

## Epistle of Romans XX

### Romans 9:1-13—God's Free Will!

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Let's just review a few things that are important for us to know, and see how the whole flow of the book of Romans is put together.

Romans 1—shows the Gospel and what it is to do

- God revealed Himself to mankind
- now with the Gospel, the righteousness of God is being revealed from heaven
- what happens to any society that rejects God or that goes into steep paganism
- ending up with all the things that He condemns very strongly

Romans 2—starts going to the individual

- v 1—“...you are without excuse, O man, everyone who judges...”
- then shows the difference between what the Gentiles were doing and the Jews were doing
- how that the circumcision would judge the circumcision if the circumcision didn't keep the law

Romans 3—everyone is under sin

- no one is without sin
- no one can work their way into a righteous standing with God; it has to be the righteousness of Christ
- vs 22-23—“Even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Romans 4—the account of Abraham

Abraham was counted righteous because he believed while he was in uncircumcision. So, he could be the father of both those who were of the circumcision and the uncircumcision.

Romans 5—explains how sin entered into the world

Romans 6—shows how we are to die with Christ, be buried with Him, be raised with Him. We are not to go on sinning; “MAY IT NEVER BE!”

Romans 7—shows the tremendous inner battle that everyone who has the Holy Spirit has in overcoming evil

- evil is within and there automatically
- you find yourself doing the things you don't want to do
- you have to recognize that that is the carnality of *the law of sin and death* within you

Romans 8—shows in spite of all of this, there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ

- God put the law of sin and death in us
- that is not a condemnation to you once God has called you and given you His grace
- you are then to overcome
- shows how we are to be led of the Spirit
- shows we're to be the sons of God
- v 28—“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.”

That is the whole key, the summary of everything from Rom. 1 all the way down to this point. That if you're called according to God's purpose that everything is going to work to good. If you're yielding to God and if you are converted, and if you're heart is right with God then it will all work for good, regardless of the outside circumstance as bad as they may appear, or whatever happens to you as an individual.

Many times we get to thinking that only those of us with our problems are the only ones with problems. *That's not so!* God says that in spite of all those problems it will all work together for good. God's calling is sure; that there is nothing that can be against us—*not a thing!* You need to understand that nothing can be against you!

Then Paul goes through this tremendous thing that ‘if God is for you, *nothing* is against you’ and that means *absolutely nothing!*

Romans 8:35: “What shall separate us from the love of Christ?...”

Verse 28: If you're loving God, “...all things work together for good...” Sometimes you don't understand it, because the circumstances that you look at may look contrary to what you think is good for you. Maybe what you're going through, the good is going to be a spiritual good, rather than a physical good. Not all good is going to be related to a

physical good for you. All of the flesh and everything like that is going to perish, so it’s going to be a spiritual good that’s important.

Verse 35: “...*Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?... [none of those things] ...Accordingly, it is written, ‘For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are reckoned as sheep for *the* slaughter’” (vs 35-36). One of these days it’s going to come down to that.

Maybe the older I get, the closer I get, I think that maybe I won’t go through that, but somebody is going to have to go through that, so I’m not going to say that I’m going to be exempt or escape or that any of us here are going to be exempt or escape from it.

But I do know, and I’m personally convinced in my own mind, that there may be a whole lot more time than we ever counted on for God to finish His plan. We don’t know, but for us, the end is going to be—if Christ does not return in our lifetime—whenever we die; that’s our end! That would be the same as living until Christ returned. We have to understand that; and it really doesn’t matter. If Satan is out there slaughtering true Christians right and left, and their blood is running deep in the gutters, that is a glory to God, because He’s going to resurrect them. You need to really focus in on the spiritual, that’s what Paul is talking about all the way through here.

Verse 38: “For I am persuaded... [and this is the persuasion we all need to come to] ...that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which *is* in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vs 38-39). Notice three times he mentions the love of God:

- v 35—“love of Christ”
- v 37—“Him Who loved us”
- v 39—“the love of God”

All of this being true, he switches from the individual and your salvation. Now he’s beginning to look at the overall plan of God, and he’s beginning to look at how this relates to the world, how we relate to the world and how we see these things that are taking place, and how we can understand the Word of God.

Romans 9:1: “I am telling you the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my own conscience in *the* Holy Spirit bears witness with me. That it is a great

grief to me and an unceasing sorrow in my heart, causing me *even* to wish myself to be accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to *the* flesh; who are Israelites, to whom *is* the sonship and the glory, and the covenants and the giving of the law, and the service and the promises; who are of *the* fathers, and from whom *came* the Christ according to *the* flesh, Who is over all—God blessed into the ages. Amen.” (vs 1-5).

He’s saying quite a bit here. Paul had the worst task in the world, he himself being a Pharisee. He had to actually spend his life condemning everything that he previously stood for. He had to warn all of those of those of his brethren in the flesh that what they were doing was not right. Though they had all of these things, what they were doing was contrary to what God wanted. It was very difficult for him. So, he has this great grief.

Let’s go back and go through each verse here:

- v 1—“I am telling you the truth in Christ...”

In a sense Paul stood alone. Though he had brethren and the brethren loved him and so forth, he stood alone. He had a very lonely and difficult life, as we saw concerning his calling, how he would suffer the thing and go to the Gentiles and go to the Jews. When he says: “I am telling you the truth in Christ, I am not lying...” he’s giving a double affirmation, one positive, one negative.

- “...my own conscience in *the* Holy Spirit bears witness with me....”

It’s not just something of a ‘rah rah; let’s not be against these people, because they belong to me’ or anything like that. But it was he truly understood God’s plan and he could truly see how that his own kinsmen, of all things, were rejecting God. That was a difficult thing for him to understand. This is very similar to what we read of Moses.

- v 3: “Causing me *even* to wish myself to be accursed from Christ for my brethren...”

Paul is saying, ‘Look, take my name out of the book of Life so that:

- “...my kinsmen according to *the* flesh” might be saved.

That’s quite a statement.

We see something similar to that with Moses (Exo. 32). It shows the depth of conversion that the Apostle Paul had, his true desire. Isn’t it always that way? The other day I was in a store and here was a nice looking family and a nicely dressed young girl—8 or 9, something like that—and the store filled

with all kinds of goods and everything like that. This little girl wanted so much her own way that she was throwing a tantrum right there in the store! You see that more often than not nowadays, it’s amazing! I held my tongue! I felt so much like going up and saying, ‘you’re such a spoiled brat.’ But I didn’t!

Isn’t it true, when those that have come to that point that they reject the best of what is given to them? It’s amazing! They want their own way. So, the true sign of someone who is deeply converted—like the Apostle Paul and Moses—let’s see what Moses said:

Exodus 32:30: “And it came to pass on the next day, Moses said to the people, ‘You have sinned a great sin....’” There they were, God had brought them out of Egypt, and this is just the way it’s been with Israel over and over again down through history. God led them out, brought them to Mt. Sinai, all of the miracles and things that He did to bring them there. Fed them with manna, spoke the Ten Commandments, and as soon as Moses went up on the mountain, they said, ‘We don’t know what happened to him.’ And they made the golden calf.

“...And now I will go up to the LORD. Perhaps I shall make an atonement for your sin.’.... [Moses didn’t want to see the people destroyed] ... And Moses returned to the LORD, and said, ‘Oh, these people have sinned a great sin, and have made themselves gods of gold! And now if You would only forgive their sin!.... [it doesn’t give the rest of the conversation there] ...And if not, I pray You, blot me out of Your book which You have written” (vs 30-32). If not then, he’s saying, ‘if You don’t forgive their sin, then just take me away.’

That’s a pretty strong conviction on the part of Moses. We have to stop and ask of each one of us: **To whom would I lay my life down to give up salvation that they may have it?** Their depth of conversion and their thoughts before God were far, far greater than ours.

Verse 33: “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book. And now go, lead the people to *the place* of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My angel shall go before you. And in the day of My visitation I will visit their sin upon them.’ And the LORD plagued the people because they made the calf, which Aaron made” (vs 33-35). So, Moses had that thought.

Even if you have the desire, here’s another thing that’s important in this: Your desire that someone be converted does not convert them. That’s

a pretty powerful statement. Speaking of the children of Israel, and this is one thing that Paul understood:

Deuteronomy 5:29: “Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always so that it might be well with them and with their children forever!”

With human nature like that, you’re just dealing with constantly going against the grain. Paul understood that. He was saying much like Moses, ‘God, if You just call all of them, blot my name out of the Book of Life.’ I’m sure he knew what Moses was told there, that God is going to do what He’s going to do. There again, what we’re beginning to see as this develops, as it comes along, that God is the Sovereign Ruler of the universe. What God does, God is going to do! How God is going to do it, He is going to do it. We’re going to see that human effort is not going to make that much of a change with God.

Romans 9:4: “Who are Israelites...” You would think the ones that God had chosen. He says ‘Israelites’ here, not Jews. As we’re going to see, it refers to *all* the 12 tribes of Israel, as well.

“...to whom *is* the sonship...” (v 4). You would think that the ones that God had chosen would be the ones so willing to do what God wanted. It all gets down to a matter of choice, as well.

“...and the glory, and the covenants... [plural] ...and the giving of the Law, and the service and the promises” (v 4). None of the Gentiles had that.

Here we see the same thing, what Paul was explaining to the Gentiles concerning this very thing, Ephesians 2:8: “For by grace you have been saved...”

- by grace you’re called
- by grace you’re saved
- by grace you stand before God

*we are to*

- stand in grace
- live by faith
- walk in hope
- dwell in love

That’s how it has to be, all of those combined together.

“...through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves...” (v 8). That’s the hardest thing for people to understand. Most people want to go ahead and have all of their effort count to make God

give you greater favor because of what you do. That is pure human reasoning on trying to secure favor with God by what you do. He's saying here: "...not of your own selves..."

It's not going to come from you internally. Remember now, we're talking about *eternal life*. We're not talking about decent conduct in this society. We're talking about God's granting of eternal life and being a spirit being forever. There are a lot of things you can do to gain favor in society by being a good person. That has nothing to do with salvation.

There's a poem about the *perfect* person:

- was politically correct
- never ate cholesterol
- always exercised
- always took care of their children
- always did things that were absolutely perfect as far as the society is concerned

When they got to how the world does, to St. Peter's golden gate, they didn't qualify because the question was, 'Where were you when I said to do this? Where were you when I called?' They were perfect, they did everything perfectly *in the letter*.

I need to rehearse just a little bit about Job. Job wanted to affect what God was going to do, because of what he did. There are times when you do that when it's from the heart. God is interested in the heart; that's what's most important.

"...not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God" (v 8). If it's a gift, *it's a gift!* If someone gave you this whole room full of gold and said it's a gift, then you come back and say, 'What must I do to have it?' *Well, it's yours!* 'I want to do something to earn it.' *It's yours!* 'You mean, all of that is mine?' *Yes! There are conditions. You have to obey me, but you can't earn it!* That's why it's a gift of God!

Verse 9: "Not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship..." (vs 9-10). That's what's important; God has to do His work in you. That is a greater work, and God's work in you is a re-creation.

"...being created in Christ Jesus unto **the good works...**" (vs 9-10). What's the difference in *good works* and *works*? You can have works that are good on the surface. *Works is what is initiated by you from within*, that you do yourself. Remember what Jesus told the young man when he came to Him and said, 'Good Master, what good thing should I do to have eternal life?' What did Jesus say? *Don't call Me good, there's none good but the*

*Father*. Out from human effort, from human nature, you cannot produce *good* works of yourself. Why? *Because it has to be Christ in you!* So then these *good* works are

- motivated by Christ
- motivated by His Spirit
- motivated from a converted heart and mind and attitude in doing what God wants

"...created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them.... [fruits of the Spirit (Eph. 5:22)] ...Therefore, remember that you were once Gentiles in *the* flesh, who are called uncircumcision by those who are called circumcision in *the* flesh made by hands" (vs 10-11).

What happened is that here are God's chosen people, the ten tribes sent off into captivity, the Jews remain and *they* develop a gospel of hate. No one can have access to anything but the Jews—*period!* They had this division.

Verse 12: "*And* that you were without Christ at that time... [I want you to compare that with what we're covering here in Rom. 9. It's important!] (The Gentiles who were without Christ, being): ... alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." So, you have the two. It's what Paul is comparing. You have the Gentiles who were in this condition until Christ, and then you have the Israelites who had everything. God gave them His Word and chose them, and they have their condition.

They're just like the little spoiled girl in the market. When Christ comes along to give them really what they need, they say, 'I don't want that.' God says, 'Okay, I'm going to the Gentiles.' In going to the Gentiles, God is trying to provoke the Israelites to see if they reject, don't accept, don't want. But they didn't respond that way.

Verse 13: "But now in Christ Jesus..." When Christ came, lived His life, was crucified and resurrected, everything changed from that point on. What it was in the flesh did not count—whether you were an Israelite or a Gentile—it now depends on the *calling* of God.

"...you who were once far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, Who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition, having annulled in His flesh the enmity..." (vs 13-15).

That is the enmity between the Jews and the

Gentiles—the *gospel of hate*—which they had; the enmity that they created with their own traditions and laws and so forth, which are called here:

“...the law of commandments contained in *the decrees of men*, so that in Himself He might create both into one new man... [in Christ] ... making peace; and *that* He might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, having slain the enmity by it” (vs 13-16).

It’s just like today, I imagine that if you ran a survey and went door-to-door in whatever city you may be in, and ask, ‘Do you have a Bible in your house?’ you probably would get a unanimous *yes*. At least high 80s minimum. ‘Oh, you do. I need to ask you two more questions: Do you read it?’ *No!* ‘Do you believe it?’ *No!* But God gave it to them. It’s in there because God made it be there, whether they bought it or Aunt Martha gave it to them, or grandma gave it to them, *whatever*. God said He would make His Word available. It’s not way off someplace, but close at hand. Here they had everything, and yet, they rejected it.

Romans 9:4: “Who are Israelites...”—of the fathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and there’s a tremendous lesson there in what Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did.

“...and from whom *came* the Christ according to *the flesh*... [proved over and over again in Scripture] ... Who is over all—God blessed into the ages. Amen. However, this does not mean that the Word of God has failed because not all of those who *descend* from Israel *are* Israel” (vs 4-6).

That’s quite a statement! If Israel, whose name was Jacob, how come not all of Israel are Israel? What happened here? How could that be? We’ll see there are two ways to apply it.

Verse 7: “Nor because they are Abraham’s seed does it mean that they *are* all children of *the promise*....” In other words, God is not going to give it just to give it because of a physical thing.

“...But, ‘In Isaac shall your seed be called.’ That is, those who are the children of the flesh *are* not the children of God; rather, the children of the promise are reckoned as *the seed* because this *is* the word of promise: ‘According to this set time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.’ And not only *that*, but Rebecca also having conceived by one, Isaac our father, but before *the children* had been born, or had done anything good or evil (in order that the purpose of God according to His own selection might stand—not of works, but of Him Who calls), It was said to her, ‘The elder shall serve

the younger.’ Accordingly, it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, and Esau I hated.’” (vs 7-13).

Now we’re confronted with some very perplexing problems, especially if you think that God has to be fair in the sense of fairness that you count fairness. Do you understand what I mean with that? Have you ever said, when something happens to you, ‘It’s not fair!’? *I have! I’m sure you have!* God’s fairness is *His* business. God is going to do what He’s going to do, because God *is* God and God *is* Sovereign and God has *His own* free choice. ***God is going to choose whom He’s going to choose***, otherwise, God is not God!

Now, let’s go back and let’s look at this again, v 6: “However, this does not mean that the Word of God has failed...” In other words, if God not calling all Israel—even though they have the glory of the covenants, the lawgiving, the sonship and the promises—the Word of God has not failed because He’s executing it according to His will. What we need to do is find out how He’s doing it.

“...because not all of those who *descend* from Israel *are* Israel” (v 6). We can also apply this: What is the Church? ***The true Israel of God! The Church!***

Galatians 6:15: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any *spiritual* force...” Was that not one of the commands of God that He gave? Why would He go back on that?

“...rather, *it is* a new creation *that avails*” (v 15). Which is greater: removal of a little bit of physical flesh? *or* a converted heart and mind and attitude? ***The latter, of course!***

Verse 16: “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God”—***the Church; the Israel of God is the Church!***

That’s why in Romans 9:6, where it says, “...because not all of those who *descend* from Israel *are* Israel”—not all of those who are of the 12 tribes of Israel have been called into the Church. That’s what He’s saying here.

What happens when God graphs in the Gentiles? ***They become the true Israel of God!*** The physical Israelites are not true Israel. This is the ***hardest*** thing for those who claim to be the ‘chosen people’ to understand. Being chosen in one sense, at a particular time, doesn’t mean that you’re chosen for all eternity.

Let’s see what the Apostle Paul said. This will help us to understand that not all that are

descended from Israel *are Israel*. In other words, they are not the true spiritual Israelites that God wants through conversion.

That’s what he’s saying here, Romans 2:17: “Behold, you are called a Jew, and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God, and know *His* will... [supposedly] ...and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and are persuaded *that* you yourself are a guide of *the* blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of *the* foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the Truth *contained* in the Law” (vs 17-20). But a form of the knowledge is not enough. Having a physical genealogy is not enough.

Verse 21: “You, then, who are teaching another, **do you not teach yourself also?** You who preach, ‘Do not steal,’ are you stealing? You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege? You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the Law? For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, exactly as it is written” (vs 21-24).

So, the one who should be bringing the knowledge, the one who should be bringing the Truth, have not been doing that. I would have to say, we need to include our experience in the Church of God in that, too. Would you not say that a lot of the things that we should have been doing we have failed in? You think about it! My! My! Did not the whole Church go through the same experience? Those who should have known better have *gone right back into paganism!* What happens when they don’t teach themselves and commit all of these sins? *Blasphemes God!*

Verse 25: “For on the one hand, circumcision profits if you are observing *the* Law; on the other hand, if you are a transgressor of *the* Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.” Those are fighting words! To a Jew, those are fighting words of the most obnoxious manner.

Verse 26: “Therefore, if the uncircumcised is keeping the requirements of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? And shall not the uncircumcised, who by nature is fulfilling the Law, judge you, who, with *the* letter and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of *the* Law? For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, neither *is* that circumcision which *is* external in *the* flesh; rather, he *is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly, and circumcision *is* of *the* heart, in *the* spirit *and* not in *the* letter; whose

praise *is* not from men but from God” (vs 26-29).

So, that whole thing carries over here into Rom. 9. God is interested in the heart, and God is going to make the choice of whom He’s going to choose and what He’s going to do—not only in the Church but in the world as well.

Roman 9:7: “Nor because they are Abraham’s seed does it mean that they *are* all children of *the promise*. But, ‘In Isaac shall your seed be called.’”

Let’s see what happened when they tried to work it according to their own means. Let’s see where the promise was given. Many times we do the same thing; we start out by believing God, by being very spiritual, and then *we try to complete it with physical means!*

Genesis 15:4: “And behold, the Word of the LORD *came* to him saying, ‘This man shall not be your heir...’” It was true, it was legal, it was proper. If you had a slave born in your house and you had no descendants, you could choose him to be as your descendant, to inherit what you had. He was not proposing something illegal, but he was proposing something that God was not going to do.

“...but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir.’ And He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your seed be.’ And he believed in the LORD. And He accounted it to him for righteousness” (vs 4-6).

Now, we come along here and things did not happen; things did not happen; things did not happen! Sarah got a little anxious. She said, ‘We’ve been trying this thing for years and years and you and I know that this scheme is not going to work.’ So, Sarah had a plan. Since it was going to come out of his own bowels, she said, ‘Look, I’ve got my handmaid here, Hagar (Gen. 16). She said, ‘You go into her and God will raise up seed from her for you; be from your own bowels.’ ***Doing a physical thing to try and accomplish a spiritual promise of God!*** Have you ever done that? Have you ever tried to fulfill something that God has said by you trying to do it, rather than waiting on God? I think that’s the whole lesson that we’re learning today in everything we’re doing. You know the account, Ishmael was born.

- Was he of the seed of Abraham? *Yes, he was!*
- Was he of ‘promise’? *No, he wasn’t!*
- Was he an antagonist to Isaac? *Yes, he was!*

‘It wasn’t reckoned from thee, in Isaac shall your seed be called.’ When that occurred, when Isaac was born, **that was a true miracle of God!**

(go to the next track)

Romans 9:8: “That is, those who are the children of the flesh *are* not the children of God; rather, the children of the promise are reckoned as *the seed*”—which then applies to us.

“...‘In Isaac shall your seed be called’” (v 7). We also had another problem with that. Let’s see how the Church is reckoned as the seed of Isaac. He was given by promise. We are called *by promise*. We are given the Holy Spirit *by promise*. He talks about the conflict that was there at that time:

Galatians 4:22 “For it is written that Abraham had two sons: one by the maidservant, and one by the free *woman*. Now on the one hand, he who came from the maidservant was born according to the flesh... [trying to work out the will of God their own way] ...but on the other hand, he who came from the free *woman was born* according to the promise” (vs 22-23).

Even then, when God came and said that next year, at this time she’s going to bear, Sarah snickered! God said, ‘*You laughed.*’ Sarah said, ‘No, my Lord, I didn’t laugh.’ *Yes, nevertheless, you laughed!* He understood it wasn’t a laughing in disbelief, it was a laugh that this thing can happen. That’s why it had to be *by promise*.

God was going to do the impossible thing! Can you imagine that? How old was Sarah when Isaac was born? *Way past grandmother stage, 90-years-old!* I tell you what, you go to and fro in the world and you find someone 90-years-old that just gave birth to a child. Can you imagine the kind of publicity that would have been? Can you imagine all the special reports and the Oprah shows—‘is this your child?’ Well tell us how it happened!

Verse 23: “Now on the one hand, he who came from the maidservant was born according to the flesh; but on the other hand, he who came from the free *woman was born* according to the promise; which things are allegorical, because these are the two covenants...” (vs 23-24).

What he’s doing, he’s relegating the Old Covenant to the same status as Ishmael. That’s what he’s doing in this allegory.

“...*The one from Mount Sinai, which is Hagar, is engendering bondage; because the Mount Sinai covenant is likened to Hagar in Arabia...*” (vs

24-25).

Some people get all upset and say there’s a Mt. Sinai in Arabia, and that there really wasn’t in the Sinai Peninsula. Well, I haven’t found any credence to that whatsoever, but this is an allegory showing that what was done at Mt. Sinai compared to what God is doing is the same as being in Arabia, and it’s the same as being a descendant of Ishmael, which is a hated thing. Look how they fight over there today in Jerusalem. Can you imagine walking up to a Jew today and say ‘you’re the same as Ishmael’? I don’t think you could get away quick enough! That’s what he’s doing here. That’s why Paul was hated.

Verse 25: “Because the Mount Sinai *covenant is likened to Hagar* in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem; and she is in bondage with her children.” They were slaves to the Romans and couldn’t get away. They were slaves to the ritual system and couldn’t give it up.

Verse 26: “But the Jerusalem above is free, which is *the mother of us all*; for it is written, ‘Rejoice, O barren who did not bear! Break forth and cry, *you who were not travailing...* [that’s talking of Sarah; barren for 90 years and finally break forth] ... because many more *are the children of the desolate...* [Sarah] ...than of her who has the husband” (vs 26-27). The *desolate* is referring now, in this particular case, to the Church, now bringing forth more children.

Verse 28: “Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are the children of promise.” Why? Because as Isaac was *by promise, by the seed of God*—have to be a Divine miracle to do that—so we, with the Holy Spirit, *have the seed of God within us*. We are counted as the seed. We are counted as the seed within Christ. Let’s look at that and see how that takes place. We’ll begin with the very basic and build up.

Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the remission of sins*, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.... [it is a gift given from God] ...For **the promise...** [of the Holy Spirit!] ...is to you and to your children... [that’s who it was given to, but they rejected it] ...and **to all those** who are afar off, **as many as the Lord our God may call**” (vs 38-39).

So, we receive the Holy Spirit *by promise*. You believe and God gives it. When He gives the Holy Spirit there is what is called *the begettal*. The Holy Spirit comes directly from God the Father, and

the Holy Spirit of God unites with the spirit of your mind.

1-John 3:7: “Little children, do not allow anyone to deceive you; the one who practices righteousness... [that is true righteousness from the heart with the Holy Spirit] ...is righteous, even as He is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil because the devil has been sinning from *the* beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil. Everyone who has been begotten by God does not practice sin because His seed *of begettal* is dwelling within him, and he is not able to **practice** sin because he **has been begotten by God**” (vs 7-9).

We have that little Greek word for *of* —‘ek’—means *out from*. The *begettal* comes directly from God the Father to you, out from God and into you.

“...he is not able to **practice** sin...”—cannot be living and practicing sin. Why? *Because the Holy Spirit of God will convict you of it. Can’t practice it.* Doesn’t mean you can’t sin, but *you can’t practice it.* Here’s why, “...because His seed *of begettal* is dwelling within him, and he is not able to **practice** sin because he has been begotten by God.” The Greek for *seed* is ‘sperma’; so His seed is dwelling in you. That’s why you are counted as the seed, like Isaac, *the children of promise*.

- you have received the promise of the Holy Spirit
- you have answered the calling of God
- you now have God’s Spirit impregnated into you, united with your mind
- you are the children of promise

*That’s why we are reckoned after Isaac.*

- it is a unilateral **act** of God
- it is a unilateral **decision** by God
- it is a unilateral **choice** by God

This should put the brethren in the Church in a whole new perspective concerning how God wants it run and how it needs to be. All the children of God and they belong to Him; have the Holy Spirit of God and it needs to be done as *God* wants it. That’s why we are reckoned after the Spirit.

Here’s another problem: Isaac and Rebecca did not ask for this, but this is what happened, Romans 9:10: “And not only *that*, but Rebecca also having conceived by one, Isaac our father, but before *the children* had been born, or had done anything good or evil (in order that the purpose of God according to His own selection might stand...” (vs 10-11)—according to God’s own choice; God is going to make the determination. You might label

this chapter as *God’s Free Will! God chose!*

“... not of works, but of Him Who calls), It was said to her, ‘The elder shall serve the younger.’ Accordingly, it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, and Esau I hated’” (vs 11-13).

That creates great difficulty for people. Has that ever created difficulty for you? Trying to understand that has created difficulty for me. I hope I understand it now. Let’s try and make it as clear as we can. Let’s see how this happened.

Genesis 25:19: “And these *were* the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son. Abraham begat Isaac. And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife because she *was barren...*” (vs 19-21). Isaac was made to learn the same lesson as Abraham.

“...And the LORD heard him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the sons struggled together within her. And she said, ‘If *it is* well, why *am* I this way?’ And she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her, ‘Two nations *are* in your womb...’” (vs 21-23). This is all of God! God is going to make the choice.

“...and two kinds of people shall be separated from your belly. And the one people shall be stronger than the other people, the older shall serve the younger.’ And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, twins *were* in her womb! And the first came out red, like a hairy garment all over. And they called his name Esau” (vs 23-25). Can you imagine that, just a woolly little kid. I’ve often wondered when the child was born and she looked at...

Verse 26: “And after that his brother came out, and his hand took hold on Esau’s heel. And his name was called Jacob. And Isaac *was* sixty years old when she bore them. And the boys grew. And Esau was a skilled hunter, a man of the field. And Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of *his* venison. But Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob boiled soup. And Esau came from the field, and he was faint. And Esau said to Jacob, ‘I beg you, let me eat of the red, this red *soup*, for I am faint.’ Therefore, his name was called Edom.... [which means *red*] ...And Jacob said, ‘Sell me your birthright today’” (vs 26-31). Why did God work it out this way? Why did God work it out where his mother had him lie?

*So the one of the flesh—Esau—would think it was all done by Jacob himself!* But the prophecy

was *‘the elder shall serve the younger.’* God already determined ahead of time how it was going to be. What better way to make it look like that it was done surreptitiously than to have it done the way it was done. His attitude here of Esau was, ‘Well, just for a bowl of pottage take whatever you want.’ He didn’t count the birthright in the way that it should have been.

Verse 32: “And Esau said, ‘Behold, I *am* at the point of dying... [he was more than just a little faint here] ... and what *profit shall* this birthright be to me?’ And Jacob said, ‘Swear to me this day.’ And he swore to him, and he sold his birthright to Jacob.... [it was going to be Jacob’s anyway all along, *because God said so*] ...Then Jacob gave Esau bread and soup of lentils. And he ate and drank, and rose up and went his way. Thus did Esau despise *his birthright*” (vs 32-34).

There’s a physical and spiritual lesson for us in this: ***Never give up salvation for a physical thing!*** One of these days there’s going to come the *mark of the beast*. When it comes, you’re either going to receive it or be killed, if you’re living at that time. They’re not going to force it upon you, because Rev. 13 makes it clear. They’re not going to take you and hold you down on the ground and put the *mark of the beast* on your hand or in your forehead. They’re going to kill you; you have to choose it. They’ll be just like this, they’ll wait and be very patient:

You run on down to the store and say ‘I want to buy this.’ *No, we can’t, our policy now is you must have this new banking system in your right hand or in your forehead.* ‘How am I going to eat?’ *It’s very simple, just take one of these and you’ll be all right. Before you do it you’ve got to go down to the local center to get it inserted in you, and when you get down there you have to bow down and worship this image of the beast. That’s the only way you can do it.* ‘Well, I won’t do it!’ *We have patience; we’ll wait.*

You begin to make a choice. What if you get to the point where you’re faint like Esau? Near the point of death! Someone comes by and say, ‘Look, it’s real easy. All you have to do is go down here to the local center and have this installed. It’s nothing to bow down to the idol. It isn’t going to hurt you. You go ahead and do it, and you can get food and feed your family, feed yourself. I mean, you’d starve to death?’

So, we’ll be confronted with something very similar to this. If we do that, if we take the *mark of the beast* then we despise our birthright exactly in

the same way. That’s why when it came time for the blessing, the birthright to be given, it went to Jacob instead of Esau. They were enemies! But ***it was God’s own choice***—that’s the thing that’s important! Let’s understand in this love/hatred, it is not an emotional thing, but it is of *will and purpose*. God hated the will and purpose of Esau. Jacob was seeking after God, though in his cunning little craftiness he didn’t get it because of that transaction, he had it from conception; that is the birthright.

Malachi 1:1: “The burden of the Word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. ‘I have loved you,’ says the LORD. ‘But you say, “In what way do You love us?” ...’” (vs 1-2).

That’s the way people are. God has given them a great inheritance, a tremendous wonderful thing, everything they would want physically. Then they say, ‘When did You love us?’ *He sent His Word! He sent His Son!* And they say, ‘When did you love us?’

“...*Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?*’ says the LORD. ‘Yet, I loved Jacob. And I hated Esau...’” (vs 2-3). How did He show that He was against the will and the purpose of Esau? Look at the difference in the lands of inheritance.

“...and made his mountains a desolation, and his inheritance *to be* for the jackals of the wilderness.’ If Edom says, ‘We are beaten down, but we will return and build the waste places,’...” (vs 3-4).

This is a whole example of how that Esau went against the will of God, then said, ‘I’m going to go ahead and do it anyway! I’m going to go ahead and take my inheritance back.’ For a time it looked like he did it. In history Esau was likened unto to one called Hercules. Esau went around and he conquered all the area that was to be the inheritance for Jacob. He conquered it and controlled it. That’s why when Jacob came back from the east—remember what happened? He said, ‘Oh, I’m fearful of my brother Esau.’ The servants came and said, ‘Esau’s come with a great troop.’ Jacob said, ‘Oh, I’m going to loose my life. I stole the birthright.’

Jacob sent offerings ahead and Jacob and his family stayed way to the back. He sent the sheep ahead, sent the cattle ahead, sent all the servants ahead—‘you go get killed for me, first.’ Here he was a big coward way at the back of the line. Finally, he came up to Esau and Esau was appeased by that time, because he thought he got the birthright back, because he conquered those lands. Jacob came and groveled before his feet and said, ‘Peace! We’re

brothers, let’s forget this and get up and go along.’

After Esau did that, v 4: “...thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘They shall build, but I will throw down...’ It was taken away from him; so there are many lessons to be learned here.

“...and they shall be called the border of wickedness, and the people *with* whom the LORD *is* indignant forever” (v 4). Esau and Edom has had inroads within the Church, inroads within the Jewish community...

Many people don’t realize it, but during the days of Herod, the line of Herod was half Jewish and half Edomite. That’s why Esau and Edom are the same. What happened was that Herod made all of the Edomites—south and east of the land of Israel at that time—embrace Judaism. He made them all become circumcised and embrace the religion—as it turned out, it was the religion of the Pharisees. So, we have this ongoing conflict between the chosen seed and the rejected seed constantly going on. Maybe that will help you understand some of the things that Jesus said here:

John 8:28: “Then Jesus said to them, ‘When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you yourselves shall know that I AM, and *that* I do nothing of Myself. But as the Father taught Me, these things I speak. And He Who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone because I always do the things that please Him.’ As He spoke these things, many believed in Him. Therefore, Jesus said to the Jews... [a Jew was one who was living in Judea] ...who had believed in Him... [now He’s making it a conditional thing]: ...‘If you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciples. And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free.’ They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham’s seed...’” (vs 28-33).

This is why Paul is writing about not all the seed of Abraham are of the ‘*children of promise*.’

“...and have never been in bondage to anyone. What do You mean by saying, ‘You shall become free?’” (v 33). They were in bondage to the Romans, right then.

Verse 34: “Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a servant of sin. And the servant does not live in the house forever; *but* the Son lives forever. Therefore, if the Son shall set you free, you shall truly be free” (vs 34-36). How is God going to make them free?

- By calling!
- By choice!

- By God making the choice to call!

God—in working out His plan of salvation —is not working it out in a haphazard way. *God knows!* Circumstances that we look at may appear to be haphazard, especially through the things that we’re experiencing in the Church today, with the Church being scattered every which way but loose. But *God knows what He’s doing!*

Verse 36: “‘Therefore, if the Son shall set you free, you shall truly be free. I know that you are Abraham’s seed... [not all the seed of Abraham were the ‘*children of promise*’] ...but you are seeking to kill Me, because My words do not enter into your *minds*. I speak the things that I have seen from My Father, and you do the things that you have seen from your father.’ They answered and said to Him, ‘Our father is Abraham.’ Jesus said to them, ‘**If you were Abraham’s children...**’” (vs 36-39).

Notice the difference in the expression: Now we have ‘...**If** you were Abraham’s children...’ We’re talking about the *true children of Abraham*. The ‘children’ are the line that came down unto Christ. The ‘seed’ could be from the house of Esau with no question. Therefore, you’ve got these Jews that are Jews and are not, but are of Esau, whose Father is the devil. So therefore, if they are in the synagogue, they are of the ‘synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not.’ So, all of that is tied up here in John 8.

“...Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham.’” (v 39). What did Abraham do? *Obedied His voice, kept His commandments, His laws, His statutes, and His judgments!*

Verse 40: “ But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has spoken the Truth to you, which I have heard from God; Abraham did not do this. You are doing the works of your father.’ Then they said to Him...” (vs 40-41).

Rather than saying, ‘Oh, the devil is our father? We’d better repent!’ *NO!* The will and purpose is for evil, so they got all mad and hostile.

“...‘We have not been born of fornication. We have one Father, *and that is* God.’ Therefore, Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father...’” (vs 41-42). Which tells you an awful lot. God in heaven above is not the God of Judaism; that’s what He’s saying, clear as can be! Most people don’t understand that, because they don’t understand Judaism. It is so pagan and demonic that most people don’t even realize it.

Verse 42: “Therefore, Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, because I proceeded forth and came from God. For I have not come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why don’t you understand My speech? Because you cannot *bear* to hear My words. You are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father you desire to practice. He was a murderer from *the* beginning, and has not stood in the Truth because there is no Truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*; for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I speak the Truth, you do not believe Me” (vs 42-45).

Which Truth is too hard to take? Did Jesus ever back off from saying the Truth? It may have offended some people. That’s too bad, but it was the Truth. And this is very important! That’s how it ties in with the whole thing that God is doing in the world, what is happening, how these events are taking place.

Let’s see something else so that we don’t have a will and purpose as Esau had, and when correction comes we don’t want to have the same attitude that Esau had:

Hebrews 12:11: “Now truly, no chastisement for the present seems to be joyous...” We’ve all gone through some kind of correction and chastisement through circumstances, through experiences in the Church and so forth. It’s not joyous.

“...but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yields *the* peaceable fruits of righteousness... [and this is conditional, but not always] ...to those who have been exercised by it” (v 11). When the correction comes from God, you have to be exercised. Let that correction exercise you, to change your heart, mind and attitude.

Verse 12: “Therefore, lift up the hands that are hanging down, and *revive* the weakened knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which *is* lame be turned aside; but let it rather be healed” (vs 12-13). Boy, if there’s any one message for the Church today, *let it be healed!*

Verse 14: “Pursue peace with everyone, and Holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking diligently, lest anyone fall from the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and through this many be defiled... [and that’s happening with many people] ...lest *there* be any fornicator or godless person, as Esau, **who for one meal sold his birthright**; because you also know that afterwards, when he wished to inherit the

blessing, he was rejected...” (vs 14-17).

God chose Esau to show and prove this very thing down through history and down through God’s dealing with His people and down through even into the Church. It’s an example and lesson for us.

“...and he found no room for repentance, although he sought it earnestly with tears” (v 17).

There comes a time when it goes too far! The whole lesson is: ***Don’t let it go to the point of being too far!*** Whatever the correction, whatever the difficulty, let it be *exercised* and let it be *the peaceable fruits of righteousness*, and that’s the whole lesson of Esau. That’s whole difference between Jacob and Esau. Jacob sought God, and was the one whom God had called and chosen. Esau was not the one. Until there is repentance and change in the right way, it cannot be affected. ***God is the One Who has to call. That’s why God’s plan has to be greater than what most people think!***

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 2:1
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- 3) Romans 8:28, 35, 28, 35-36, 38-39
- 4) Romans 9:1-5, 1, 3
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- 6) Deuteronomy 5:29
- 7) Romans 9:4
- 8) Ephesians 2:8-16
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- 10) Galatians 6:15-16
- 11) Romans 9:6
- 12) Romans 2:17-29
- 13) Romans 9:7
- 14) Genesis 15:4-6
- 15) Romans 9:8, 7
- 16) Galatians 4:22-28
- 17) Acts 2:38-39
- 18) 1 John 3:7-9
- 19) Romans 9:10-13
- 20) Genesis 25:19-34
- 21) Malachi 1:1-4
- 22) John 8:28-45
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- Ephesians 5:22
- Genesis 16
- Revelation 13

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