



## Chapter Nine

### INTRODUCTION

**NOTE:** Romans 9 focuses upon one subject: IDENTIFYING THE HEIRS OF THE PROMISE.

Paul compares the “spiritual” seed with the “fleshly” seed.

The point he makes over and over is that Jesus came to give new spirit (new life) to Israelites so they could become “heirs of the promise” and citizens of New Jerusalem (i.e., the Kingdom of God).

The reason Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the fathers of “Israel” was NOT due to their flesh (race), but due to the spirit that God gave them. Not all of their descendants kept that spirit ... even though they kept the name “Israel.”

The name “Israel” infers a spiritual quality ... not just a fleshly pedigree.

**C**OMMUNICATION is a demanding science – more so than most people realize. Communication is more than someone merely expressing a thought. Communication requires not only that a thought be expressed accurately, it must also be received and understood accurately ... in the way the speaker intended. In other words, to receive a communication accurately one must hear not only what was said, but also what was meant.

This is even more of a challenge when the thought is contrary to conventional wisdom. This was Paul’s dilemma. It is our dilemma as well. Like Paul we must struggle to communicate ... and in doing so we may sometimes overemphasize points and alienate our audiences.

Many misunderstood Paul. Communication failed much of the time. Many still misunderstand him today. The few who do understand Paul, and teach his writings accurately, will appreciate how it must have been for Paul. His struggle to communicate this message is now our struggle. Like Paul, we are misunderstood and misrepresented. We feel alone and frustrated. We are sometimes redundant and eccentric. We get irritable and impatient.

The people to whom the message was sent had grown accustomed to hearing mostly lies. Over time, when people hear mostly lies they become desensitized to lies. They lose their ability to recognize a lie. The Judeans of Paul’s day had this problem. Americans today have it as well – possibly worse than the Judeo-Romans of Paul’s day. In America the best liars become lawyers, politicians, preachers, or advertisers. Non-liars are seen as recluses and “extremists.”

Paul faced a Judean/Roman culture of lies and confusion. The people had lost their instinct for truth. They had learned to expect lies from everyone ... much like in the USSR a few decades ago, and now in America.

American culture today is very much Judeo-Roman in nearly every way. When trying to communicate we face those barriers and confusions. Everyone lies. Everyone expects lies ... from government, from news media, from police, from churches, from schools, from neighbors, even from your own families. Everything we hear, even truths, are initially assumed to be lies. Communication is failing, and Americans are growing ignorant, confused, and faithless.

When society sinks to this level the communication of truth becomes nearly impossible. It is the Tower Of Babylon all over again. Things are so bad today that only God can reinstate communication between men. It is impossible to communicate with dead people ... and most people walking around today are dead. Before they can hear, God must raise them to life. On our own we are incapable of getting through to people thus infected. We cannot do it on our own. Even Jesus, during his mortal life, was unable to reach most of his listeners. Only after being raised immor-

tal could He get past the barriers of lies and religious perversions that were blocking the minds of his audiences.

The struggle is hopeless for us unless/until God intervenes and quickens the minds of our audiences to hear accurately. Thus, like Paul, we must learn to rely upon God to deal with hearts of the people.

Meanwhile, daily we face the perversion of thoughts precipitated by the churches of the dead. Spiritually-dead men in religion and politics create lies faster than we can answer them. It is frustrating to watch helplessly as clever devils seem to have their way with the people.

We, as a people, like to think that we are well informed and intelligent. Unfortunately, the opposite is true. We, today, are the product of decades of systematic intellectual subversion by the institutions of government and religion. American people today are not better informed than their ancestors, as the popular myth goes. Rather, we are less informed, and poorer in our ability to communicate or understand truth. Thus, real teachers among us are very rare ... an "endangered species."

But we are here to stand for truth, and that is what we will do, God willing ... whether or not we see progress.

So, bear with Paul – and please bear with me – as we examine his teachings to the Romans.

Paul has set the stage for his Israelite brethren in Rome. He has explained the new birth in Christ, labeling it by various terms like "eonian life," "the calling," and "the raising" (wrongly called "resurrection" by in the KJV). He struggles to break through the religious and political deceptions of the day.

Now, in chapter nine, Paul shows that the Bible message applies narrowly to a chosen few ... a select family of "sons" ... the "called-out" who are "the raised" from among the descendants of Jacob.

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## **ROMANS 9:1-7 SONS CALLED IN ISAAC**

I am speaking truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing witness with me in holy spirit,

That my grief is great, and pain in my heart is continual.

For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ on behalf of my brethren, my kinsmen according to flesh:

Who are Israelites; to whom pertains the sonship, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of law, and the service, and the promises;

Whose are the fathers, and out of whom was Christ according to flesh, the one who is over all, God blessed into the eons (ages). Amen.

Not as though the word of God has failed. For not all them that are out of Israel are Israel.

Neither because they are seed of Abraham are they all children: but your seed will be called in Isaac.

**T**HE principles Paul has been teaching are built around Israel with its fleshly seed and spiritual seed. Paul agonizes over the state of his brethren of the flesh. He says that he would be willing to sacrifice himself if it would somehow take away the blindness that is upon his brethren in the flesh.

He reminds them that they are Israelites, and that the covenants, the blessings, and "the sonship" pertain to them. It's interesting to note that today's churches claim that "the sonship" applies to "gentiles" (the erroneous church term for "non-Israelites"). They call it "the adoption," and claim it is for is for non-Israelites as a way to incorporate them into the Israel fold. But Paul states clearly in verse four that "sonship" pertains to Israelites. The glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of the kingdom, and the promises – in other words, just about everything of scripture – pertains to Israel.

The word "sonship" was mistrans-

lated "adoption" by the KJV, and the churches teach it wrongly. They think of it in terms of a family adopting an unrelated child.

But "adoption" is clearly the wrong word. It was NOT what Paul said. The right word is "sonship," and it means something quite different. "Sonship" refers to the placing of an adult son – a tradition unknown in modern western society. Israelites of Paul's day knew what it meant. It was a young Israelite's rite of passage. It was a family ceremony where the father accepts his boy into the status of "son." The declaration had lawful and hereditary implications. A "son" inherited joint ownership in the family estate. He was also vested with the authority to speak for, and do business in the name of, his father. Before, as a "child," he didn't have that authority. A "son" was given authority that was like "power of attorney."

Furthermore, and even more importantly, a "son" inherited his father's SPIRIT. All offspring inherited their father's fleshly genes, but only a SON inherited his father's spirit. In this case, Paul is talking about "sons" of spirit ... sons who inherited the spirit of Abraham through their fathers.

To understand this you must be familiar with Israel history and custom. Also one must know whether or not he is an Israelite to determine whether or not these scriptures relate to him ... for these things are manifest within Israel.

It's no wonder, then, that in verse four Paul calls the Israelites in Rome his kinsmen – his racial brethren. God's message about Israel was sent to Israelites ... not to non-Israelites. The covenants, the law, the promises, the ministry of the kingdom and the sonship all pertain to Israel, not to strangers and foreigners. Sonship was a tradition in Israel, not for strangers as the modern church teaches. When a boy became a "son" the ceremony of "sonship" was public notice of his new status of authority under his father. Now he was authorized to do business in behalf of the family estate. Spiritually speaking, it specifically refers to spiritual maturity: i.e., being elevated (raised) to the status of "son"

– meaning he had his father’s spirit toward God and the family estate.

So, we see a distinct division within physical Israel: two kinds of Israelites. There are Israelites who are not “sons,” and then there are Israelites who are “sons” and therefore “heirs of the promise.” Sons, only, are given the keys to the Kingdom of God, for only “sons” have the spirit to be responsible and loyal to God’s estate (the Kingdom). It is an important designation. It is the spiritual distinction between Isaac and Ishmael; between Jacob and Esau; between Saul the Pharisee and Paul the Apostle.

In verse six Paul says, “*not as though the word of God has failed.*” Paul mentions this in anticipation of the argument that, “God’s plan must have gone off track ... because Israel is not being blessed.”

It was true, God was not blessing fleshly Israel at that time ... for good reason. Israel, as a whole, had turned reprobate. Israel had abandoned God, and like Esau, sold their birthright and had thrown away their right of sonship. Like Esau, they proved to have no interest in the Father’s business.

As a whole, these Israelites didn’t understand or care for the Word of God – much like America today. They were more enthralled with the traditions of men. Paul mocked them, saying “... *it’s not as though the God’s word has failed.*” When he put it to them like that, it was a indictment against them. He was saying that the word of God was still being fulfilled ... just not with fleshly Israel. God’s blessings were upon his “spiritual children” (New Jerusalem) as per his promise ... but unregenerate fleshly Israel remained in bondage.

*28. Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are the children of promise.*

*29. But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit. Thus, also, it is now.*

*30. Nevertheless what does the scripture say? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman (fleshly children) shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman (spiritual sons).*

*31. Wherefore, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*

Gal. 4:28-31

Paul continues in Romans 9:6, “... *not all them that are out of Israel are Israel.*” This well-known statement is a paradox in church circles. I’ll wager that you’ve never heard a viable explanation of this verse ... except from this ministry.

Paul says that not all who are out of Israel are Israel. Does that make sense? It does if you understand the difference between flesh seed and spirit seed. Paul says that the promise through Abraham was NOT to fleshly Israel, but to called-out SPIRITUAL Israel. These are two distinct groups. Not all of Israel responded to the call to become “sons.”

This will be an impossible scripture for you if you insist

that the term “Israel” applies only to flesh. However, if we presume that Paul knew what he was saying, then we must conclude that this statement was not predicated upon flesh (race), but upon spirit. This factor separates Israelites into two “seed” groups: ones with spirit, and ones without spirit. That will be tough to accept for those who only want to recognize racial (flesh) Israel.

In Romans 11 we find another reference to this bifurcation within Israel:

*5. Even so then at this present time there has come to be a remnant according to the calling of grace.*

*7. What then? Israel did not attain that for which he is seeking; but the called attained it, and the rest were hardened.*

Romans 11:5, 7

Only a remnant of Israel, referred to as “the called-out,” had attained their inheritance. “The rest” had not attained it. “The called-out” (the ecclesia) were separated out from fleshly Israel. The “called-out” attained it, and the rest of Israel was “hardened” or “made callous.” This is a very important statement, and must not be taken lightly. These “called out” were selected from within Israel. The rest remained fleshly and were not “called out.” They rejected the life Jesus offered them.

From the beginning Israel was defined, not by “flesh,” but by spirit. The quality that God imputed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the progenitors of Israel, was NOT flesh, but spirit. Flesh, by itself, would have qualified Ishmael and Esau along with Isaac and Jacob. According to the flesh, all would have been equal. But Ishmael and Esau were NOT equal spiritually. They did not have Abraham’s spirit.

Isaac and Ishmael were racial brothers, but Ishmael was NOT called-out; he did not have the spirit. Abraham was racially equal to others of his family. But he alone was called out. Abraham was different in spirit, not in flesh.

We will never see what God is doing through Israel until we look beyond the flesh. “Israel” means more than mere flesh or race. Jacob was renamed “Israel” because of spirit, not because of flesh. The word “Israel” means “led by God.” He who is led by God has God’s spirit. It is precisely that quality which defines “the calling-out,” and separates between heirs of the flesh and heirs of the promise.

Paul is opening up the door for us to understand a great truth. Romans 11:7 makes clear the fact that in Paul’s day there was a body of called-out (sons) who were chosen out from fleshly Israel. These “called-out” sons had attained righteousness by faith in Christ. The rest of Israel had not attained righteousness. These were two factions that branched out of the racial family of Israel: one branch was blind, and one branch could see; one was flesh-driven, and one was spirit-driven.

Thus we read in Romans 9:7: “*Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children.*” In other words, there was a distinction between Abraham’s fleshly offspring and his spiritual offspring. Notice Paul’s clear delineation of these two groups: racial “seed” (flesh Israel)

and spiritual “children” (sons).

This was not a new concept in Paul’s day. God told Abraham, hundreds of years earlier, that his spiritual seed would be called through Isaac (the son of promise) rather than through Ishmael (the son of flesh). That “calling” has always been the designating factor that separates the flesh from the spirit; flesh seed from spirit seed.

God calls his “sons” out from flesh families. He called out Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, etc. Heirs of the promise are born of the spirit, not just born of the flesh. These “called-out” (“elect” in the KJV) are heirs through “sonship.” These “called-out” are the “living stones” in the symbolic walls of New Jerusalem (I Pet. 2:4-5).

Not all Israelites are “sons.” Only the ones quickened by the spirit are the “children of Abraham” and therefore “heirs according to the promise.” Not all who are “called” are “called-out.” Many are called, but few are called-out (Mtt. 22:14). Many hear the call, but only few accept it and take on new life.

The line of promise from Abraham came through Isaac, not by flesh but by spirit. Racially, Isaac was the same as Ishmael. Both were of Abraham’s flesh. But only one was of Abraham’s spirit.

The same was true with Jacob and Esau. Jacob received the promise, and Esau did not. Israel began from Jacob who was selected and called by spirit. Israel was defined by the work of spirit – not flesh. But just as some of Abraham’s, Isaac’s, and Jacob’s children were “called-out” and some were not, so it has been with Israel today. Some are “called-out,” and some are not. It wasn’t something new in Paul’s time. It has always been a common theme within God’s purpose.

The crucial thing to learn is that your genealogical pedigree alone won’t pay your way, and it won’t make you a “son.” Being a racial Israelite is great – and it is important for us to know about it because we cannot understand the Bible without understanding our Israel racial history. But race alone cannot make us heirs of promise.

12. *Therefore brethren we are not debtors to the flesh (to genetics) to live according to the flesh.*

13. *For if you are living according to the flesh, you are dying: but if through the Spirit you are mortifying the deeds of the body, you will live.*

14. *For as many as are being led by the spirit of God, these are sons of God. (i.e., spirit, not flesh, makes “sons of God”)*

Rom. 8:12-14

If learning that you are a racial Israelite is all you are interested in, then you might as well quit reading this study. Also, you might as well forget the Book of Romans. You don’t need knowledge or God’s spirit to be an Israelite in the flesh. We need the spirit to be “sons” and “heirs of the promise.” Otherwise we are no more than seed of flesh. Pride in flesh makes Israelites lose their way. It makes them spiritually dead.

You may say, “God’s spirit is in EVERY Israelite ... and that is what makes us superior.”

But of course, that is nonsense. In fact, that error is the reason the flesh worshippers are lost and confused. If we Israelites came from the womb with God’s spirit intact in us, why then would any Israelite need to be taught about repentance and rebirth? If all Israelites came genetically equipped with God’s spirit, then why did Israel sin against Yahweh time and time again? Why did Israel go whoring after other gods and cause Yahweh to divorce her and remove his protection from her? Why would the Father have sent his Son to suffer for the people of Israel and teach them to repent ... if they were already genetically equipped with the spirit? If they already had “life” and “light” why did Jesus come to give us life and light?

4. *In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.*

5. *And the light is shining in darkness; and the darkness is not overpowering it.*

11. *He came to his own, but his own did not receive Him.*

12. *But as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become children of God, to the ones believing in his name.*

13. *Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Jn. 1: 4,5, 11-13

**QUESTION:** Why do you trivialize the Identity of God’s people (racial Israel) and the New Jerusalem called “America”?

## **ROMANS 9:8-9 CHILDREN OF SPIRIT NOT OF FLESH**

That is, the children of the flesh are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted as seed.

For this is the word of promise, At the appointed time I will come and a son will be born to Sarah.

**N**OTICE the emphasis on the distinction between children of the flesh and children of the promise.

That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of spirit is spirit. The child of flesh cannot inherit the promise until he receives the spirit

which causes him to be reborn from above. The children of flesh follow the leading of flesh, and are NOT counted as seed. But the children of spirit perceive and follow a higher calling. They are “the called-out.” They are Israelites according to flesh, but they are children of God according to the spirit.

Paul is talking about two factions: the ones with the spirit, and the ones without the spirit. God called out Abraham from his family. He called out Isaac. He called out Jacob. The “called-out” are separated from those who won’t come out.

God told Abraham, “*your seed shall be called in Isaac*” (Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7; Heb. 11:18). It was the spirit that defined Isaac – not his flesh. Thus, “in Isaac” (i.e., in the same way Isaac was called out) Abraham’s “seed of promise” also would be called out and defined – by spirit, not flesh.

## “THAT WHICH IS SPIRIT”

“The calling out” (“election” in KJV) refers to spiritual seed and not fleshly seed. “The calling” is not of natural birth, but of spiritual birth – as in the case of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These were not only born of the flesh. They were also born of spirit. They received the spirit of God ... and thus they received a higher form of “life” (i.e., eonian life).

In John chapter three Jesus explains “the calling” – also called “the raising,” and thus eonian life.

1. *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a chief of the Judeans;*

2. *This one came to Him (Jesus) by night, and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God: for no one can do these signs that you are doing, except God be with him.*

3. *Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*

4. *Nicodemus said to Him, How can a man be born when he is old? He is not able to enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born.*

5. *Jesus answered, Truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and spirit he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God.*

John 3:1-5

Man’s eyes cannot function if they are dead. To be able to “see the Kingdom of God” ones eyes must be “alive.” The “life” Jesus gives us quickens our eyes to “see” the Kingdom of God. “Born of water” refers to baptism symbolizing death. “Born of spirit” means raised (born again) to eonian life in Christ. Eonian life makes us truly ALIVE, with eyes that can see the Kingdom of Life; the Kingdom of the Living. Without this life from above we remain spiritually dead and unable to see or enter the kingdom of God.

6. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.*

7. *Marvel not that I said to you, You must be born from above.*

8. *The wind blows wherever it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you know not from where it comes, and where it goes: so it is with everyone born of the spirit.*

John 3:6-8

What does this mean? Was Jesus telling us that we can be invisible and float around like the wind? Was Jesus promoting the sort of Spiritism that Witches and Sorcerers promote? Was Jesus a Freemason?

By no means! Jesus was not talking about men becoming invisible. He was talking about the nature and operation of the “life” that He was giving to men.

The Greek word for spirit is “pneuma.” It is the word from which we get “pneumatic” and “pneumonia.” Pneuma is, first of all, wind. Wind is spirit, and thus, defines the term. Spirit acts like wind. Both are expressed by the Greek “pneuma.” Like wind, God’s pneuma (spirit) moves things and animates them. It drives things and gives them life. You cannot see spirit, but you can observe the effects it has upon people and things. The spirit of God moves the hearts and minds of people ... as the wind

moves physical things.

Motivation or drive compels men to think and do things. In John 3:8 Jesus likens spirit to the wind. Spirit drives men like wind drives sailboats. Jesus says that the wind blows from one place to another and you can’t see it. You can’t see the actual wind, but you can see the effects it has upon physical objects like trees, grass, clouds, water, etc. Imagine at a sailboat on a lake. The wind that drives it cannot be seen. But you can see the wind’s effect upon the sailboat. You can also see the effect the wind has upon the surface of the water, churning up waves. Spirit (wind) drives the boat and drives the waves. The spirit of God drives and moves men. Men are like sailboats adrift on a sea of thoughts ... driven this way and that by spirit. It is therefore most important that we learn to close our sails to bad winds and open our sails to the good winds.

What does “born of the spirit” mean? In answer we might ask, what is meant by “born of the wind.” Wind is “spirit” according to the Greek language. So how do things become “born of the wind?”

Think of a leaf falling from a tree. If there is no wind (spirit) the leaf falls, lifelessly, straight to the ground. But, if there is a breeze (spirit) the leaf becomes animated; it takes on a life. It moves. It is not lifeless, but alive on the wind ... driven by an invisible force: the spirit. The leaf is “born of spirit.” It had died on the tree, hanging lifeless. But it is reborn by spirit, at least for a few moments ... as long as the spirit carries it. Spirit gives it movement (i.e., life). To be “born of the spirit” means to be “quickened” or given new life.

The holy spirit is not an invisible person with a mind of his own. Neither can it be summoned up from inside men, anymore than the force which moves a leaf can be summoned up from within the dead leaf. God’s spirit (holy spirit) is a force that comes to man from outside himself. It overwhelms us (baptizes us) and drives us. And like wind, how far or fast it drives us depends upon how strong the spirit is. Sometimes the spirit is like gentle

breeze. Sometimes it is like a hurricane wind, driving us into unexpected circumstances.

Anger is a spirit. Anger can possess a man; make him lose control. It can drive him to do things he wouldn't ordinarily do. Jesus was driven to take a whip to the moneychangers in the temple. He was said to be "consumed with the zeal of God's house" (Jn. 2:14-17) ... which meant He was driven, carried away, by a spirit of zeal. This is the meaning of "spirit possession." The spirit possesses us when it drives us to do things beyond what we might ordinarily do.

The spirit of fear can drive people, as can the spirit of love. There is also a spirit of holiness: a compelling drive to dedicate yourself to the Lord's work.

That's what it means to be "born of the spirit."

Jesus was causing people to be driven by the spirit of God. In this way He animated people and brought them into the Kingdom of Life. We can see the Kingdom, and enter it, only if we are born of his spirit.

**QUESTION:** Aren't you afraid of grieving the Holy Spirit by belittling him to the point of saying he doesn't exist? Since this is known as the Unpardonable Sin, mabe you shouldn't be so quick to dismiss his existence.

## **ROMANS 9:10-19 IS GOD FAIR?**

And not only that, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac;

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, in order that the purpose of God according to the calling might stand, not of works, but of the One calling;)

It was said to her, The elder shall serve the younger.

As it is written, Jacob I loved; but Esau I hated.

What therefore shall we say? Is there injustice with God? It cannot be.

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

So then it is not of the one who wills, nor of the one who runs, but of God who has mercy.

For the scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose I raised you up, that in you I might show my power, and that my name might be declared throughout all the land.

Therefore He shows mercy upon whom He wills, but He hardens whom He wills.

You may say then to me, Why does He yet lay blame? For who has withstood his will?

**P**AUL explains "the calling" by citing the example of Jacob and Esau. These twins were obviously the same by race – yet they were different by spirit. One was "called-out," and the other wasn't. This was the case also with Isaac before Jacob, as well as with Abraham before Isaac. These were called out and separated from their genetic equals. Thus, race was clearly not the deciding factor that set them apart. They were of the same race as their contemporaries, but something was different about these men.

God promised Abraham that Sarah would bear him a son. But Sarah was too old to bear children ... and yet she did conceive Isaac and did bear a son to Abraham: a promised son. The conception and birth was a miracle. Isaac was a miracle child; a son of promise. From his beginning, Isaac was the result of promise – not the result of flesh. He was born of a woman incapable of conceiving him. In Isaac's miraculous conception and birth we see a type of the birth of Jesus who also was conceived and born to woman unable to conceive due to the fact that she had not been with a man. Mary conceived and bore Jesus in fulfillment of a promise from God (Lk 1: 28-35). Likewise, Sarah bore Isaac in fulfillment of a promise from God.

Today when a man is reborn in Christ it is also a miracle birth. His new life in Christ is the result of promise, not flesh.

26. *But Jerusalem above is free, who is our mother.*

27. *For it is written, Rejoice you barren one who bears not; break forth and cry, the one who has no childbirth pains: for the desolate has many more children than she which has a husband.*

28. *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*

Gal. 4:26-28

This verse is a quote from Isaiah 54:1. It ties in with Isaiah 62:1-4. These refer to the phenomenon of barren Sarah having children, comparing her to New Jerusalem – the spiritual city that is the mother of all of us spiritual seed of Abraham: heirs of the promise. Thus we understand the admonition Paul gave us ... that we are indebted to

promise and spirit, not to flesh and biology, for our eonian life in Christ:

12. *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.*

13. *For if you are living according to the flesh, you are dying; but if through the spirit you are mortifying the deeds of the body, you will live.*

14. *For as many as are being led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God*

15. *For you have not received the spirit of bondage (flesh) again into fear; but you have received the spirit of sonship in which we are crying, "Abba, Father!"*

Rm. 8:12-14

Sarah bore Isaac, and Rebecca bore Jacob. They were sons of the promise.

But Rebecca also gave birth to Esau. Jacob and Esau were conceived and born together as twins. Their separation was by promise; by spirit ... not by flesh. One was the seed of promise and one was not. One was born of flesh only, the other was born of flesh and born of spirit. One had the spirit of Abraham, and the other had only the spirit of flesh. One child would be a "son," and one would not. Both children were of the same father and same mother, but separated by God's process of "calling out" (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

By what strange process does God make a choice such as this? These were twin babes: equal and innocent. Neither had ever done anything good or anything bad. They were equally helpless, equally innocent, and equal in genetic makeup. Why did God choose one and not the other? Is there injustice in God?

This is an important point. Paul says, in essence, that these things may seem outrageous ... but remember, God knows what He is doing, and his purpose is right. The calling is not of flesh, or merit, but of the will and mercy of God.

This realization may be distasteful to the presumed "self-made" man, or to the man who thinks that his genetics is his ticket into the Kingdom.

But the truth is that no man is wholly self-made. And the best genes cannot make up for spiritual deficiency. Genetic makeup is important. And it is important for us to work and achieve. But the fact is we can rely upon flesh alone. We need God's spirit to guide our flesh. Man's works always fail unless he follows God and the Kingship of Jesus. Success in the world of flesh is not true success. It cannot bring true happiness or security. True success can come to man only when he accepts God's call. Paul refers to it as God's mercy. We may plant, and we may water, but God alone gives the increase (I Cor. 3:7).

Some have raised the question of whether or not this is fair. Is God fair?

First, we must understand that no man truly deserves God's mercy. God's mercy and generosity is never merited by us. It is a gift.

No man deserves the mercy of God. No man earns God's mercy. God owes no man. At conception man is given life. Life, and every second that follows, are gifts. Love, goodwill, and nurturing from mother and father are all gifts. Life, and all that goes with it, are gifts. To be born is to receive more than we've earned.

Therefore, whether a man receives great mercy, or no mercy, he has no grounds to complain. We come into this world with nothing. So EVERYTHING we have, including life itself, is a gift ... on the plus side. We exist by grace, not by merit. Anyone who demands "what he deserves" is asking for NOTHING.

None of us can raise a viable complaint against God. If God stops being generous to us tomorrow, we have no grounds to complain. To say God owes us something is childish.

Neither God, nor our parents, owed us life. It is a gift. To cry "UNFAIR" because God, or our parents, are not giving MORE is childish ranting and selfish nonsense.

Did God have mercy on Pharaoh? No. Why? Paul says it was done in order to declare God's name throughout all the land.

God did not owe mercy to Pharaoh. Therefore, not giving mercy to Pharaoh was not unfair.

You may say, Pharaoh was an evil man and he didn't deserve mercy. I agree with that. But the fact remains that no man deserves mercy. The mercy God shows to man is always a gift – and gifts can be given, or not given ... without being unfair.

You may think it is unfair for God to give a gift to one man if He doesn't intend to give the same to ALL men. Such though is probably a product of the modern welfare mentality. Americans are like a babies making selfish demands on their mommies. However, babies have an excuse, whereas Americans don't. They are slaves crying for "equal rights" and handouts from a "kinder gentler" slave master.

But why would God intentionally disregard a man's life (Pharaoh) just to cause his name to be declared throughout the land? He hardened Pharaoh's heart and didn't show him mercy. But didn't God give him life in the first place? Wasn't that generous?

God is the source of all life. Life, even if it lasts but one minute, is a gift that would not have existed except for God's favor. To the one receiving life, it is everything ... even if it is brief. Death, then, is no loss, but only the expiration of a gift. A gift for one minute is better than no gift at all. Allow a blind man see for one minute, then take away his sight again, and he is better off than before. There is no injustice with God. There is, however, mercy and generosity.

There is an evil trait in men that, if left unchecked, makes us unthankful. We may complain that the gift is not good enough, or that someone else got a better gift. That evil trait is called "a wicked eye" in the Parable of the laborers in the vineyard.

## THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD

The question of fairness was addressed in Matthew 20. According to Jesus it is not unfair for a man to give gifts to whomever he wishes. Thus, the giver is not obligated to give equally to everyone.

The kingdom parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard is about the question of fairness. Like Job, some

of the laborers were complaining that they were being cheated ... that they were not receiving enough. Like Job, they demanded more.

Matthew 20:

1. *For the Kingdom Of The Heavens is likened to a man, a landlord, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard.*

2. *And when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.*

3. *And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,*

4. *And said to them; You go also into the vineyard, and whatever is fair I will give to you.*

5. *So they went away. Then again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.*

6. *And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and said to them, Why are you standing here idle all day?*

7. *They said to him, Because no one has hired us. He said to them, You go also into the vineyard.*

8. *So, when evening had come, the lord of the vineyard said to his foreman, Call the laborers and pay the wages, beginning from the last until the first.*

9. *And the ones who came about the eleventh hour each received a denarius.*

10. *But the ones who came first held that they should receive more; but they each received a denarius also.*

11. *And having received it, they murmured against the landlord,*

12. *Saying, These last ones worked one hour, and you made them equals to us who have borne the burden and heat of the day.*

13. *But he answered one of them, and said, Fellow, I am doing you no wrong: did you not agree with me for a denarius?*

14. *Take what is yours, and go your way: but I wish to give to this last one the same as to you.*

15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own? Or is your eye wicked because I am generous?*

Matthew 20:1-15

The landlord wanted to be generous, and some of the laborers didn't like it. He gave all the workers a denarius. The point is, no one was cheated. No one received less than he had earned. Rather, some received more than they'd earned ... as per the "mercy" or generosity of the landlord.

Likewise, God cheats no one. When He is merciful or generous to someone, it is no disservice to others. In deed, we should rejoice when God blesses someone ... and not allow the fleshly spirits of envy and greed (the wicked eye) overtake us.

## ONE SOURCE

Verse 19 asks a rhetorical question: "Why does He (God) yet find fault?" ... alluding to the insinuation that God is not fair. Someone may answer, "God is all powerful, so He can be unfair if He wants." But that is not the right answer.

The question is this: Is it unfair of God to find fault with us (mortal man) when our righteousness depends totally upon His will? In other words, should man be held to blame for being weak ... when God made us that way?

This is a good question, and it deserves a good answer.

First, in Romans 8:

28. *And we know that to those who love God all things are working together according to his purpose for good to them who are the called.*

Romans 8:28

God's purpose is for our good ... not our condemnation. God does not expect or demand that we be sinless. He would not ask us to be something we cannot be. That would be unreasonable.

He does, however, demand that we honor Him as Father and not seek other "fathers." God never required man to be faultless. The

pagan churches have taught it wrong to churchgoers. God does not punish man for being mortal and weak. He created man this way ... and called it "good" (Gen. 1:31). God does not condemn man for being mortal. He does, however, require that we accept Him as Father; that we look to Him (not man) for authority. And He requires that we accept his call ... much the same as any parent desires his child to take up the family heritage and become a "son" in the spirit of Christ. In deed, by loving and honoring our parents when we are children we learn to honor and love God.

Learning how to honor God is the theme of the story of Job. Job is another misunderstood Bible character. Most people think that the Book of Job was put into the Bible to showcase Job as an example of faithfulness, patience and godliness. Actually, just the opposite is true! Job represents faithlessness, impatience, self-righteousness. Job had typical faults, and yet God loved him and redeemed him.

At the beginning of the book, Job suffered a great tragedy. Then for 30 subsequent chapters we endure Job's ranting and raving about his own righteousness, and how God was misjudging him. The book of Job is a study about human self-centeredness and the fairness of God. We all can relate to Job in some way because we've probably felt, at some time, that we were getting a bad deal from God. Job's reaction was typical - that is, he felt persecuted and exceedingly sorry for himself. He complains that he didn't deserve the calamity that was befalling him, and that God was making a great mistake in his case. Job even goes so far as to call God UNJUST ... several times.

In chapter 35, verses 2, 7, 16 Elihu scolds Job for claiming that his righteousness is greater than God's. Elihu told Job that God was testing him by exposing a weakness in him. Thus, Job was advised to repent from his self-righteousness ... which was the real point all along.

Eventually, after God, Himself, confronted him directly, Job repented (Job 40:1-4):

1. *Then Job answered Yahweh, and said,*



3. ... I have spoken that which I understood not; things beyond my comprehension, which I knew not.

5. I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear: but now my eye sees you.

6. Wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

10. And Yahweh reversed the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends. Also Yahweh gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Job 42:1-10

Job's story depicts and parallels the story of the nation of Israel. Job's weaknesses reflected Israel's weaknesses. His faithlessness reflected Israel's faithlessness. His self-righteousness reflected Israel's self-righteousness. His eventual repentance reflected Israel's need to repent. And the blessings that came to him after he repented reflect the blessings awaiting Israel ... once we repent of our self-serving ways.

## IS GOD FAIR?

It's all man can do to judge fairness on his own level. He has no business trying to judge on God's level. God considers factors that man does not. If we take his word we must accept that He is fair. If we cannot accept this premise, then we lack the faith needed to internalize God's word.

These are fundamentals. Man is lost when he loses sight of God. Left to himself, man is a ship with no rudder. Being "lost" means to lose God's guidance. When man attempts to steer his own ship without God's guidance he naturally steers off course, forgets where he is going or from where he came ... and becomes confused and hopeless. Without God, we are only flesh ... and inadequate:

18. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for the will to do good is with me, but the ability is not.

Romans 7:18

Flesh, like a child, requires higher supervision and guidance. Without God's spirit to supervise and guide us

(our flesh) we never grow out of the child stage.

Now, Paul, realizing that God's fairness would be difficult for men to grasp, goes into detail. In Romans 9:17 Paul explains that God acts out of generosity, not out of debt to us. What we receive from God are gifts ... not out of obligation, but out of his desire to be generous.

Those who claim God is cheating them, that He is not fair, that life is not good enough, are hypocrites ... because they still cling to life. A spoiled generation greedily covets more and more, and complains that God does not give them enough. And if God gave them more, they would still demand more, and more, and more ... because their greed is never satisfied.

11. There is a generation that curses its father, and does not bless its mother.

12. There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, and is not washed from its filth.

13. There is a generation, O how lofty are its eyes! And its eyelids are lifted up.

14. There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and its jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from the land, and the needy from among men.

15. The leech has two daughters, crying Give, give! There are three things that are never satisfied, four things that have never said, It is enough!

16. The grave; and the barren womb; the land that is not filled with water; and the fire that has never said, It is enough.

Prov. 30:11-16

Job, like a lot of men, wanted to complain, and blame God for his own failures. Eventually he learned his lesson, and repented of his self-righteousness and greed (Job 42:6). He came to realize that he had taken himself too seriously, and that his attitude had been shameful.

We, like Job, must learn to focus upon God, and not upon ourselves. This is the message Paul was sending to the Romans in chapter nine.

When we catch ourselves thinking that God is not being fair with us,

that's when we need to go back and read the book of Job. Then reread Romans chapter nine. In Romans nine, Paul reiterates for the Romans the answer to the question: "Why does God find fault with man when he is governed by God's will?" It's the same question Job asked.

Job got his answer, and now Paul was answering his Israelite brothers in Rome. Anyone with this problem should repent like Job, and trust God. God knows what He's doing ... whether blessing or cursing.

Trust that God knows what He's doing! Trust that God can lead you to truth when you look to Him for guidance!

Truth is not always joyful, but it is always better than lies. Millions of people have looked in the Bible and have not found truth. Having a Bible, and reading it ... is not enough. You need guidance from God before you can rightly interpret the Bible. Without God's guidance you are lost ... even while reading the Bible. Without the guidance of God's spirit you cannot see truth even when it is before your eyes. God's spirit opens your eyes. Without it you are blind ... as was Saul before the "scales" were taken from his eyes (Acts 9:18). It is like driving past road signs without seeing them.

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## ROMANS 9:20-21 THE POTTER

Truly then, O man, who are you to dispute against God? The thing formed will not say to Him that formed it, Why have You made me thus?

Does not the Potter have authority over the clay, to make of the same lump one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor?

**P**AUL asks his Roman brethren, "Who are you to rebut God?" Paul might as well have told them to go read about Job and then look into a mirror.

Can the creation find fault with the

Creator? We can almost hear the words of the Creator saying to Job, and to these Romans, "If you don't like the way I created you, then try doing it yourself!" The thought is humorous.

Paul refers to the potter and the clay to illustrate his point. The potter can spin his wheel and make any kind of vessel he wants. He can make one that's beautiful, or he can make one that's ugly. It is his wheel, his clay, and his creation. He can make a vessel to hold water or wine, and he can make another to hold trash. Any vessel that is formed is better than the "lump" from which it came. Each owes its existence to the potter.

God is the potter and we are the vessels. He creates us different according his purpose for us. Is God unfair because He makes one vessel different from another? Of course not.

If we envy others then the problem is our own envy, not God's lack of generosity. Men's greed can be like a growing fire ... never satisfied, always demanding more and more. No matter how much God gives, man still wants more. Instead of applying themselves to do justice to the gifts they have received, most men prefer to complain and try to squeeze as much as they can from God.

We have the opportunity to alter and improve our own lives. The light of the gospel is just for that purpose ... to guide us to live a richer, fuller and better life. For our own good God may put us in positions that we don't like, and He may give us work to do things we don't prefer. We should be thankful that we can work, and that He hires us into his work force.

He may use us as vessels to show his wrath, or He may use us as vessels to show his mercy. He is the Creator and we trust Him to know what He is doing.

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## **ROMANS 9:22-33 CALLING OUT THE VESSELS OF MERCY FROM THE VESSELS OF WRATH**

But if God intended to show forth his wrath, and to make his power known, but patiently bore with the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,

In order that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he prepared beforehand for glory,

Even us, whom he has called, not only out of the Judeans, but also out of the nations.

As he said also in Hosea, I will call them my people, who are not my people; and beloved, who are not beloved.

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

Isaiah also is crying out concerning Israel, Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, (only) a remnant will be saved:

For a communication will the Lord make, concluding it and cutting it short, upon the land.

And as Isaiah said before, If the Lord of Hosts had not left a seed within us, we might have become as Sodom, and likened to Gomorrha.

What shall we say then? The nations not pursuing righteousness have attained righteousness. But it is the righteousness that is of faith. But Israel, pursuing after the law, has not arrived at righteousness in law.

For what reason? Because they pursued it not of faith, but as of works. For they stumbled at that stone of stumbling;

As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a Stone of stumbling and Rock of obstruction: and anyone who believes on Him will not be shamed.

**G**OD creates vessels of wrath, and vessels of mercy. It cannot be said any clearer. For another witness, read Isaiah 64:8, and Jeremiah 18:1-6, where Yahweh is compared to a potter, and Israel to clay in the potter's hands. Paul tells us that God sometimes makes vessels of wrath ... so He can show his mercy upon other vessels He has made.

Who are the people Paul is talking about? He is quoting Hosea 1:1-10. These people were Israel. But how can that be? Aren't Israelites "God's people"? Isaiah and Paul say they are not his people, but are to become "his people." Israel had not been loved, but will be loved. God says, "I will show them that I love them. They have not been loved, but I will show my love for them."

This doesn't fit the picture the churches have told us about Israel. We've been told that Israel is always God's chosen people. But Hosea, Paul (and others) plainly call Israel a people who, at that time, were NOT GOD'S PEOPLE! How is this possible?

Israel was once Yahweh's people by covenant. She was Yahweh's wife. The wedding covenant was declared at Mt. Sinai. Israel was God's special love, and He was her husband ... for approximately 14 centuries, during the time of the judges.

Then Israel (the wife) turned unfaithful and committed adultery with other gods. She spurned Yahweh and made a mockery of the marriage. Thus, Yahweh put her away and divorced her (Jer. 3:8). This happened centuries before Paul was born. Thus, Israel was once God's people, but then they were not God's people.

In Paul's day Israel had been "not God's people" for many centuries. Israel had abandoned Yahweh 1100

years before Paul (I Sam. 8). As a result she was taken captive by Assyria in 721 BC, and by Babylon approximately 600 BC. Israel sold herself to other gods, abandoned her Husband (Yahweh), and opted for slavery. Thus, God divorced her and let her go.

God said that He was going to redeem them who had been “not his people.” They would become “his people” again. That promise was fulfilled by a New Covenant and a new marriage. A NEW ISRAEL (New Jerusalem) was born, and a new King of Israel (Jesus) was born to be the Bridegroom.

New Jerusalem is a spiritual city of Israelites who were born of the spirit and called out (raised up from the dead). The born-again (raised up) Israelites became known as “children of God” (Jn. 1:12). These newborn “seed of promise” were now “God’s people” who had been “not God’s people” for a long time. Out of Israel a whole new people were emerging. This new body of people (New Jerusalem) became the Bride of Christ by the New Covenant.

6. *For it is contained in scripture (Is. 28:16), Behold, I am laying in Zion a called out and precious cornerstone: anyone who believes on Him will not be shamed.*

7. *Therefore he is precious to you which believe: but to them which do not believe, the stone which the builders disallowed, this one became the head of the corner,*

8. *And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of obstruction, to them which are stumbling at the word, being unbelieving; for that also they were set forth.*

9. *But you are a called out family, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a people being purchased; that you might declare the virtues of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:*

10. *Who once were not a people, but now are the people of God: the ones who were not shown mercy, but now are shown mercy.*

I Pet. 2:6-10

New Jerusalem is a city of spirit (city of life) for people born of spirit. In Romans 9:29 Paul talks about “a

seed.” This was not just a physical or genetic seed. He was talking about a spiritual seed: the seed of promise. Paul says, if God hadn’t supplied this spiritual seed of promise (culminating in Jesus) we would have perished like Sodom and Gomorrah. If He hadn’t left us the gift of spiritual life – the seed of new life in Christ – we would have been irretrievably lost.

Verse 30 explains the failure of fleshly Israel. She was attempting to do something she was not equipped to do. Fleshly (spiritually-dead) Israel fell to seeking righteousness by their own means.

The law teaches us right from wrong. But law cannot give life to a dead body. To honor and follow the law is good and right. But to depend upon law to save us is foolish and impossible. The only way to life is by way of faith in Jesus, and the righteousness which He imputes to those who love Him.

This reflects the whole history of Israel. They sought righteousness not by faith. They sought righteousness not by believing in their God, but rather by believing in themselves. They thought they could attain righteousness on their own ... and of course they failed.

“Stumbling at the Stone of stumbling” means rejecting the gift of life. If you have faith in the Rock you won’t be shamed, because He will keep you spiritually alive and beside the River of Life.

**QUESTION:** I’ve heard that people are like containers that God pours Himself (His Spirit) into in different amounts. He poured more of Himself into Jesus, of course, and then lesser amounts into the rest of us. Couldn’t we be “sons” like Jesus if we had this spirit poured into us?

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## END OF ROMANS CHAPTER NINE

FOR ANSWERS AND NOTES SEE ANSWER SECTION.

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