

# ROMANS



9:1-5



Paul's  
Anguish

AND

Israel's  
Advantage



# ROMANS

## 9:1-5



*<sup>1</sup>I speak [the] truth in Christ. I am not lying; my conscience bearing witness with me in [the] Holy Spirit, <sup>2</sup>that to me is great grief, and unceasing sorrow in my heart. <sup>3</sup>For I could pray I myself were to be a curse, separated from Christ for my brothers, the kinsmen of me according to [the] flesh; <sup>4</sup>who are Israelites, whose [is] the Divine adoption as sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises; <sup>5</sup>whose [are] the patriarchs; and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh, being over all God, blessed to the ages. Amen.*



# ROMANS

## 9:1-2



## PAUL'S ANGUISH

*<sup>1</sup>I speak [the] truth in Christ. I am not lying; my conscience bearing witness with me in [the] Holy Spirit, <sup>2</sup>that to me is great grief, and unceasing sorrow in my heart.*

St. Paul begins his new section with an appeal...to Jesus Christ! His appeal is heartfelt, “*I speak...in Christ*.” His “...*in Christ*” is in keeping with one of Paul’s dominant themes in Romans 5-8.

It is framed with “...*nothing [is] condemnation for the ones in Christ Jesus*” (8:1) and that nothing “*will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (8:39).

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## 9:1-2



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<sup>2</sup>that to me is great grief, and unceasing sorrow in my heart.*

Though you should take note that there is a drastic change of attitude: from celebration (8:31-39) to lamentation (9:1-3). However, St. Paul points out that this is truth, since he has been called to proclaim such by Jesus Christ (cf. 1:1). And he follows this up with a negative stated formula of affirmation: “*I am not lying*” (οὐ ψεύδομαι).



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9:1-2



PAUL'S  
ANGUISH

*<sup>1</sup>I speak [the] truth in Christ. I am not lying; my conscience bearing witness with me in [the] Holy Spirit,  
<sup>2</sup>that to me is great grief, and unceasing sorrow in my heart.*

Essentially, Paul is saying that he is not willfully or purposefully misrepresenting or misleading the congregations in Rome, or in fact, anyone in regard to what he is about to discuss. Remembering that he is basing all in “...*truth...in Christ!*” Paul then uses a profound confirmation by saying: “...*my conscience bearing witness with me in [the] Holy Spirit.*” Not only is Paul speaking emphatically, but he boldly proclaims that his conscience, being enlightened by the Holy Spirit, bears witness to the truth in Christ!

# ROMANS

## 9:1-2



## PAUL'S ANGUISH

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<sup>2</sup>that to me is great grief, and unceasing sorrow in my heart.*

The impact of Paul's affirmation in v.1 drives forward his statement of v.2: "...that to me is great grief, and unceasing sorrow in my heart...." There are two very important words, with their modifiers, that we must understand... "great grief" and "unceasing sorrow."



# ROMANS

## 9:1-2



## PAUL'S ANGUISH

*<sup>1</sup>I speak [the] truth in Christ. I am not lying; my conscience bearing witness with me in [the] Holy Spirit,  
<sup>2</sup>that to me is great grief, and unceasing sorrow in my heart.*

1. “...great grief...” (μεγάλη λύπη):  
properly, distress or vexation.  
Figuratively: physical or emotional pain; a very heavy, sorrowful heart filled with great grief that brings tremendous anguish.

Paul amplifies his grief by adding the adjective “great” (μεγάλη) that in Greek is an intensifier...thus, a *consuming* grief.

# ROMANS

## 9:1-2



## PAUL'S ANGUISH

<sup>1</sup>*I speak [the] truth in Christ. I am not lying; my conscience bearing witness with me in [the] Holy Spirit,*  
<sup>2</sup>*that to me is great grief, and unceasing sorrow in my heart.*

2. “...unceasing sorrow...” (ἀδιάλειπτος ὀδύνη): **an intense emotional pain (deep personal anguish); consuming grief**, which is emotionally lethal if experienced apart from God’s grace which comforts.

And, again, Paul adds an intensifier “**unceasing**” (ἀδιάλειπτος) **that properly means no unnecessary gaps in space or time.**



# ROMANS

9:1-2



PAUL'S  
ANGUISH

*<sup>1</sup>I speak [the] truth in Christ. I am not lying; my conscience bearing witness with me in [the] Holy Spirit,  
<sup>2</sup>that to me is great grief, and unceasing sorrow in my heart.*

So Paul is describing his emotional and mental pain of mind and spirit. And these two nouns, *grief* and *sorrow*, are also used in the OT (in the LXX) being associated with the same state of mind in Is. 35:10 and 51:11.

# ROMANS

## 9:3-4a



An  
Extraordinary  
Plea

*<sup>3</sup>For I could pray I myself were to be a curse, separated from Christ for my brothers, the kinsmen of me according to [the] flesh; <sup>4a</sup>who are Israelites...,”*

Paul’s intensity continues to build as he now makes a very extraordinary plea to God. First, let’s clear up a translation issue. The word that Paul uses for “pray” is *ἠὺχόμην* (ayoo’-kho-meen). This verb is a primitive Greek verb that’s only used in Holy Scriptures seven times. Properly, to *wish*, or *offer a request*. Paul uses this verb in the passive.



# ROMANS

## 9:3-4a



An  
Extraordinary  
Plea

<sup>3</sup>For I could pray I myself were to be a curse, separated from Christ for my brothers, the kinsmen of me according to [the] flesh; <sup>4a</sup>who are Israelites....”

Normally, it's use is limited to εὐξομαι (“*pray, wish for*”) that are prayers or wishes *not* necessarily God-birthed, unlike the meaning associated with the stronger, prefixed cognate, ἡὺχόμεν, which we have here. Therefore, Paul is wishing or praying to the Lord that He would place a curse on him; that he (Paul) be separated from Christ...for the sake of his brothers, Israel. In light of the context, the better translation is “*pray*” since we aren’t commanded to make “*wishes*” to God, but to “*pray!*”

# ROMANS

## 9:3-4a



An  
Extraordinary  
Plea

*<sup>3</sup>For I could pray I myself were to be a curse, separated from Christ for my brothers, the kinsmen of me according to [the] flesh; <sup>4a</sup>who are Israelites...,”*

Paul’s intensity continues by his use of the word “curse” (ἀνάθεμα) which introduces a very powerful word with two seemingly different definitions. It can refer to an offering dedicated to God (a votive offering). However, most often in the NT, including the five times that Paul uses this noun (also in 1 Cor. 12:3; 16:22; and Gal 1:8, 9) its in the context of being accursed or cursed.



# ROMANS

## 9:3-4a



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Extraordinary  
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*<sup>3</sup>For I could pray I myself were to be a curse, separated from Christ for my brothers, the kinsmen of me according to [the] flesh; <sup>4a</sup>who are Israelites...,*

Interestingly, Paul attaches an Infinitive Active Present Verb, “to be” (εἶναι) that means to “forfeit ones final salvation.”

And then Paul heightens his personal implication by using two personal pronouns: “I myself” (αὐτὸς ἐγὼ); Paul is placing himself before God, praying that he be cursed, that he lose his salvation by being separated from Christ, for the sake of all Israelites!

# ROMANS

## 9:3-4a



Origen, 185 - 253 AD

<sup>3</sup>For I could pray I myself were to be a curse, separated from Christ for my brothers, the kinsmen of me according to [the] flesh; <sup>4a</sup>who are Israelites....”

Let's allow a Church Father to exegete this for us:

*“Why be surprised that the apostle desires to be cursed for his brethren’s sake, when he who is in the form of God emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant and was made a curse for us? Why be surprised if, when Christ became a curse for his servants, one of his servants should become a curse for his brethren?”<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Origen, Romans. (Bray, Romans, ACCS NT 6:237).



# ROMANS

## 9:3-4a



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Extraordinary  
Plea

*<sup>3</sup>For I could pray I myself were to be a curse, separated from Christ for my brothers, the kinsmen of me according to [the] flesh; <sup>4a</sup>who are Israelites...,”*

Paul’s desire to be separated and cursed is a striking contrast with 8:39 where Paul rejoiced that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Thus, Paul’s anguish is that God’s people have failed to recognize their Messiah; therefore, they have separated themselves. However, Paul desires to be cursed in their stead. His reasoning will soon become more specific...

# ROMANS

## 9:3-4a



An  
Extraordinary  
Plea

<sup>3</sup>...for my brothers, the kinsmen of me according to [the] flesh; <sup>4a</sup>who are Israelites....”

Paul reasoning begin by the use of a preposition that we have studied previously (8:27, 31-34): “for” (ὕπέρ) (also can mean “in behalf of”) and it conveys an exchange image in that all of Paul’s “brothers” who have separated themselves from the Messiah are cursed; Paul’s “prayer” is, in behalf of (“for”) them, to become the curse in their stead!



# ROMANS

## 9:3-4a



An  
Extraordinary  
Plea

<sup>3</sup>...for my brothers, the kinsmen of me according to [the] flesh; <sup>4a</sup>who are Israelites....”

Who are Paul’s “brothers” (ἀδελφῶν)? They are “according to [the] flesh” (κατὰ σάρκα)! This is the ethnic sense of those to whom Paul is related by blood. They are his extended relatives; his “kinsmen” (συγγενῶν) or “fellow-countrymen.” They are those “...who are Israelites” (Ἰσραηλῖται). Of note, this is the first time that Paul uses “Israel” or a form of “Israel” in chapter 11; yet, he will use it ten more times!

# ROMANS

## 9:4b-5a



Israel's  
Advantage

*4b “...whose [is] the Divine adoption as sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises; <sup>5a</sup>whose [are] the patriarchs; and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh....”*

Paul begins this section with the use of a possessive relative pronoun “whose [is]” or “of whom [is]” (ὃν). He then provides a lists of those things that belong to the Israelites; however, they possess these by Divine gift. These gifts have all been graciously bestowed, and they are also blessings that Paul shares.



# ROMANS

## 9:4b-5a



### Israel's Advantage

*4b “...whose [is] the Divine adoption as sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises; <sup>5a</sup>whose [are] the patriarchs; and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh....”*

There are six gifts given, but they all hinge on the first gift given to Israel that was first discussed in Rom. 3:1-2: *“Then what is the advantage of the Jew or what is the benefit of the circumcision? Much in every way! Indeed, [it is] primarily they were entrusted with the sayings of God.”* Now, in addition to the primary advantage *“the sayings of God”*; Paul will add an additional six gifts:

# ROMANS

## 9:4b-5a



Israel's  
Advantage

<sup>4b</sup> “...whose [is] the **Divine adoption as sons**, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises; <sup>5a</sup>whose [are] the patriarchs; and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh....”

1. “... **the Divine adoption as sons...**, (ἡ υἱοθεσία) – Properly, son-ship! This term is not used anywhere in the LXX or in Jewish writings of the period. However, based on the OT, the applicability to the Israelites is very appropriate. They were “adopted” as Yahweh’s chosen ones; He chose them (e.g., Dt. 7:6-11; 14:2; 1 Kings 3:8; Is. 41:8-9; Ezek 20:5). This is Israel’s resulting state: they are God’s (firstborn) sons. The adoption is by God, thus Divine: ἡ υἱοθεσία.



# ROMANS

## 9:4b-5a



Israel's  
Advantage

<sup>4b</sup> “...whose [is] the Divine adoption as sons, and **the glory**, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises; <sup>5a</sup>whose [are] the patriarchs; and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh....”

2. “...*the glory*...” (τὸ δόξα) — Properly, Paul is addressing the “*glory of the Lord*” and His theophanies that gave to Israel special privileges as God’s Divinely adopted sons.

# ROMANS

## 9:4b-5a



Israel's  
Advantage

<sup>4b</sup> “...whose [is] the Divine adoption as sons, and the glory, and **the covenants**, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises; <sup>5a</sup>whose [are] the patriarchs; and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh....”

3. “...**the covenants**...” (αἱ διαθήκαι) – this gift is plural and likely represents the original as written by Paul (most often this noun is singular, but the form fits Paul’s usage here and most probably encompasses all of God’s covenants made with Israel). The covenants:

- a. Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15 and 17);
- b. Isaac and Jacob (Ex. 2:4; 2 Ki. 13:23; Ps. 105:8-10) (God repeats the Abrahamic Covenant);
- c. Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 19:5-6; 24:7-8);
- d. Plain of Moab (Dt. 29-31);
- e. Ebal and Gerizim (Joshua 8:30-35); and the,
- f. Davidic Covenant (2 Chr. 21:7; Ps. 89:3).



# ROMANS

## 9:4b-5a



## Israel's Advantage

*4b “...whose [is] the Divine adoption as sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and **the lawgiving**, and the service, and the promises; <sup>5a</sup>whose [are] the patriarchs; and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh....”*

4. “...**the lawgiving...**” (ἡ νομοθεσία) – this was a very lofty privilege for Israel alone out of all the nations on earth (cf. Dt. 4:7-8; Ps. 147:19-20). Yet, it may seem that the “**Law**” may not, at first glance, be a gift or blessing bestowed upon Israel. Yet, we must understand Paul’s use here. The broader sense of the “**Law**” as referring to all of God’s revelation at Sinai would apply. Indeed, Yahweh’s first word to Moses was to remind him, and Israel, that He was their rescuer from slavery; then God gave them the **Law**.

# ROMANS

## 9:4b-5a



Israel's  
Advantage

*4b "...whose [is] the Divine adoption as sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and **the lawgiving**, and the service, and the promises; <sup>5a</sup>whose [are] the patriarchs; and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh...."*

Recalling Rom 3:21; cf. also 3:27, 31; and v.2a above, God gave the Torah to Israel as a testimony of His faithfulness and righteousness and then God lays out Israel's path toward a life full of more promised blessings (Lev. 18:5; also Rom. 7:10 in reference to life!).



# ROMANS

## 9:4b-5a



Israel's  
Advantage

<sup>4b</sup> “...whose [is] the Divine adoption as sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises; <sup>5a</sup>whose [are] the patriarchs; and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh....”

5. “...the service...” (ἡ λατρεία) – In actuality this noun should be translated as “*the temple service.*” In biblical use, this Greek noun specifically means: “technical, priestly-service.” It occurs five times in the NT; in each instance, it refers to the sacrificial rites at the Tabernacle or Temple. Contrary to what you may be thinking, it’s not the service that the Israelites gave to God; rather, it’s God’s Service to them in the forgiveness of their sins and the delivery of both physical and spiritual blessing to them! The German word sums it up very well: *Gottesdienst!* You have experienced such this morning: Divine Service!

# ROMANS

## 9:4b-5a



Israel's  
Advantage

<sup>4b</sup> “...whose [is] the Divine adoption as sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and *the promises*; <sup>5a</sup>whose [are] the patriarchs; and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh....”

6. “...*the promises...*” (αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι) – In light of the promises found in 4:13, 14, 16, and 20; the dominant reference is to the promises that were made to Abraham (cf. Gal. 3:16-29 and then compare to Gen. 12:1-3; 15:3-6; 17:1-7; 18:18; and 22:17-18).



# ROMANS

## 9:4b-5a



Israel's  
Advantage

<sup>4b</sup> “...whose [is] the Divine adoption as sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises; <sup>5a</sup>whose [are] the patriarchs; and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh....”

Paul then signals the end of the list, in v.5a, with another use of the possessive relative pronoun “whose [are]” (ὧν). It states that the “the patriarchs” also belong to the Israelites. The patriarchs refer to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons; since, they are the “*founding fathers*” of the twelve tribes of Israel. All the gifts and blessings were passed down through them to the Israelites.

# ROMANS

## 9:4b-5a



Israel's  
Advantage

<sup>4b</sup> “...whose [is] the Divine adoption as sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises;  
<sup>5a</sup> whose [are] the patriarchs; **and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh....**”

**Then, “...and from whom [is] Christ according to the flesh....”** (καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα). The fulfillment of the promise to the fathers...the Messiah would be a descendant through them. Jesus confirmed this in St. John 4:22 — “*Salvation is from the Jews.*” Not only does this promise stretch back to Abraham, but even to the Garden (Gen. 3:15). And Paul adds a clarification: “*according to the flesh*” (τὸ κατὰ σάρκα) and the Greek article (τό) is in the neuter that makes a qualification about our Lord’s human descent, since it does not modify the His masculine title: ὁ Χριστὸς! Let’s read 2 Sam 7:12-16!  
**Prophecy fulfilled!!!**



# ROMANS

9:5b



## The Doxology

*5b ...being over all God, blessed to the ages. Amen."*

Now we are faced with an interpretive puzzle that has been a dispute since the early days of the church. Does the phrase, "*...being over all God...*," refer to Jesus or to the Father? We could outline all the argument from the church fathers on; yet, since we are Lutherans, let's see how our Confessions handle this controversy:

CONCORDIA



**Widerholet eimmütige Bekenntnis**  
nachbenannter Churfürsten / Fürsten vnd  
Stände Augspurgischer Confession / vnd derselben  
Theologen Leere vnd glaubens:

Als angeheftet / in Gottes wort / als der einigen Richte-  
schnur / wolgegründter erklerung etlicher Artikel / bey  
welchen nach D. Martin Luthers seligen absterben /  
Disputation vnd streit vorgefallen.

**Aus einhelliger vergleihung vnd**  
beuehl obgedachter Churfürsten / Fürsten vñ Stenden /  
derselben Landen / Kirchen / Schulen vnd Nachkommen /  
zum vnderricht vnd warnung in Druck  
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# The Doxology

“We believe, teach, and confess that although the Son of God is a separate, distinct, and a complete Divine Person and therefore has been from all eternity true, essential, and perfect God with the Father and the Holy Spirit, yet, when the time had fully come, He took the human nature into the unity of His person, not in such a manner that there are now two persons or two Christs, but in such a way that Christ Jesus is henceforth in one person simultaneously true eternal God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also a true man, born of the most blessed virgin Mary, as it is written, ‘Of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever’ (Rom. 9:5). [FC SD VIII 6]



# ROMANS

9:5b



AMEN!

*<sup>5b</sup> ...being over all God, blessed to the ages. Amen."*

It is worthy of comment that this word ***"Amen."*** (ἀμήν) concludes this section. Amen, is a transliterated word from Hebrew (,m4a2) that means to ***"believe [in God]."***

Therefore, Paul ends this section with this affirmation that what he has written he believes (he firmly knows) is true!

# ROMANS

9:6



Next  
Week

Paul will continue his argument by describing the merciful call of God through His Word in both the past and present (6-29), which we will divide by looking at *“God’s Word of Promise and His Purposeful Call”* (6-13); then *“God’s Word of Mercy Calls Us”* (14-24); and then we’ll conclude chapter 9 with *“God’s Word Stands – for Both Jews and Gentiles”* (25-29).

By the end of February, we’ll transition into Chapter 10, as we begin with 9:30 – 10:21 and Paul’s diagnosis of various human responses to God’s call. As we approach Passiontide, we will take a serious look at God’s Divine reaction to human unbelief (11:1-12) and we will also take an honest look at modern-day Israel and explore if they are the *“Children of Abraham”* or not; as Paul also does the same in 11:13-32.



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Questions?