

## Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 100 – Romans 8:31-9:18

### Day 496: Romans 8:31-34

#### Verses 31-39

Paul concludes his argument of chapters 5-8 with a "magnificent celebration of God's eternal commitment to his people." Moo. These verses share several key words and themes with the beginning of Ch 5. Paul "adduces two reasons for us to celebrate our security: the *work* of God for us in Christ (vv.31-34) and the *love* of God for us in Christ (vv.35-39)." Moo. Wright comments, "The argument of this paragraph is, in fact, the same as that of 5:6-10: that since God's love has done for Christians all that has been done in Christ, there is no power that can shake that love now, or turn it aside from completing the job. The love of God, enjoyed in the present, will outlast and defeat all enemies, including death itself."

#### Verse 31

τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν πρὸς ταῦτα; εἰ ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, τίς καθ' ἡμῶν;

ἐροῦμεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl λεγω

ταῦτα all the many reasons for the confidence that Paul has written about in chapters 5-8. Paul now poses four rhetorical questions, the implicit answer to each of which is 'Nobody'. Each question is followed by the reason or ground for the implied answer, 'Nobody.' "They are proffered not as a challenge to Paul's readers to think up clever answers or counterexamples but as a demonstration of the certainty of his case." Wright.

τίς καθ' ἡμῶν Not that there are no adversaries, vv.35,36 refer to opposition. The thought is simply that no adversary is of any account when God is for us.

Remember that Paul is writing this, "not from a comfortable armchair with the world at his feet, but on his way to fulfill a difficult and dangerous mission (delivering the collection to Jerusalem) that might cost him his life for one reason (opposition from Torah-observant Jews), and to begin another perhaps even more dangerous and difficult mission (to Rome, and thence to Spain) that might cost him his life for a different reason (the clash between his gospel and Caesar's kingdom). These, together with the normal hazards of his life as a missionary, and the threats from spiritual as well as human and natural forces, will be noted presently. But Paul stands firm as a Jewish-style monotheist: there is one God, and if this God is on our side, then no force on earth or elsewhere can ultimately stand against us." Wright.

#### Verse 32

ὅς γε τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν, πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ἡμῖν χαρίσεται;

γε enclitic particle adding emphasis to the word with which it is associated  
ιδίος, α, ον one's own  
φειδομαι spare, refrain from, keep oneself from doing

God did not spare him from the full measure of judgement due to our sin. "The way Paul puts it here suggests a comparison between Christ and Isaac. As Abraham did not spare his beloved son Isaac, so God does not spare his beloved Son (see Gen 22)." Moo. Only Jesus *did* suffer death for us: God did what Abraham had not done, for Isaac was spared.

παραδίδωμι hand or give over, deliver up

"Who delivered up Jesus to die? Not Judas for money; not Pilate for fear; not the Jews for envy; but the Father for love!" Winslow.

οὐχὶ (emphatic form of οὐ) not; used in questions expecting an affirmative answer.

σὺν αὐτῷ It is impossible for Christ to be given to us without 'all things' (all that is included in the promises and blessings of God) being given to us also, for all these things are *in him* and come to us with him. Cf. 1 Cor 3:21-23; 2 Cor 6:10.

χαρίζομαι grant, give, bestow

**Verse 33**

τίς ἐγκαλέσει κατὰ ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ; θεὸς ὁ δικαίων·

There is some debate over the structure of Paul's argument in vv. 33-36. Do the opening words of 34, τίς ὁ κατακρινῶν belong with v.33 or with v.34. Murray argues that the phrase belongs with v.33, but it is equally possible to see the remainder of verse 34 as the answer to this opening question. Moo thinks that "The NIV reflects probably the best of options, with each verse featuring a question and answer." So also Wright who argues that this preserves the pattern of Paul's argument with his rhetorical questions:

- Who can be against us? No one; God, after all, did not spare the Son (vv. 31b-32)
- Who will bring any charge? No one; God, after all, is the justifier (v. 33).
- Who will condemn? No one; Christ Jesus, after all, died, was raised, and intercedes (v. 34).

ἐγκαλεῶ bring charges against, accuse  
ἐκλεκτος, η, ον chosen  
δικαιῶ see v.30

There is no higher court of appeal than that of the judgment of God, who has already pronounced the verdict. Cf. Is 50:8-9a.

**Verse 34**

τίς ὁ κατακρινῶν; Χριστὸς [Ἰησοῦς] ὁ ἀποθανῶν, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγεροθίς, ὃς καὶ ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν.

κατακρινῶ condemn, pass judgement on  
ἀποθνήσκω die, face death, be mortal  
μᾶλλον adv more; rather, more than that

μᾶλλον δὲ formally indicates amendment or correction to something. Here it stresses that the death and resurrection of Christ are inseparable aspects of one work for us.

ἐγεροθείς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s  
ἐγειρῶ raise

The aorist pass refers to the work of the Father.

Some MSS add ἐκ νεκρῶν after ἐγεροθείς. Metzger writes that the longer text has "the appearance of being an explanatory gloss."

δεξιός, α, ον right, δεξιά right hand

Indicates sovereignty, dominion and glory.

ἐντυγχάνω see v.27

Viewing the latter part of the verse as an answer to the opening question, the logic is this: Christ died for us, enduring our condemnation. More than that, he is risen and now intercedes for us. Who then can bring anything before the judgment seat of God which will result in our condemnation when we have such a Saviour as our advocate? He never loses a case.

"That he makes intercession 'for us' is the reminder that the particularity of concern and provision which we noted already in the 'for us all' of v.32 is exemplified here also.

Intercession must have regard to the distinctive situation of each individual." Murray.

Wright comments, "As the servant songs have already been alluded to in this passage, it is possible that, with Jesus' atoning and justifying death also mentioned, we should detect a reference to the intercessory work of the servant of the Lord in the fourth song, at Isa 53:12."

**Day 497: Romans 8:35-39****Verse 35**

τίς ἡμᾶς χωρίσει ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ; θλιψὶς ἢ στενοχωρία ἢ διωγμὸς ἢ λιμὸς ἢ γυμνότης ἢ κίνδυνος ἢ μάχαῖρα; χωρίζω separate

του Χριστου some MSS read του θεου while B reads θεου της εν Χριστω (see v.39). The reading Χριστου is strongly supported and binds together verses 34 and 35.

Christ not only defends us, he loves us, cf. Gal 2:20. There follows "a formidable list of potential enemies who seem bent on separating believers from God's love... Paul speaks of that which he knows; he had himself faced all these enemies, except perhaps the sword, and he must have known that this too might come his way, whether judicially in a Roman court or casually on the road (cf. 2 Cor 11:23-29)." Wright.

θλιψὶς, εως f trouble, suffering  
στενοχωρία, ας f distress, difficulty, trouble

διωγμός, ου m persecution

λιμός, ου m & f famine, hunger

γυμνοτης, ητος f nakedness, poverty

κινδυνος, ου m danger, peril

μαχαῖρα, ης f sword, war, violent death

**Verse 36**

καθως γέγραπται ὅτι Ἔνεκεν σοῦ  
θανατούμεθα ὄλην τὴν ἡμέραν,  
ἐλογίσθημεν ὡς πρόβατα σφαγῆς.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

"The quotation of Psalm 44:22 in verse 36 is a bit of a detour in the logic of Paul's argument. But the detour reveals two of his key concerns: to remind us that suffering is a natural and expected part of the Christian life (cf. 5:3-4; 8:17), and to root the experience of Christians in the experience of God's old covenant people." Moo.

ἐνεκα (ἐνεκεν and εἵνεκεν) because of, for the sake of

θανατω kill, put to death, put in danger of death

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

λογίζομαι reckon, count

προβατον, ον n sheep

σφαγη, ης f slaughter

As those who follow the Saviour, the Lamb of God, and are being conformed to his image.

**Verse 37**

ἀλλ• ἐν τούτοις πᾶσιν ὑπερνικῶμεν διὰ  
τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντος ἡμᾶς.

ὑπερνικαω be completely victorious

Not only a conqueror but completely and gloriously so. It is because Christ has more than conquered (cf. Col 2:15) that we have this confidence. "In other words, we are not only able to win a victory over these enemies, we are able to see them off the field entirely." Wright.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

The aorist may signify particularly the love which God has shown us in the cross of Christ.

**Verse 38**

πέπεισμαι γὰρ ὅτι οὔτε θάνατος οὔτε ζωὴ  
οὔτε ἄγγελοι οὔτε ἀρχαὶ οὔτε ἐνεστῶτα  
οὔτε μέλλοντα οὔτε δυνάμεις

πέπεισμαι Verb, perf pass indic, 1 s πειθω  
persuade; perf act & pass have confidence, be confident

"The final γὰρ *gar* of this section explains the shout of triumph in terms of the settled conviction (grounded on what Paul knows of the Messiah, Jesus, the Lord of the world and 'our Lord') that the one true God has poured out, through this Jesus, love of the most powerful and unbreakable kind." Wright.

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)

θανατος, ου m death

The last enemy (1 Cor 15:26).

ζωη, ης f life

The present life with all its difficulties.

ἀρχη, ης f beginning, origin, power

Murray and Moo suggest the contrast here is between angels and demons.

ἐνεστῶτα Verb, perf act ptc, n nom/acc pl ἐνιστημι be present

μελλω (ptc. without infin) coming, future

οὔτε δυνάμεις breaks the pattern of contrasting pairs. Murray suggests the meaning here is 'mighty work.'

**Verse 39**

οὔτε ὕψωμα οὔτε βάθος οὔτε τις κτίσις  
ἐτέρα δυνήσεται ἡμᾶς χωρίσαι ἀπὸ τῆς  
ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ  
κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.

ὕψωμα, τος n height

βάθος, ους n depth

Cf. Eph 3:18 for similar use of spacial language.

κτίσις, εως f creation, what is created

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

δυνήσεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 s

δυναμαι

χωρίζω see v.35

"The love of God from which we cannot be separated is the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is only in Christ Jesus it exists, only in him that it has been manifest, only in him is it operative, and only in Christ Jesus as Lord can we know the embrace and bond of this love of God." Murray.

"As the chapter began with 'no condemnation' (Rom 8:1), so it ends with the bookends of 'no separation' (8:35,39)." Moo.

Wright comments, "We are back with the picture that has been there in Romans from the beginning: God and creation, with the human race poised in between, belonging within the latter but called to reflect the image of the former. Idolatry had reversed God's intended order: humans had worshiped that which was not God, had ceded power to that which, being itself corruptible, could only bring death. Now, in the Messiah, Jesus, humanity had been restored; death has been defeated, and creation itself, so far from being shunned as essentially evil, awaits its redemption. Christian assurance, despite caricatures, is the very opposite of human arrogance; it is the fruit of humble, trusting faith. Those who follow the Messiah into the valley of the shadow of death will find that they need fear no evil. Though they may sometimes seem sheep for the slaughter, yet they may trust the Shepherd, whose love will follow them all the days of their life."

And he concludes by offering the following 'paraphrase' of the final two verses of Romans 8; "Paul has spoken, and we must speak, of the love of the one true God. This love of God calls across the dark intervals of meaning, reaches into the depths of human despair, embraces those who live in the shadow of death or in the overbright light of present life, challenges the rulers of the world and shows them up as a sham, looks at the present with clear faith and at the future with sure hope, overpowers all powers that might get in the way, fills the outer dimensions of the cosmos, and declares to the world that God is God, that Jesus the Messiah is the world's true Lord, and that in him love has won the victory. This powerful, overmastering love grasps Paul, and sustains him in his praying, his preaching, his journeying, his writing, his pastoring, and his suffering, with the strong sense of the presence of the God who had loved him from the beginning and had put that love into action in Jesus. This is the love because of which there is no condemnation. This is the love because of which those who are justified are also surely glorified. And this is the love, seen supremely in the death of the Messiah, which reaches out to the whole world with the exodus message, the freedom message, the word of joy and justice, the word of the gospel of Jesus."

### **Romans 8:31-39 – Postscript**

Wright, speaking of the OT allusions in the previous verses, comments, "By skillful use of this complex web of biblical allusion and quotation, Paul is underscoring his basic contention from 3:21 onward. Those who believe in Jesus the Messiah, who respond with love to God's loving action in his death and with faith to God's raising him from the dead, are constituted as the renewed Israel of God. They are the true children of Abraham; they are the true servant people; they are the people who claim and sing as their own the psalms of the faithful covenant people. Law, prophets and writings are thus called in as witnesses to the fact that, in the midst of suffering and oppression, the one God of Israel has, in long-promised redeeming love, reconstituted Israel in and around Jesus as the true people of this one God."

### **Day 498: Romans 9:1-5**

#### **Romans 9-11**

These chapters in Romans have sometimes been viewed as a digression (Dodd argued that they were an old sermon Paul slipped in at this point breaking the flow from Romans 8 to Romans 12). Such views arise from a failure to understand the burden of Paul's ministry and his insight into the gospel.

From the beginning of this letter Paul has made it clear that the gospel he preached was that 'promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures' (1:2) and that the risen Saviour whom he proclaimed was none other than the promised Messiah, son of David (1:3, see also 1:16). Yet he knew from personal experience that most Jews rejected the gospel while there was a far better response from the Gentiles. Paul's ministry was therefore addressed to largely Gentile churches. How could he continue to maintain that the gospel he preached was a fulfilment of God's promise to his people *Israel*?

This situation was exacerbated by the tensions between Jews and Gentiles within the churches – tension which evidently existed also at Rome (see chapter 14). It is likely that after the relapse of the edict of Claudius which had expelled the Jews from Rome, Jews, including Jewish Christians, had returned to the city. A largely Gentile church had now experienced an influx of Jewish members. The Jewish Christians may have been suggesting that the Gentiles were only second-class people of God while the Gentiles, in turn, may have been suggesting that there was no significance in being a Jew or even that God had abandoned all concern for the Jews.

It is against such a background, and as an integral part of Paul's exposition of the gospel, that he pens chapters 9-11. "Two questions dominate these three chapters: the question of unbelieving Israel, and the question of God's faithfulness." Wright.

### Verse 1-5

"The basic fact which though it is never actually mentioned, lies behind every verse in the opening paragraph, and sets in motion the whole long argument of chs 9-11 is that, notwithstanding her privileges, and his apostolic labour, Israel has rejected the Gospel that Paul preached." Barrett.

### Verse 1

Ἀλήθειαν λέγω ἐν Χριστῷ, οὐ ψεύδομαι, συμμαρτυρούσης μοι τῆς συνειδήσεως μου ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ,

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality  
 ψευδομαι lie, speak untruth, deceive  
 συμμαρτυρω give evidence in support of  
 συνειδησις, εως f conscience,  
 awareness

"In the Holy Spirit' confirms the witness of conscience. It is only as we are indwelt by the Spirit and live in the Spirit, only as our minds are governed by the Spirit may we be assured that the voice of the conscience is in conformity with truth and right." Murray.  
 The construction "gives the strongest possible emphasis to what he is about to say." Wright.

### Verse 2

ὅτι λύπη μοί ἐστιν μεγάλη καὶ ἀδιάλειπτος ὁδύνη τῆ καρδία μου.

λυπη, ης f grief, sorrow, pain  
 μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great  
 ἀδιαλειπτος, ον endless, constant  
 ὁδυνη, ης f pain, sorrow

"We should remind ourselves that the hearers of the letter would not yet know, at this point, what he was talking about; the effect of this statement would naturally be to excite sympathy and concern. Paul has led them to the point where they may, perhaps, be ready to listen to the topic he must now raise, if only because they have learnt to trust him. If he now turns to a matter of such agonising concern to himself, they should share it as well." Wright.

### Verse 3

ἠὺχόμεν γὰρ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα,

εὐχομαι pray, wish, long  
 ἀναθεμα, τος η cursed, under the curse of  
 God

Cf. 1 Cor 16:22; Gal 1:8-9. "The word carries overtones of the curse put on various people in Israelite history." Wright.

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

"The grammatical construction of the sentence shows that Paul recognises that the wish is scarcely capable of fulfilment." Barrett.

συγγενης, ος η relative, kinsman,  
 fellow-countryman  
 σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,  
 human nature

"Paul did not consider it possible to be separated from Christ (8:38,39). Yet he expresses an intensity of love for his own people patterned after the love of the Saviour (Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:21)." Murray. Cf. Moses' prayer in Ex 32:30-32.

### Verse 4

οἵτινες εἰσιν Ἰσραηλῖται, ὧν ἡ υἰοθεσία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ αἱ διαθήκαι καὶ ἡ νομοθεσία καὶ ἡ λατρεία καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι,

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὁ τι who, which

Ἰσραηλῖται "The name is important. In many Jewish intertestamental books, foreigners use the word 'Jew' as a simple national designation, but when Jews speak about themselves and their special position in salvation history, they call themselves 'Israelites.'" Moo.

υἰοθεσια, ας f adoption, sonship

See Ex. 4:22; Hos 11:1. The word is used here in a different way from 8:16,23. "Paul's application of the same word to regenerate believers and to Israel 'according to the flesh' within the space of twenty verses summarises the tension between Israel's promises and the church's blessing that infuses these chapters." Moo.

δοξα, ης f glory

Perhaps referring to the glory of God's visible presence at the Exodus. Cf. Ex 16:7; 24:16; 40:34-35. Paul has emphasised that 'glory' is the inheritance of the Christian, in Christ.

διαθηκη, ης covenant, will, testament

The singular, 'covenant' is strongly supported (p<sup>46</sup> B *et al*), but the plural (κ C K Ψ *et al*) is probably original. The plural may refer to the Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic covenants.

νομοθεσια, ας f (God's) giving of the law (to Israel)

λατρευια, ας f service, worship; pl. rites  
επαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised

"The force of this list is thus to say: the privileges that now belong to all those in Christ – 'not least,' Paul might add, 'those of you in Rome' (see 1:7,15) – are actually the privileges God promised to Israel according to the flesh. You Christians have come, as he says explicitly in 11:17 and 15:27, to share in the spiritual blessings of Israel. You must now spare a thought, and a prayer, for their present plight." Wright.

### Verse 5

ὧν οἱ πατέρες, καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα· ὁ ὧν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

πατηρ, πατρος m father

At least Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

Cf. 1:3. "The point, then, is that God, having called ethnic Israel to be the light of the world, has now shone that light lavishly on the wider world, while Israel seems to have chosen to remain in darkness. Israel, called to be God's messenger to the world (3:1-2), has seen the message successfully delivered while itself failing to give heed to it. The irony and the tragedy of the situation is the reason both for Paul's anguish and for this poignant way of expressing it." Wright.

εὐλογητος, η, ον blessed, praised  
αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order, eternity

σαρκα· ὁ ὧν ... There are three main punctuations/interpretations of this phrase:

- i) Placing a comma after σαρκα and referring the words that follow to ὁ Χριστος ('who is God over all, blessed for ever.')
- ii) Placing a stop after σαρκα and taking the following words as an independent clause, either:
  - a. 'God who is over all be blessed for ever' *or*
  - b. 'He who is God over all be blessed for ever' *or*
  - c. 'He who is over all is God blessed for ever'.
- iii) Placing a comma after σαρκα and a stop after παντων ('... who is over all. God be (or is) blessed for ever'.)

The manuscript evidence is of no value here since the punctuation is a later addition.

The majority of the committee compiling UBS Greek Testament preferred the second of the above options, though a significant minority argued for the first reading.

Sanday and Headlam argue for the first option, as does Moo, and Murray argues for a variation on this reading, asserting that Paul does here refer to Jesus as God. Moo concludes, "This verse ... deserves to be numbered among those few in the New Testament that explicitly call Jesus 'God.'" Wright similarly comments "Gramatically the arguments weigh heavily on the side of (i); in other words, on the side of saying that Paul does indeed here ascribe divinity to Christ. Of the various arguments here, perhaps the strongest is that it would be highly unusual for Paul to write an asyndetic doxology – that is, an expression of praise that is not linked to a word in the immediately preceding sentence." And he concludes by saying, "If we read v. 5 in this way, what force does it add to the opening paragraph as a whole? Just this: that the Messiah who is from Israel's own race, their highest privilege and final hope, is the very embodiment of their sovereign Lord, their covenant God. And it is he whom they have rejected; this is precisely the point Paul makes in 10:21, at the close of the main 'story' of chaps. 9 and 10. Just as Israel rejected their God on Mt Sinai, precipitating Moses into his extraordinary prayer (see above), so now Israel according to the flesh has rejected its God as he came in the flesh, precipitating Paul into his own version of that prayer and his own great, unceasing grief. Israel's highest privilege, when spurned, becomes the cause of Israel's greatest tragedy.

"But even that tragedy contains within itself the seeds of hope. Just because the Messiah 'according to the flesh' is also 'God over all, blessed for ever,' and particularly because his 'flesh' was the place where God 'condemned sin' (8:3), so the strange and sad story of Israel's fate, to which Paul will now turn, is designed to lead on and out into new life. Read in this way, 9:5 becomes an exact, if ironic, summary of both parts of the argument which will now unfold."

### **Day 499: Romans 9:6-13**

#### **Verses 6-13**

"Since God has so clearly given Israel a position of unique privilege, does not Israel's defection mean that God's intention has broken down? The word of promise has been proved false by history. Paul's blunt negative answer to this question is supported by an analysis of the meaning of Israel." Barrett.  
Wright adds, "It is of primary importance in reading Romans 9-11 to realise that its backbone is a *retelling of the story of Israel from Abraham to (Paul's) present day*. From 9:6 to 10:21, Paul is retelling the great narrative that every Jew knew. His retelling belongs with (though it subverts) other Second Temple retellings of the Jewish story: it is a retelling that speaks to what God has been doing all along, and that leaves Paul in a position to mount the fresh argument of chap. 11... Israel, Paul is saying, is Messiah-focused. The long story that began with Abraham reached its climax, its goal, its τέλος (*telos*) in him. And Israel is also Messiah-shaped. The pattern of Israel's history (rejection, failure, and exile followed by astonishing covenant renewal) is none other than the pattern of death and resurrection."

#### **Verse 6**

οὐχ οἷον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ, οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ:

οἷος, α, ον relative pronoun **such as, of what kind**

οὐχ οἷον δε ὅτι 'But it is not as though ...'

ἐκπέπτωκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s  
ἐκπιπτω fall off, fall away, lose, fail

Cf. Is 55:11. "To defend the gospel, Paul must defend God's faithfulness to his promises to Israel. For if God has gone back on his word to Israel, then a deep chasm between the Old and New Testament opens up, and the good news can no longer claim the God of Israel as its author." Moo. Wright adds, "The word for 'failed' in 9:6a means, literally, 'fall,' and though several transferred senses such as 'fail' are well attested we should note that Paul uses the language of 'stumbling,' 'tripping up,' and 'falling' several times later on in the argument. The answer to the implied question is: it is Israel that has stumbled, not God's word. In fact, Israel's stumble has been because of God's own Torah (9:32f)."

οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ, οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ· Cf. 2:28-29. "Israel is not a term like Ammon, Moab, Greece or Rome. 'Israel' cannot be defined in terms of physical descent, or understood simply on the human side; it is created not by blood and soil, but by the promise of God, and therefore exists within the limits of God's freedom." Barrett.

#### **Verse 7**

οὐδὲ ὅτι εἰσὶν σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ, πάντες τέκνα, ἀλλὰ, Ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα.

σπερμα, τος n **seed, offspring**

The Greek is ambiguous, it could mean:

- Neither because they are Abraham's seed are they all children; or
- Nor are all the children of Abraham counted as seed.

The second fits better with Paul's general use of the term 'seed of Abraham,' cf. 4:13, 16, 18; Gal 3:16,19,29; 2 Cor 11:22 – and especially the following verse. For Paul, the phrase has a Christological focus.

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants  
κληθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s καλεω

Cf. Gen 21:12. Natural descent does not make children of promise.

#### **Verse 8**

τοῦτ' ἔστιν, οὐ τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκὸς ταῦτα τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας λογίζεται εἰς σπέρμα·

σαρξ, σαρκος f **flesh, physical body, human nature**

ἐπαγγελια, ας f **promise, what is promised**

Children who derive their origin from the promises of God.

λογίζομαι reckon, count, calculate, credit, suppose

"The word 'counted' is of fundamental importance in this epistle. It has already occurred in several contexts, but especially in the quotation from Gen 15:6 (Rom 4:3). It points to the creative freedom of God, who creates 'righteousness' by 'counting' it, and annuls sin by not 'counting' it (4:6,8). He can raise up sons to Abraham out of stones (Matt 3:11; Lk 3:8) and freely determines what is seed and what is not.

"Seed' thus understood in the light of the creative freedom of God, is necessarily bound up with the 'promise.' Ishmael was a true son of Abraham, with as much of his father's blood in his veins as Isaac had; but he was a child of the flesh, not of promise. Isaac's birth, which took place in the context of human death and sterility (4:19), depended entirely upon God's gracious promise." Barrett.

### Verse 9

ἐπαγγελίας γὰρ ὁ λόγος οὗτος, Κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἐλεύσομαι καὶ ἔσται τῇ Σάρρα υἱός.

Cf. Gen 18:10 or 18:14.

καιρός, ου m time, appointed/proper time

ἐλεύσομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s ἔρχομαι

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἶμι

"The quotation reminds us of God's gracious and miraculous intervention to enable Sarah, who was infertile, to bear the child of the promise (see Rom 4:18-20). The initiative, Paul makes clear again, is with God. Inheriting the promise is not based on birth alone; it depends on God's gracious intervention.

"This same point becomes even clearer in 9:10-13. For one can argue that Isaac and Ishmael are distinguished by a key physical difference: The former was born to Sarah and the latter to Hagar. Thus, to dispel any idea that physical descent plays a role in the promise, Paul brings us down one generation, to two children born of the same parents and at the same time." Moo.

Wright comments, "The point here, in case we missed it in the flurry of detail, is that God has done what was promised. The word of God has not failed (the 'word' here refers back to 9:6). God promised a son (Genesis 18); then, when the time came for a choice (Genesis 21), God reaffirmed the earlier word concerning Isaac."

### Verse 10

οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ῥεβέκκα ἐξ ἑνὸς κοίτην ἔχουσα, Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν·

μονον adv only, alone

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνός, μιας, ἑνός one, a, an, single

κοιτη, ης f bed, marital bed, act of intercourse, conception

### Verse 11

μήπω γὰρ γεννηθέντων μηδὲ πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν ἢ φαῦλον, ἵνα ἡ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένη.

μηπω adv not yet

γενναω give birth to; pass be born, cause

μηδε nor, and not, not even, neither

πρασσω practice, do, collect (of taxes)

ἀγαθος, η, ου good, useful, fitting

ἢ or, (ἢ ... ἢ either ... or, ἢ και or even), than

φαυλος, η, ου evil, wrong, bad

ἐκλογη, ης f election, choosing, what is chosen

The main question here is whether the election Paul speaks of is personal or 'national' in the sense of God's choice of Israel and rejection of Edom. On the basis of the personal histories in vv. 11 and 12 Moo concludes that "it is hard to resist ... the conclusion that Paul is thinking of Jacob and Esau here as individuals." On the other hand, Wright comments, "The point is, though, that Paul is not here discussing what an abstract, impartial deity would or should have done; he is discussing the long purposes of God for Israel, and through Israel for the world. Central to those purposes is the principle that all must be of grace, 'not of works, but of the one who calls.'"

προθεσις, εως f purpose, plan, will  
μενω remain, stay, abide

### Verse 12

οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος, ἐρρέθη αὐτῇ ὅτι Ὁ μείζων δουλεύσει τῷ ἐλάσσονι·

ἐρρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s λεγω

μείζων, ου and μείζοτερος, α, ου (comp of μεγας) greater, greatest

ἐλασσων, ου (comp of μικρος) lesser, inferior, younger

### Verse 13

καθως γέγραπται, Τὸν Ἰακωβ ἠγάπησα, τὸν δὲ Ἡσαῦ ἐμίσησα.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

Mal 1:2-3.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for  
μισεω hate, despise, be indifferent to

The meaning here is 'reject' in contrast to Jacob's calling.

"This ... raises for Paul, as it does for contemporary readers, the major question: Has God been unjust? To answer this, Paul continues the story of Israel with its next major moment: the exodus from Egypt." Wright.

### Day 500: Romans 9:14-18

#### Verse 14

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; μὴ ἀδικία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ;  
μὴ γένοιτο·

Paul anticipates the question that might pass through the minds of his readers. It "is essentially the same question as Paul grappled with in chap. 3, that of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (*dikaioσύνη theou*)." Wright.

ἐροῦμεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl λεγω  
ἀδικία, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

Here the sense is 'injustice.' Cf 3:5.

γένειτο Verb, aor opt, 3s γινομαι; μη  
γενοιτο 'certainly not/ by no means'

#### Verses 15-18

"Determining right or wrong, what is just or unjust, demands a standard for measurement. The standard is ultimately nothing less than God's own character... God, therefore, acts justly when he acts in accordance with his own person and plan. This is precisely the point Paul makes in 9:15-18. The argument falls into two parallel parts, each with a quotation from the Old Testament (vv. 15 and 17) and a conclusion drawn from the quotation ('therefore,' vv.16,18)" Moo.

#### Verse 15

τῷ Μωϋσεὶ γὰρ λέγει, Ἐλεήσω ὃν ἂν  
ἐλεῶ, καὶ οἰκτιρήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτίρω.

Cf. Ex 33:19. In context, an expression of God's mercy in the face of Israel's idolatry with the golden calf.

ἐλεήσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s ἐλεαω and  
ἐλεω be merciful, show kindness  
ἂν particle indicating contingency  
οἰκτιρήσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s οἰκτιρω  
have compassion on

Justice would lead to God rejecting all. It is only because of his mercy and compassion that *any* are embraced as his people.

#### Verse 16

ἄρα οὖν οὐ τοῦ θέλοντος οὐδὲ τοῦ  
τρέχοντος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐλεῶντος θεοῦ.

θελω wish, will  
τρεχω run, exert oneself

"Salvation lies within man's grasp neither by his volition nor by his active exertion." Murray.

#### Verse 17

λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή τῷ Φαραῶ ὅτι Εἰς αὐτὸ  
τοῦτο ἐξήγειρά σε ὅπως ἐνδείξωμαι ἐν σοὶ  
τὴν δύναμίν μου, καὶ ὅπως διαγγελῆ τὸ  
ὄνομά μου ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῆ.

γραφη, ης f writing, Scripture  
ἐξεγειρω raise, bring to power

I.e. gave him this position of power in Egypt.

σε Pronoun, acc s συ  
ὅπως (or ὅπως ἂν) that, in order that  
ἐνδείξωμαι Verb, aor midd dep subj, 1 s  
ἐνδεικνυμαι show, give indication of  
διαγγελῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s  
διαγγελλω proclaim, preach  
ὄνομα, τος n name, title, person,  
authority, reputation  
γῆ, γης f earth

As with Pharaoh, so also Israel exists for this twofold purpose:

- i) To provide the occasion or context for God to demonstrate his power through a great act of deliverance.
- ii) To act as the means by which that act is published throughout the world.

Both took place precisely because Israel rejected the Gospel.

Wright comments, "What God has done to Pharaoh is not arbitrary. Pharaoh has already enslaved God's people and resisted the call to set them free. God has in view not the protracted punishment of Pharaoh for his own sake, but the worldwide proclamation of God's power and name."

#### Verse 18

ἄρα οὖν ὃν θέλει ἐλεεῖ, ὃν δὲ θέλει  
σκληρύνει.

σκληρυνω make stubborn; pass be  
stubborn, be hardened

The hardening spoken of must be understood in the context of v.17. Nevertheless it is an offensive term which raises the natural objection of v.19.

Murray comments on this hardening, "There can be no question that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Though the instances are comparatively few in which the activity of Pharaoh is explicitly mentioned (cf. [Ex] 7:13; 8:32(28); 9:34), yet they are sufficient. But, preponderantly, the terms are to the effect that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart (cf. Ex 4:31; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:4,8)... It is impossible to suppress or tone down the sovereign determination of God's will any more than in the first part of the verse."

Wright comments, "Paul is not, then, using the example of Pharaoh to explain that God has the right to show mercy, or to harden someone's heart, out of mere caprice. Nor is it simply that God has the right to do this sort of thing when someone is standing in the way of the glorious purpose that has been promised. The sense of this passage is gained from its place within the wider story line from 9:6-10:21 – that is, as part of the story of Israel itself, told to explain what is happening to Paul's 'kinsfolk according to the flesh.' God's action upon Pharaoh was part of the means, not only of rescuing Israel from slavery, but of declaring God's name in the world."