

## A LOOK AT ROMANS 9

In Romans 3:28-30, Paul states

28For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. 29Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

Paul says that a man is justified by faith apart from works, and that God is both God of Jew and Gentile. How? Through faith. He points out that this is true because Abraham was justified by faith without being circumcised, and before the Law even existed.

In Romans 4, Paul then lays out some important truths about Abraham that reflect this same idea that he just stated about God. Paul states that Abraham was declared righteous because of his faith. He then asks the question: Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. (Romans 4:9)

Paul states that Abraham's righteousness had come upon the circumcised (natural Jew), and upon the uncircumcised (Gentile). The condition for both is the same – faith. So then we see that God is a God of Jew and Gentile just as Paul had stated. He states then how this promise came upon the Gentiles: Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! (Romans 4:10)

So Paul states that Abraham believed God, and God declared him righteous. This happened before Abraham was circumcised. Thus Abraham is an allegorical picture of any lost soul of any nation who can be justified by God and declared righteous through faith in God. In being circumcised, this righteousness that Abraham had was now shown in his flesh. This led to Abraham being made promises by God. He was now a father of many nations. The word “father” in the Hebrew means “head or founder of a household, group, family, or clan.” Abraham was the head and founder of a new household. This household would come to be called Israel. In this sense, Abraham was the “first of his kind among many.” Abraham would now serve as the federal head, not only for one nation, but for many. In Abraham, God showed how He would justify sinners from every nation.

Paul thus states that Abraham was to become a father of two types of children:

11And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12And he is also the

father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who **also** walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. (Romans 4:11-12)

Abraham was the father of all uncircumcised people who believe, and to all circumcised people who believe. Thus, Abraham is NOT the father of uncircumcised people who do not believe, or of circumcised people who do not believe. Thus Abraham's fatherhood was spiritual. He was the father of faith to Jews and Gentiles who believed.

In verse 16, Paul sums up why the promise only comes by faith. If it came by the Law, then faith is made void. Why? Because they already had the Law, and the promise had not come yet. It took no faith to believe the Law, thus Paul states in Galatians 3:12 –  
**12**The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." To live by the Law, meant to "do something." It wasn't that people under the Law had no faith, but that their faith was in the Law making them righteous, when it didn't, and couldn't.

So in verse 16 Paul says:

**16**Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

Remember that Paul had just said that Abraham was the father of all who were uncircumcised, yet believed, and also of those who were circumcised, and also believed. So being circumcised alone was not enough to be considered Abraham's son or heir to the promises for only "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). Abraham believed God's word. Jesus was God's Word made manifest. For us to now believe God's Word, we must believe in Jesus Christ. So Paul here says the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by God's unmerited favor, otherwise we earned it. It comes by faith, Paul says, so that the promise may be guaranteed to all the offspring which are 1) not only those who are "of the Law", but also 2) to those who are of the faith of Abraham.

By "of the Law", Paul means the Jewish believer, for Gentiles were never under the Mosaic Covenant, and Abraham was only the father of believers, so all Paul could possibly mean is Jewish and Gentile believers. We can all receive the promise if it is by faith. Truly in this way, he would become the "founder," the "first of his kind among nations." Thus Paul also states in Galatians 3:7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. Abraham was the father of believers, not the Jews.

In Romans 9, Paul begins by lamenting over his Jewish brethren. They were God's chosen people. God had intended for them to inherit the promises with Messiah. Yet

they had for the most part always rejected God from the beginning. As Jesus aptly stated in Matthew 23:37-38 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38Look, your house is left to you desolate.

Unless Jesus is a liar, He stated that he had often longed to gather them to Himself. He could not, however, because they were not willing. In order to become true sons of Abraham and heirs of his promises, they had to believe in Jesus.

Now the Jews stood rejected as a whole and were “nigh unto cursing.” They refused to let go of the old world of the Law. Jesus had warned the disciples that Jerusalem would be destroyed in Matthew 24. He warned them to flee when they saw the Roman armies of Titus surround Jerusalem. All those who would believe their message would escape, but all those who remained in the old world of the Law would be destroyed with it. Paul was distressed that they would not escape this punishment, and that they were unprepared for eternity.

#### ROMANS 9:1-5

1I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit— 2I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised!<sup>[a]</sup> Amen.

Then Paul states that even though Israel had not obtained the promises of Abraham, God’s word to them had not failed. Thus, Paul begins to support his claim that God’s word had not failed. He begins by saying that not everyone who is Jewish is actually a part of the true Israel. Remember that in Chapter 4 Paul said that Abraham was only the father of those who were circumcised AND ALSO believed.

#### ROMANS 9:6-7

6It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 7Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

We know that Isaac was a miracle. Abraham nor Sarah could conceive on their own. Thus Isaac could only be born by a promise from God. Isaac was born of the Spirit. He was the child of promise. Thus, as Abraham, Paul points out that Isaac is the first of many children of promise. When God spoke to Abraham and said "in Isaac shall your seed be called," He was saying that only the children of the promise "like Isaac" would be counted for the true descendants of Abraham. Paul also says this in Galatians 3:7 - Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.

Paul could not have been talking about physical descendants of Abraham through Isaac, for those were the very Jews over who he was lamenting. Abraham was only the father of the children of promise. The children of promise were the only ones to inherit the blessing. Only those who were born of the spirit would be counted as descendants. So then, in Isaac the original child of promise, shall "your seed be called." Paul then explains that this is clearly what he is saying. As Paul stated in Galatians 4:28, "Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise."

ROMANS 9:8-9

8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. 9 For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."

"I will return, and Sarah will have a son." This was the promise of God to Abraham. Isaac was a child that was promised and brought about only by the power of God.

So Paul then explains it further by saying that just because one is Jewish, that doesn't make him an heir to the promise. Nor does it make him a part of the Israel of God. Abraham was a spiritual father of a spiritual nation, the children of promise. Paul goes on to use another example to make the same exact point. This has nothing to do with God arbitrarily choosing Abraham's physical descendants, but it has to do with Paul showing that only those who are children of promise are the inheritors of Abraham's promise, and are thus counted as "Israel."

Paul points out the spiritual by pointing out the physical. Ishmael had not been chosen even though he was Abraham's descendant. He was not a child that was promised. He was a child born through Abraham's own physical effort. He was a product of works. Works can never please God. Jesus is the fulfillment of all that was in the Law. It has to be by faith so that it can be by grace. So then Paul answers what could have been an objection, because the promise was made to Sarah, not Hagar. So Paul points out that it doesn't matter. Rebekah also conceived by "one father" Isaac. Thus, again, it had nothing to do with the physical. All these serve as allegories.

ROMANS 9:10-13

10Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. 11Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: 12not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Here Paul makes the same point. How was Jacob a child of promise? Because he was born second. He should have not received the birthright. Yet, God knew that Jacob would deceive his father and obtain the birthright. Whether or not God “caused” this, cannot be proven. At any rate, Jacob then was a child of promise. It was impossible for him to be the heir, and yet here he was, the heir indeed. As Genesis 28:10-15 records:

Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. 11 When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. 12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

So we see that Jacob inherited the promise of Abraham and Isaac even though he was not eligible to receive it. The word for “hate” used here simply means that God “loved Esau less.” God preferred Isaac over Esau for His own reasons. It had nothing to do with their own works, because when God spoke these things, He spoke to them as nations and not men. Nevertheless God’s purpose in election was to bring about the one to whom all the promises of Abraham would eventually come, the Messiah Jesus Christ. This was God’s purpose. This is what Abraham had rejoiced to see. God would bring about Jesus Christ in an allegorical way, by children of promise to show a shadow that would be revealed by the apostles. That is what Paul is explaining here. Again, these things are an allegory.

Then Paul asks a question, “Is God unjust in doing this?” No. If God made the promise, then God is perfectly righteous in setting the terms by which that promise can be received. God was sovereignly showing in the shadow of the Old Testament how the promise would be carried out. He can do this because He is God. It was His plan, and His mercy that brought Jesus Christ into the world. It was His plan and His promise that would bring salvation from Abraham to Christ and then to the world. Thus, God could do it however He chose.

God has always used men to bring about His purposes. This does not mean, nor can it be proven, that God is the cause of all our wicked behavior. God is not the author of sin, neither can He be. However, He can use men in whatever state they are in to bring about His plan, especially in the Old Testament where the plan of redemption was being acted out. In the New Covenant, the shadows have come to light. Thus, there is no need to assume that God is still using or has any reason to use history as an allegory anymore. As Paul said in Ephesians 3:8-9:

8Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

ROMANS 9:14-18

14What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15For he says to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

Moses wanted God to show mercy on all the children of Israel. He wanted God to consider all the Jews His chosen, but God would not do it. It was a spiritual nation that God had in mind. He had never chosen Israel as a physical nation, and that is the point that Paul is trying to make. As Paul had stated earlier, only those who had the faith of Abraham are the children of Abraham. It is here in Exodus 33:12-19 that Paul refers:

12 Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' 13 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people (Moses' desire for them to be chosen)."

14 The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

17 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

Moses' desire was for God to choose him AND all of Israel, but God would not do so. God would only choose those who were children of promise. The children of promise were those who had Abraham's faith. It was God's plan to bring the true heir of Abraham into the world. This had to do with bringing Jesus into the world. This means that it was always God's plan to accept those of faith, and not those who had merely descended from Abraham physically. This is Paul's whole argument.

Paul then shows that even Pharaoh was used by God to show His plan of salvation.

#### ROMANS 9:17-18

17For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." 18Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

Let's not lose sight of Paul's theme here that not all of Israel is in fact Israel, and that God's word had not failed. He proves this by showing that it was always God's intention to have a spiritual nation, of those who "like Isaac" were children of promise. Only those who believe would be children of Abraham. Here Paul shows that God raised up Pharaoh for two reasons, and that God had the right to do so. The first reason was so that God should display His power and the second was so that His name would be proclaimed in all the earth.

Watch this: God will not show mercy on all of Israel, but calls Israel to be His means of blessing to all the other nations. What happens when they fail? God calls him who is not elect, such as Pharaoh, and make him elect to accomplish God's purpose. Notice all of these people have been chosen for their ROLE in God's plan. They serve a furthering PURPOSE. God always chose the One to be the blessing for the many. By hardening Pharaoh's heart, God could save Israel with a mighty hand. What happened as a result? The fear of Israel spread throughout the whole earth. This is how Rahab was saved. All of Jericho had heard of the God of Israel. Rahab thus believed in God and showed it by hiding the spies and was saved. This shows that through Pharaoh, God accomplished His purpose. In Romans 1, Paul had already stated that God "turned them over to a reprobate

mind.” God simply turned Pharaoh over to do his own evil desires. He certainly didn’t need any additional help with that from God. As one writer put it:

God's choice of Abraham did not mean that He intended to discard all others. God chose Abraham as a means of blessing the others. The election of one was for the blessing of many. The corollary of the election of one party is not the rejection (much less the inevitable damnation) of the other party.

Let us consider God's purpose in the election of Israel at Sinai:

Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine. — Ex. 19:4, 5, KJV.

In this passage God is not saying that in choosing Israel He is going to discard His interest in the world. He chooses Israel because the whole world is His. He has a saving purpose which is as wide as the world. Israel is chosen to be His instrument in that saving purpose.

God further declared to Israel, "You will be for Me a kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:6). The primary office of the priesthood was not to offer sacrifice but to teach the oracles of God.

God delivered Israel from Egypt in order that Egypt might know that Yahweh was the Lord (see Ex. 7:4, 5). By His mighty act of election God wanted His name to be "proclaimed in all the earth" (Ex. 9:16).

So with natural Israel, God had accomplished His purpose. They had always rebelled against God, but God put up with them because of His promise to Abraham to save all the nations of the world. God would endure with Israel until Christ could come. Even after that, God gave them a space to repent. When they would not repent, God eventually destroyed forever that Old World of the Law, and many of them in the process.

ROMANS 9:19-21

<sup>19</sup>One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" <sup>20</sup>But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" <sup>21</sup>Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

Paul here, as is often the case, answers a Jewish objection. Why does God still blame us (the Jews)? Who can resist the will of God? If it was the will of God that the physical nation of Israel would never be accepted, how can He blame us for His idea? No, Paul says, God is God. He had said to Abraham, "In YOU, all the nations shall be blessed." Moses had said "You are only here because of Abraham’s righteousness and the promise

that God gave to him.” Yet, you would not listen. You became wise in your own conceits and held the truth of God in a lie so that you are without excuse. You thought that the promise could be obtained just because you were the “chosen” people. Yet, you were not chosen. You thought you could obtain the promise by following the Law, yet, it was never the Law God wanted you to follow but Him. As God has said, “obedience is better than sacrifice,” and as Moses had told you from the beginning, “circumcise your hearts.” But you were not willing. Do not blame God. He has the right to make out of one lump, (the nation of Israel), some vessels for noble purposes and some for common use. He creates both. He uses both. But it depends on faith given by God through the gospel and exercised back toward Him that enables one to become a vessel unto honor.

Then Paul asks a question himself. He ties together some of the terms that he has been using to describe the children of promise, who have faith, and the children of the flesh, which may be circumcised, but have no faith. What does Paul ask? “What if God’s plan was to put up with natural Israel for all those years so that they would accomplish His purpose of bringing Jesus Christ into the world, so that He could actually obtain from them His mandate from Sinai that ‘through them all the world would be blessed.’? After all, Jesus was the one who at last became the only heir of Abraham, as it was spoken by Ezekiel the prophet in Ezekiel 21:25-27:

25 " 'O profane and wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose time of punishment has reached its climax, 26 this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Take off the turban, remove the crown. It will not be as it was: The lowly will be exalted and the exalted will be brought low. 27 A ruin! A ruin! I will make it a ruin! It will not be restored until he comes to whom it rightfully belongs; to him I will give it.'

The promise being realized in Jesus Christ, God could at long last begin to save the Gentiles.

ROMANS 9:22-26

22What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? (natural Israel, according to Ezekiel) 23What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— 24even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? 25As he says in Hosea:

"I will call them 'my people' who are not my people;  
and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," 26and,  
"It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them,  
'You are not my people,'  
they will be called 'sons of the living God.' "

Here Paul states that God put up with rebellious Israel so that His plan of bringing Jesus Christ into the world would come to fruition, and the promise to Abraham to save the world through him would come to pass.

What Paul is actually saying is “What if God was willing to show His wrath and make His power known, but INSTEAD, endured the objects of wrath with great longsuffering...” It is thus translated in the Contemporary English Version:

22God wanted to show his anger and reveal his power against everyone who deserved to be destroyed. But instead, he patiently put up with them. 23He did this by showing how glorious he is when he has pity on the people he has chosen to share in his glory. 24Whether Jews or Gentiles, we are those chosen ones.

God endured the objects of His wrath – the children of the flesh, those of the Law, used for common purpose – so that He could show mercy upon the objects of His mercy – the children of promise, those of faith, used for noble purpose. This was God’s intention from the beginning. Then Paul quotes Hosea the prophet to support that this was God’s plan from the beginning by showing that God would reach out to all those who were not Abraham’s true children and through Christ make them not only Abraham’s children, but God’s own children. God would reach out to the uncircumcised who would have faith, and to the circumcised who would have faith. Since Jesus Christ was the only one chosen in the end, He was the last in the long line of children of promise being, “like Isaac”, born of a virgin, and born of the Spirit. Thus, through Him, all who were not the true children of Abraham – those who did not have faith, objects of wrath – could become children of Abraham.

In this sense, we were all “objects of wrath” and God put up with all of us so that he could destroy us as objects of wrath and make us into objects of mercy. As objects of wrath we were all destined to be destroyed. Either way, we are destroyed, for an object of mercy is an object of wrath that has been destroyed. As an object of mercy, I am no longer an object of God’s wrath, but instead the Bible says that “being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Romans 5:9):

1As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath (Eph. 1-3).

God not only endured with Israel as a nation so that Jesus Christ could come into the world and save us, but He also endures with us out of mercy, not willing for any to perish but that all should come to repentance. For Jesus even said that He did not come into the world to judge the world, but to save it. He came into the world as the One true heir of

Abraham's promise. Through Him, the promise that was to spill over from Abraham into the whole world would come to pass.

#### ROMANS 9:27-29

27Isaiah cries out concerning Israel:

"Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea,  
only the remnant will be saved.

28For the Lord will carry out

his sentence on earth with speed and finality."

29It is just as Isaiah said previously:

"Unless the Lord Almighty  
had left us descendants,  
we would have become like Sodom,  
we would have been like Gomorrah."

Again Paul shows us that God's judgment on Israel was because of her own sinful rebellion. Thus Isaiah said that this was God's "sentence on earth." These words that God would save a remnant show God's mercy. He had every right to wipe them out, but instead patiently endured them so that Jesus could come into the world. Though only a small number of them would believe in Jesus, God cared enough to allow them the opportunity because of His promise to Abraham. In saying all of this, Paul has demonstrated that God's word did not fail, which was the point he was trying to make.

#### ROMANS 9:30-33

30What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; 31but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. 32Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone."

33As it is written:

"See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble  
and a rock that makes them fall,  
and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Thus Paul sums up his argument by arriving at a conclusion. The conclusion is that the Gentiles obtained righteousness, while natural Israel fell short of it. They fell short of it because they did not pursue it by faith. They refused to believe that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the Law. Thus, God's promise to Abraham did not fail after all. For what had been promised him? God had promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, and that through him all the world, (Gentiles), would be blessed. Paul says that the promise has been realized, even though the people through whom everyone thought God would bring those things to pass were ultimately rejected. This just shows that God could only accomplish these things through Jesus Christ, and never Israel.

A quick look at Galatians 3:16 would show us why:

<sup>16</sup>The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.

This means that the promise was only spoken to two people to begin with: 1) Abraham and 2) Jesus Christ. It was Israel's for a time because of Abraham, but now it belongs to whosoever will through Jesus Christ.

Does the thought of Paul on this end here? No. He continues this thought through chapter 11, and it is incomplete without the rest. Paul concludes the whole matter by showing that the very reason that Israel was being rejected is so that God could fulfill His promise to Abraham and save the Gentiles. God saved the Gentiles, Paul says, so that they could turn right around and save the Jews – those same Jews who had been blinded and hardened. Thus God's rejection of Israel was to their ultimate salvation, and not to their damnation:

<sup>1</sup>I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup>God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew (Romans 11:1-2)

<sup>11</sup>Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. <sup>12</sup>But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! (Romans 11:11-12)

<sup>22</sup>Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. <sup>23</sup>And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. (Romans 11:22-23)

Graft who in? Those very branches that were broken off because of unbelief!

When we look at this book as a whole, and use the whole Bible to interpret difficult passages instead of using difficult passages to interpret the whole Bible, we find that not one thing is being said here about unconditional election to salvation or damnation. What we do find is that God has used men to accomplish his purposes in history. God is Love. God's purpose in history is to display His nature and show His mercy unto all, and upon all that will believe in Jesus Christ:

<sup>21</sup>But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup>This righteousness

from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup>God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— <sup>26</sup>he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:21-26)

So Paul himself lays out the doctrine as a whole for us. This righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, Jew or Gentile, it makes no difference because all have sinned. Then Paul states that God presented Jesus as the sacrifice and took out on Him all the punishment for sin that should have come upon all objects of wrath. This is how he could put up with Israel and also all of us as objects of wrath and display His mercy upon us. Paul plainly states here that God demonstrated that wrath upon Jesus “because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.” Thus, through faith in Jesus Christ, all those sins and God’s wrath would remain where God intended for them to remain – on the cross.