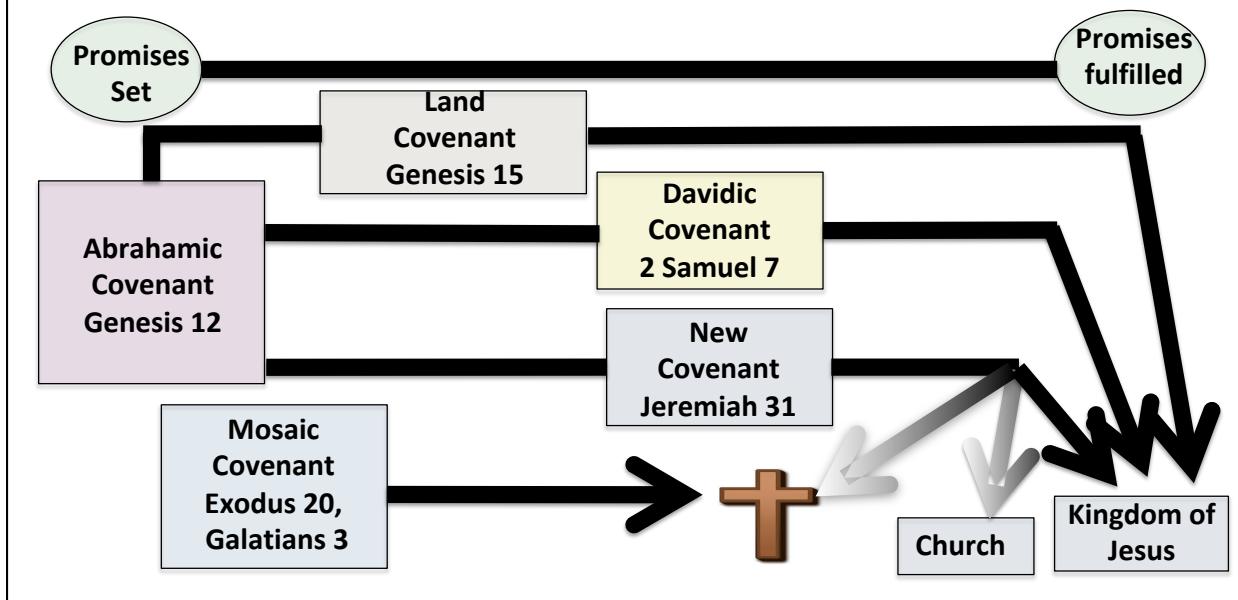
- **#2 Glory:**

- “And in the morning you shall see the **glory** of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?”-**Exodus 16:7**
- “and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the LORD), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD, For he is good, for his **steadfast love endures forever**, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the **glory** of the LORD filled the house of God.”-**2 Chronicles 5:13-14**

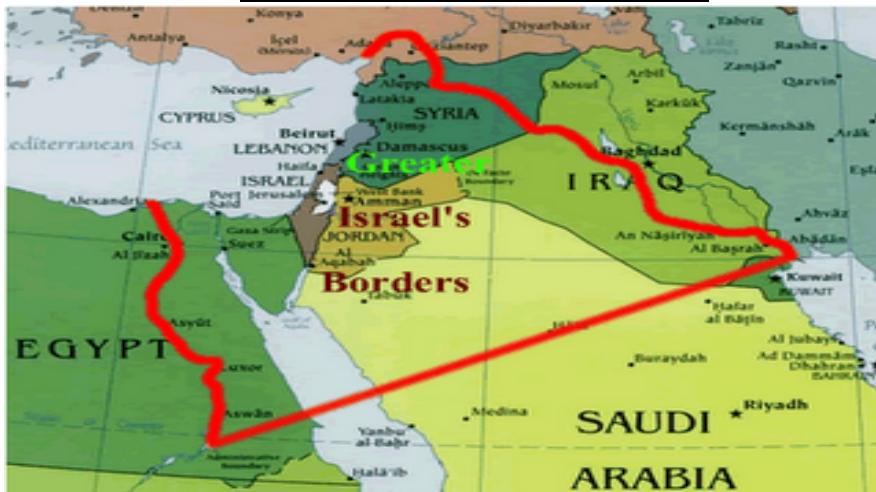
### #3: The Covenants

The Covenants	Who Received The Covenant	The Promise of The Covenant	What were The Conditions
Abrahamic	Abraham and his descendants throughout the ages	God will bless Israel and make them a great nation. Gentiles will be blessed through Abraham.	Unconditional and forever
Mosaic	The nation of Israel	The Law is given to govern Israel. It was fulfilled by Jesus at the cross.	Conditional upon obedience.
Land	Abraham and then later the nation of Israel	Israel will inherit the land given to them by God	Unconditional and forever
Davidic	David	David's seed will reign over Israel	Unconditional and forever
New	The nation of Israel	God will forgive Israel's sins and be intimately known to them	Unconditional and forever

### #3 The Covenants



## Land Covenant



This map features the biblical boundaries of the Land of Israel as described in [Genesis 15:18](#) and [Genesis 17:8](#).

- #4: The giving of the Law:
- We saw in Romans **Chapter 3:2**, that Israel had been given a great and awesome privilege by God to be **entrusted with the oracles of God**.
- “The LORD said to Moses, ‘Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may **give you** the tablets of stone, **with the law and the commandment**, which I have written for their instruction.”-**Exodus 24:12**
- “This Book of **the Law** shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success”-**Joshua 1:8**

- “Almost all English translations of the Bible translate the Hebrew word **torah** as **law**. Modern Western Christians often have, as a result, received a distorted perspective of **Torah** from uniformed preaching and Sunday school teachings...To understand **Torah** strictly as **law** would be like translating the word parent as disciplinarian...The verb **yarah** from which the noun **torah** comes, means to shoot at a target with force and accuracy. It also means **revelation** and first and foremost refers to a revelation of the nature and character of God and how to live life to the fullest measure in a way that is pleasing to God. It means to shoot and hit the target accurately based upon the revelation of God.”-Young, Brad

- **#5: Worship:**
- The word used for **worship** is ***latreia*** and literally means to **perform sacred services**.
- It is the service and worship of God according to the requirements of the **priestly law** given in Leviticus.
- “Note carefully that such outward form-worship belongs to the nation of Israel, and not to Christianity. To introduce it into Christianity is to return to paganism. For Paul plainly classifies the forms and ceremonies of Judaism as now belonging with “the weak and beggarly religious principles” which heathen Gentiles engage in!”-Newell, William

- “But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the **weak and worthless elementary principles** of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years!”-**Galatians 4:9-10**
- “Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a **shadow** of the things to come, but the **substance belongs to Christ.**”-**Colossians 2:16-17**
- **#6: The Promises:**
- One aspect of the **promises** refers to **all of the Old Testament** has to say about the coming Redeemer and His kingdom reign.

- “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”-**Luke 24:27**
- Another aspect of the **promises** pertain to Israel as a nation. No other nation since the beginning of time has had God’s **promises.**
- “Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he **promised.** Not one word has failed of all his good **promise**, which he spoke by Moses his servant.”-**1 Kings 8:56**

- **#7: The Patriarchs:**
- In Scripture the patriarchs refer specifically to **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** but we should also include Joseph, Moses, Joshua and David.
- Every nation has had great leaders but it was through these men that God had a special relationship and spoke directly to Israel.
- “Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘The LORD, **the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.**’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.”-**Exodus 3:13-15**

- **#8: The Christ, who is God over all:**
- It is through the Jewish race that Jesus traces His human ancestry. In case people forget **Jesus is Jewish.**
- “ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the **son** of David, the **son** of Abraham.”-**Matthew 1:1**
- Here in **Romans 9:5**, is one of the clearest statements concerning the deity of Jesus, **Who is God over all.**
- The **Christ** came from Israel, though He is not exclusively theirs but **for all** mankind since He is the sovereign eternally **God over all.**

- “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘**All authority** in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’”-**Matthew 28:18**
- Most of the world starts from the foundation that Jesus plays no part in the movement of history. In fact most are driven to diminish or eliminate Jesus’s role in history.
- Jesus is in charge of the universe and nothing happens outside of His ruling authority. All of history is moving along just as He has planned.
- Jesus not only has sovereign authority over the big issues of the cosmos but He is also governing in our own lives moving us along as He sees fit.

- “Subtract Jesus from the universe, and everything falls apart. He is not a bobble-head Savior, to be smiled at and merely added to an otherwise well-oiled life.”-Ortlund, Dane
- “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the **world** you will have **tribulation**. But take heart; I have **overcome the world**.”-**John 16:33**
- In the world and unfortunately in the church at times man tries to sideline Jesus’ supreme rule and authority but “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.”-**Philippians 2:10-11**

## **Romans 9:6-9**

“But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring,

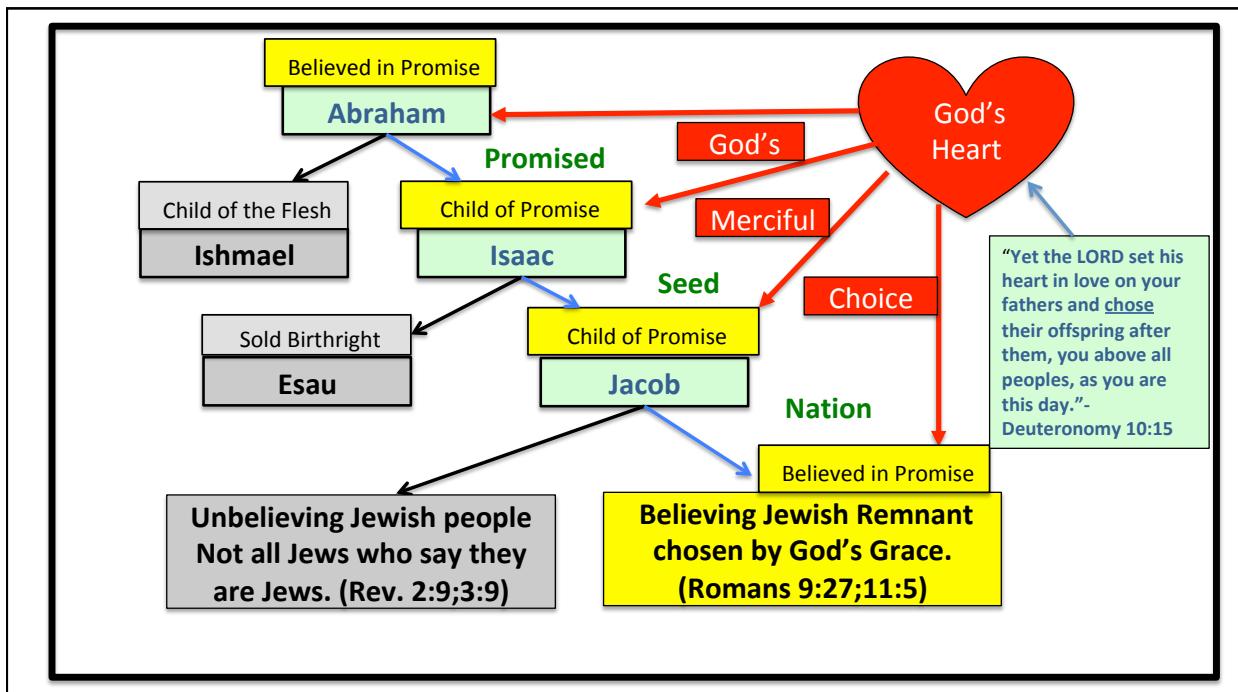
but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.”

## The Word of God

- Paul here is thinking about the individual who may believe that the **Word of God** did not fulfill its promises towards Israel.
- It appeared as though the **word of God** spoken concerning Israel's purpose had **failed**.
- The word used here for **failed** is ***Ekpipto*** which means to be **driven off course like a ship without a rudder**.
- The **Word of God** has not gone astray and the promises it contains are sure and true both towards Israel and the Believer.
- The failure was Israel's for not **believing the promises** in the Word of God.

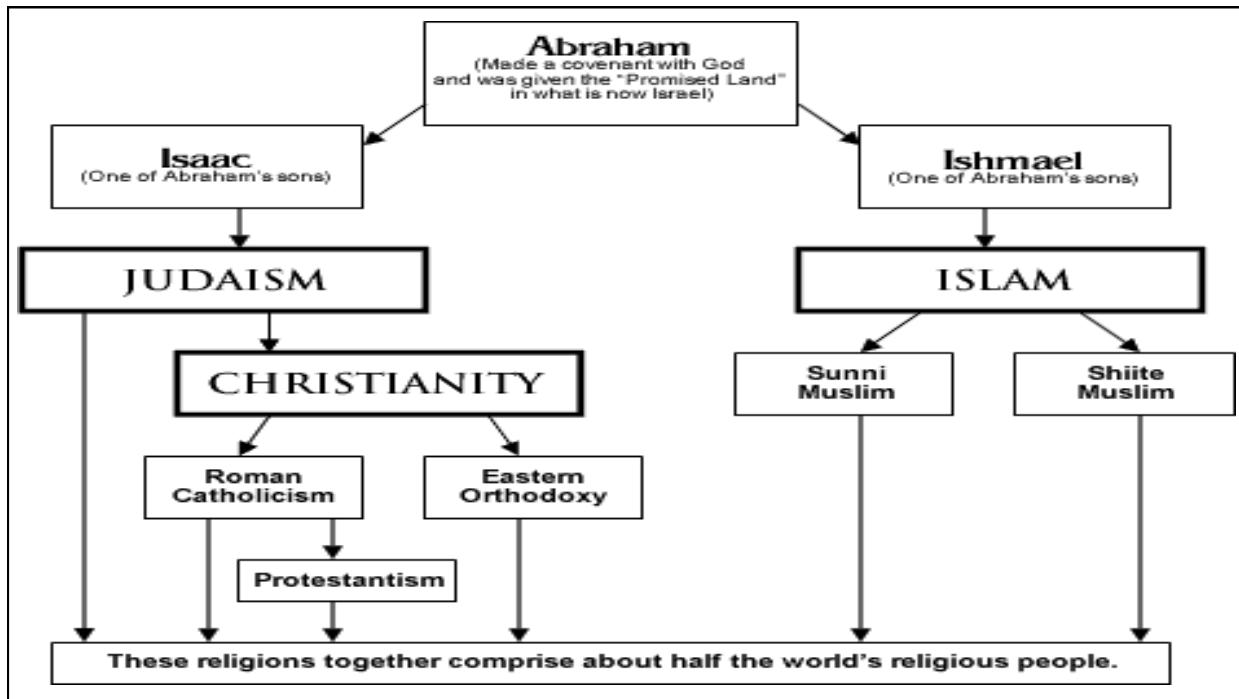
- Paul makes an important distinction that **not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel**.
- “Paul tells us that no one is truly Israel unless he is governed by God. We have a parallel situation with the word ‘Christian.’ Not everyone who is called a Christian is truly a follower of Christ.”- Smith, Chuck
- **The children of the promise are counted as offspring.**
- The Jewish people made a mistake in forming their **spiritual** identity. They thought that if they were **physically** related to Abraham that they were true Israel.
- “He came to his own, and **his own people** did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who **believed** in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were **born, not of blood** nor of **the will of the flesh** nor of the **will of man**, but of **God**.”- **John 1:11-13**

- Salvation is a gift by grace inspired by God Who calls man to believe. Not of works, natural descent, nor birthright but the will of God.
- Yet not all of Abraham's descendants are **children of the promise** given to Abraham.
- It is through **Isaac** that Abraham's **offspring be named** the **children of the promise**.
- Isaac and Ishmael are both children of Abraham but only **Isaac** was the **child of the promise**. Ishmael was a **child born of the flesh**.
- Abraham and Sarah are like all of us at times assuming that God needs a little help to fulfill His promise.
- "For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born **according to the flesh**, while the son of the free woman was **born through promise**." -**Galatians 4:22-23**



- “And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before you!” God said, “**No**, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have **blessed** him and will make him **fruitful** and **multiply him greatly**. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.”-**Genesis 17:18-21**
- In Genesis, Ishmael is the treasured son of Abraham (Gen 17:18). He receives all the promises given to his father Abraham except the one to be the son of promise.
- This is a demonstration of God’s mercy and compassion upon Ishmael although he was not a child of the promise but of the flesh.

- “These are the only people besides the Jews who have subsisted as a distinct people from the beginning, and in some respects they very much resemble each other
  1. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, are descended from Abraham, and both boast of their descent from the father of the faithful.
  2. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, are circumcised, and both profess to have derived this ceremony from Abraham.
  3. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, had originally *twelve patriarchs*, who were their princes or governors.
  4. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, marry among themselves, and in their own tribes.
  5. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, are singular in several of their customs, and are standing monuments to all ages of the exactness of the Divine predictions, and of the veracity of Scripture history.”-Bishop Newton, quoted in Adam Clarke’s commentary



- **“Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.** And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with **Abraham, the man of faith.**”-Galatians 3:7-9
- It is the same for Believers of all races and nations today.
- Every person must have their **own faith** in God if they are to follow in the footsteps of our father Abraham, **the man of faith.**
- God's acceptance of men from all nations has always been based upon **believing in His promises** not our performance or birth right. This distinction is clear in all of Scripture.

## **Romans 9:10-13**

“And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 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—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

## God's Purpose

- In the case of Ishmael and Isaac they had two different mothers representing the child of the **promise** verses the child of the **flesh**.
- In the case of **Rebekah** she had two children by one man which makes it a little harder to understand to why God would choose Jacob over Esau.
- God's purpose was revealed to Rebekah before either child had **yet to be born**.
- God's purpose was to choose not based upon works since neither child had **done nothing either good or bad**. It would be solely upon His sovereign grace.

- The reason that God did this was so that His **purpose of election might continue**.
- The Greek word for **election** means to **pull out from or to choose by picking**.
- God's purpose in choosing is not based upon "eeny-meeny-miny-moe", it is a redemption story based upon His grace.
- It is reinforced by **Verse 12**, by saying the blessing is **not because of works**.
- The promise of the blessing is **because of him who calls** by His divine mercy and compassion and yet not all respond to that call.

- The next phrase **Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated** has troubled some over the years but when looking back at **Malachi 1:1-3** it gives some understanding.
- “The oracle of the word of the LORD **to Israel** by Malachi. I have **loved** you, says the LORD. But you say, “How have you loved us? Is not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares the LORD. **“Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated.** I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert.”
- In Malachi, the Lord is referring to **national election** not **personal election**. Israel is the nation among all nations that is loved by God.

- We must be careful not to put our human emotion of **hate** as being identical to how God views Esau.
- It is a Hebrew phrase that means **preference over** rather than the emotion of **hate**.
- Jesus said something similar in **Luke 14:26**, “If anyone comes to me and does not **hate** his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”
- This does not mean we are to hate our parents, which would contradict the commandment to honor our parents, but means that the disciple should **desire** Jesus over them and even more than our own life.

- As to 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated,' a woman once said to Mr. Spurgeon, 'I cannot understand why God should say that He hated Esau.' 'That,' Spurgeon replied, 'is not my difficulty, madam. My trouble is to understand how God could love Jacob!' -Quote from William Newell
- Paul in this section of Scripture is saying that God chose to put Jacob and his descendants above Esau and his descendants, not because of anything about Jacob or Israel that is morally superior but simply by **His Own gracious elective choice**.
- If the difference between an unbeliever and a believer has anything to do with us then **salvation is of our own making and work**, but if it is by God Who calls and elects then it is by grace alone (**Eph. 2:8-9**).

## Romans 9:14-16

“What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.”

## God's Mercy

- A natural human response to God's choosing to elect some and not others would prompt the question: **Is there injustice on God's part?**
- **By no means!** says Paul or more pointed **God forbid!**
- In **Exodus 33:18**, Moses asked God to show him His glory. The Lord's response was: "I will make all my **goodness** pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."-Exodus 33:19
- On the surface the Lord's response to Moses seems like the Lord is a fickle and arbitrary bully but this is not the case.

- **Mercy** is not getting what we do deserve. **Mercy** by definition is God extending forgiveness or **withholding punishment** due .
- "The LORD is gracious and **merciful**, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and his **mercy** is over all that he has made."-**Psalm 145:8-9**
- "**Mercy** triumphs over judgment."-**James 2:13**
- **Justice** is getting what we deserve. Jesus took upon Himself all of the judgment that was mankind's responsibility to bear.
- "We are punished **justly**, because we're getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has **done nothing wrong**."-**Luke 23:41**
- **Grace** is getting an undeserved **free gift**. The Spirit's role is to open our eye's to which the believer has been graced namely the **atoning work** of Jesus.

- “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.”-**1 Corinthians 2:12**
- The English word for **things freely given** are translated as one Greek word and is the verb form of the noun for **grace**.
- “Paul’s way of defending God’s justice is to proclaim his mercy. It sounds like a complete non sequitur. But it is not. It simply indicates that the question itself is misconceived, because the basis on which God deals sparingly with sinners is not justice but mercy.”-Stott, John
- A person doesn’t receive God’s mercy by **human will or exertion, verse 16**, but is freely given to us by a **God full of mercy** and compassion.
- Salvation is about His **mercy** and His **gift**, not our **right** or our **working!**

- Man has no claim or right upon God to receive mercy, if we did it would no longer be **mercy** since **the wages of sin is death** (Romans 6:23).
- God is under no obligation to show **mercy** or extend grace to anyone. If we insist on receiving just treatment from God what we will get is condemnation.
- “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”-**Romans 3:23**
- "The grace of God has been spoken of in this Epistle often before; but not until these chapters is **mercy** named; and until **mercy** is understood, grace cannot be fully appreciated.”-Newell, William

- “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of **grace**, that we may **receive mercy** and find **grace** to help in time of need.”-**Hebrews 4:16**
- We have a Great High Priest sitting on behalf of believers at the right hand of God so that we can draw near to the throne of grace and receive mercy!
- “The deepest temptation, trial, struggle that you have ever felt, Jesus endured more. He endured more, and therefore he is able to help you. Because of his humanity, his incarnation, because of his experience of temptation, Christ sympathizes with our weaknesses.”-Hedges, Brian

## Romans 9:17-18

“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.” So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.”

## Pharaoh

- The Pharaohs by the time of Moses considered themselves to be god incarnate.
- “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘See, I have made you **like God to Pharaoh**... ‘Pharaoh will **not listen** to you.’”-**Exodus 7:1;4a**
- “remember the former things of old; for **I am God**, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, **declaring the end from the beginning** and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’- **Isaiah 46:9-10**
- The **pride** of Pharaoh is evident: “But Pharaoh said, “**Who is the LORD**, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? **I do not know the LORD**, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”-**Exodus 5:2**

- The hardening of Pharaoh’s heart is described in three different ways in scripture:
  - “I will **harden** Pharaoh’s heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will **not listen** to you”-**Exodus 7:3-4a; 9:12**
  - “Pharaoh’s **heart was hardened**, and he would not **listen** to them, as the LORD had said”-**Exodus 7:13**
  - “But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, **he hardened his heart** and would **not listen** to them, as the LORD had said.”-**Exodus 8:15**

- The Hebrew word for **harden** conveys the idea of an **unwillingness to listen** to the Lord, or rather a **God defying refusal** to **listen** to the Lord.
- “I the LORD search the **heart** and test the mind, to give every man **according to his ways**, according to the fruit of his deeds.”-**Jeremiah 17:10**
- “Now it is not necessary nor right to make God the author of Pharaoh’s stubbornness. No more is it right to insist that if God be a God of love He must save everybody, as all sorts of Universalists claim. Ex. 7:13, 14 records Pharaoh’s attitude after the first “wonder”; and then God’s report of Pharaoh’s heart-condition,—for **God sees the heart**: ‘And Pharaoh’s heart was hardened.’”-Newell, William

- We observed in Romans Chapter 1, that God’s wrath is to **give them up in the lust of their hearts.**
- God’s hardening of Pharaoh's heart was simply **giving him over** to his own stubbornness by refusing to listen to the Lord.
- Pharaoh decided to resist God so God gave Pharaoh over to what he chose in his heart.
- Pharaoh deserved death for his refusal to listen to the Lord. It was God’s **mercy** that He didn’t take his life. God **hardens** some people for fulfilling His purpose but He does not create the **hardness** He simply lets the **hardened** person to go the way of his **own choosing**.
- There is still a hardening process happening within the heart of man today who refuse to listen to the message of the gospel.

- “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”-**2 Timothy 4:3-4**
- “And now, because you have done all these things, declares the LORD, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer...”-**Jeremiah 7:13**
- Man is free to hear what God is saying in His Word and **choose Him** but also man is free to not listen to God and **refuse Him!**

- God would not take Pharaoh’s life so that his continuing stubbornness would lead to God’s victory over him of which resulted in greater glory for God and that God’s **name might be proclaimed in all the earth.**
- If Pharaoh would have allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt when Moses first asked him then there would not have been any **miracles** and the children of Israel would not have had **the fame** as God’s chosen people which follows them to this present day.

- Rahab stated to the two spies: “For **we have heard** how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we **heard** it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, **for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.**”-**Joshua 2:10-11**
- “Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when they shall **no longer say**, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the **people of Israel** out of the **land of Egypt**,’ but ‘As the LORD lives who brought up and **led the offspring of the house of Israel** out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ Then they shall dwell in their own land.”-**Jeremiah 23:7-8**

## Strange Work

- “God has no pleasure in the destruction or calamity of persons or people...He had rather they turn...He is **well-pleased** if they forsake their evil ways, that he may not have occasion to execute his **wrath** upon them. He is a God that **delights** in **mercy**, and judgment is a **strange** work”-Edwards, Jonathan
- “but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the **abundance** of his **steadfast love**; for **he does not afflict from his heart....**”-**Lamentations 3:32-33a**
- “My heart **recoils** within me; my **compassion** grows warm and tender.”-**Hosea 11:8**

- “For the LORD will rise up as he did at Mount Perazim. He will rise in wrath, as at the Valley of Gibeon, to do his work, his unexpected work, and to perform his task, his unfamiliar task.”-**Isaiah 28:21**
- “Left to our own natural intuitions about God, we will conclude that mercy is his strange work and judgment his natural work. Rewriting our vision of God as we study the Scripture, we see, helped by the great teachers of the past, that judgment is his strange work and mercy his natural.”-Ortlund, Dane
- for he does not afflict from his heart.

## Romans 9:19-21

“You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” But who are you, man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” 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? ”

## Whose Fault?

- Paul in verse 19, is addressing the individual who may think that God is unjust in hardening Pharaoh's heart.
- After all, Pharaoh did what God had willed and by refusing to listen fulfilled God's purpose.
- Therefore, where does the responsibility lie. Man likes to cast blame: **Why have you made me like this?-Romans 9:20**
- It is an age old lie from Adam. Adam blamed God: "The man said, The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."-**Genesis 3:12**
- Eve blamed the Serpent: "The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."-**Genesis 3:13**

- **But who are you, man, to answer back to God?-Romans 9:20**
- Mankind likes to sit in judgment towards God and His ways.
- "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways **higher** than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."- **Isaiah 55:8-9**
- In order for man to sit in judgment towards the ways of God man must make themselves a god and the almighty God subject to our flawed reasoning. Man does not judge God but God judges man.
- Judging is God's prerogative, not ours. Creatures have no right to complain about their Creator's behavior.- Constable,Thomas

## A Prayer For Periods of Doubt

- **Psalm 131** is a great Psalm to pray during the times when we don't have the answers to God's way of doing things.
- "LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me. Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever."-**Psalm 131**
- "Before he was weaned, David wanted God only for what he could get from God. After he was weaned, having learned that God loved him and would care for him even if it was not exactly the way he anticipated or most wanted, he came to love God for God himself."-Boice, James Montgomery

## The Potter and the Clay

- Paul now turns to an illustration from the Old Testament (Is. 45:9; 64:8; Jer. 18:1-10). **Has the potter no right over the clay.**
- "Woe to him who **strives** with him who **formed** him, pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making? or 'Your work has no handles'?"-**Isaiah 45:9**
- This reinforces God's sovereignty. Men are not lumps of clay but have intelligence, feelings and a will but like the clay we are helpless and weak sinners in need of being formed by God to be used for His purposes.
- "But now, O LORD, you are our **Father**; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand."-**Isaiah 64:8**

- The potter does not make the clay but takes the clay as he finds it and then molds it and forms it either for decorative and honorable uses or plain and dishonorable uses. The potter determines the final use.
- “The words are not written to cause us to fear and despair, but to glorify divine grace and destroy our arrogance”. Luther, Martin
- Believers are being formed by God’s mercy and His grace; the Believers final destination is glory.
- “For we are his **workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”-**Ephesians 2:10**

## **Romans 9:22-24**

“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, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?”

## God's Power

- What if God desires to **show His wrath** but has **endured with much patience** softening **wrath** through **mercy**?
- What does this tell us about God?
- “Unlike humans, this deity is not fickle, undependable, self-serving, and grasping. Instead He is faithful, true, upright, and generous. Always!”-Oswalt, John
- “The LORD is **gracious and merciful, slow to anger** and abounding in **steadfast love**. The LORD is good to all, and his **mercy** is over all that he has made.”-**Psalm 145:8-9**
- “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is **patient toward you**, not **willing for any to perish**, but for all to come to repentance.”-**2 Peter 3:9**

- “As God is **not willing** that any should perish, and as he is **willing** that **all** should come to **repentance**, consequently he has never devised nor decreed the damnation of any man, nor has he rendered it impossible for any soul to be saved.”-Clarke, Adam
- The **power of God** is revealed in salvation (**Rom. 1:16**) and in the work of Christ upon the Cross.
- For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the **power of God**.”-**1 Corinthians 1:18**

- God has done everything possible for man through **His Son** for salvation. If people refuse to believe in the work of Jesus then they **becomes vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.**
- “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the **wrath of God** remains on him.”-**John 3:36**
- If anybody is lost the blame falls upon that person for his **rejection** of the Son; but if anybody is saved the **credit** is God’s alone **to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy.**
- “Men fit themselves for hell; but it is God that fits men for heaven.”-Griffith, Thomas

## **Called**

- It is God Who **calls** out to man **not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles.**
- “But God, who is **rich in mercy**, because of **His great love** with which He loved us...”(**Ephesians 2:4**) **calls** out to man with a deep concern for man and his position before Him.
- “Why, when I came, was there no man? Why, when I **called**, was there none to answer?”-**Isaiah 50:2**
- for the Son of Man has come **to seek** and to save that which was lost.”-**Luke 19:10**
- This demonstrates that God is a **merciful, gracious, and compassionate** God. Who loves man and **calls** out to **Jews** and **Gentiles** to believe in His Son.

- “It is very likely that the word **called** means more than merely “named” and refers to the **effectual action** of God the Father ... specifically Who calls effectually by His grace.”-Murray, John
- All of the redemptive work that God does upon the heart of the believer all begins by His **divine call** which leads the believer into fellowship and union with His Son.
- “the gospel by the **power of God**, who saved us and **called** us to a holy calling, not because of our **works** but because of his **own purpose** and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began”-**2 Timothy 1: 8b-9**
- Man has no **moral standing** before God. God could have destroyed man in **wrath** but because He is **rich in mercy** He **calls** out to man and all the credit and work is His alone.

## Romans 9:25-26

“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.’ 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.’”

## God's People

- What matters to God is not physical descent or religious affiliation but His calling out to **those who were not my people I will call my people.**
- In these verses Paul used the Old Testament books of Hosea and Isaiah to show that God does indeed keep His promises in His Word but the Jews may have been surprised by the fulfillment of them although they should not have been.
- “I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a **light for the nations**, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.”-**Isaiah 42:6-7**

- The Church brings together people from **all nations** into one body, the body of Christ, His Church.
- “ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all **one in Christ Jesus**. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs **according to promise.**”-**Galatians 3:28-29**
- Not until the founding of the church at Pentecost has a Gentile nation been called the **people** of God in the Bible.
- “Simeon (Peter) has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a **people for his name.**”-**Acts 15:14**
- The paradox inherent in the contrast between **Gentiles** (or nations) and **people** is striking, since the latter term was often used of the **Jews** as the **people of God** in contrast to the **Gentiles**. Now it is being urged that **God’s people** includes the **Gentiles.**”-Marshall, Howard

- God blesses the **Gentile** nations now as **sons of the living God**. A people who do not **deserve** it but are **called** by God out from among all nations and by His mercy, steadfast love, and grace. All of the glory is due Him!
- It has always been the heart of the Father in the Scriptures to save people unto Himself from all nations.
- “Go therefore and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”-**Matthew 28:19**
- “And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from **every tribe and language and people and nation**’”-**Revelation 5:9**

## **Romans 9:27-29**

“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, for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay. And as Isaiah predicted, ‘If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.’”

## Remnant

- Paul goes to **Isaiah 10:22** to further establish the mercy of God towards Israel.
- Isaiah confirms that only a **remnant** of Israel will be saved.
- The **remnant** is a result of God's sovereign grace and mercy and if He had not intervened the nation of Israel would have been destroyed **like Sodom and become like Gomorrah**.
- Paul is also planting the idea of the **remnant** of Israel that he will develop more fully in **Romans 11**, that God most definitely has future plan for Israel.
- God's mercy and promise are clear: "But if **only** a remnant will survive, **at least** a remnant will survive, and constitute the hope of restoration."-Bruce, F.F.

## Romans 9:30-33

“What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law.

Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, 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.”

## Righteousness

- Israel rejected faith but instead desired to be justified **by works** of righteousness according to the **Law**.
- Although Israel **pursued a law** and viewed themselves as having a moral superiority over the **Gentiles they did not succeed in reaching that law** because the Jews did not **pursue it by faith** but through **works**.
- “We ourselves are Jews by birth and not **Gentile sinners**; yet we know that a person is not justified by **works of the law** but through **faith in Jesus Christ**, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be **justified by faith** in Christ and not by works of the law, because by **works of the law** no one will be justified.”- **Galatians 2:15-16**

- A Jewish person may claim he is justified before God because he **pursued the Law**; whereas a Gentile may claim to be justified because he **did not pursue righteousness but have attained it that is a righteous by faith**.
- If a person could obey the **Law perfectly** he would be justified before God. Only **Jesus lived out the Law perfectly in obedience**.
- “For all who rely on **works of the law** are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by **all things written** in the Book of the Law, and **do** them.”- **Galatians 3:10**
- “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if **righteousness** were through the **law**, then **Christ died for no purpose**.”-**Galatians 2:21**

- Paul is not saying that there is anything wrong with being a Jew and trying to live a moral life according to the Law.
- The problem was and is for every religious person to **rely** and **boast** in one’s own religious and moral superiority.
- This is the faulty reasoning that is common to all **works based** religions. The false belief that man is accepted or rejected by God based upon being good or better than the others surrounding us.
- People claim, “I’m different from those immoral people therefore, I should be accepted by God! I’m not that bad of a person”.
- “As long as we cling to our own selves and think that there is even a **shred** of righteousness in ourselves that could satisfy the demands of a holy God, there is no possibility of salvation for us.”-Barnhouse, Donald Grey

## Stumbling Stone

- Paul said in **1 Corinthians 1:22-24**: “For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a **stumbling block** to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”
- Paul is showing that the Jews are responsible for their present condition for refusing to believe in Jesus, their **stone of stumbling** and **rock of offense**.
- “Christ, the meek and lowly One, who went about doing them good, who healed them, loved them, and finally died for them,—became to them the **Stone of Stumbling!** And it was **in Zion**, where they had the Law, that this **Stone of stumbling** was to **be laid**.

- Now the only way to have Him is to believe on Him: otherwise, He was a **Rock of offence**. He offended all the claims of the Jews as “children of Abraham”; He offended all their false claims of righteousness, by the light which He was,—the Holy One.-Newell, William
- Jesus is a stumbling stone to every one **who rejects** His perfect atoning sacrifice for their sins and attempts to be righteous through their own **works** of righteousness, or their **own will** and **exertion**.
- Everyone who believes in Him and seeks righteousness from Him **will not be put to shame**.
- “As you come to him, a living stone **rejected by men** but in the **sight of God chosen and precious**...They stumble because they **disobey the word**, as they were destined to do.”-**1 Peter 2:4,8**

- John Bunyan later in life came to seven conclusions about his heart in his book **Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners**.
  1. I am inclined to unbelief and keep trusting my own heart.
  2. I suddenly forget the love and mercy in Christ and I am apt towards pride.
  3. I keep trying to be good enough rather than relying on God's grace.
  4. My mind wanders when I pray and my prayers are often cold and lifeless.
  5. I forget to look for answers in prayer.
  6. I am apt to complain when I don't have what I want, yet I abuse what I already have.
  7. Whenever I try and do the things God commands my corrupt nature comes to life. When I do good evil is present with me.