**The Precious Cornerstone, Who is Also a Stubling Stone**

Romans 9:1-33

(Lesson #16)

***9:1 I am speaking the truth in Christ —  I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit —  2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. 4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. 5 To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.***

**Vs 1-3 -** Now it is interesting that Paul comes to this point in his letter, where he states, I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying, My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit.

He uses a rhetorical double/double expression:

1. I am speaking the truth... I am not lying...
2. I am speaking the truth in Christ... My conscience witnesses in the Spirit...

**So, what is Paul speaking the truth about: Vs 2 -** He has great sorrow, not simply sorrow but great sorrow over Israel and how many have rejected Jesus as the Messiah, but not just “great sorrow” but also unceasing anguish in his heart!

The noun can refer to constant physical pain, torment, or extreme anxiety. In fact, he goes on to say just that, except what he says is much more startling.

**Vs 3** - For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

Paul’s love for his fellow countrymen, his fellow Jews is so profound, that he **could wish**, if it were possible, that he would himself be accursed, if it could rebound in them coming to faith.

The Greek word translated accursed is: **ἀνάθεμα** (anathema)*,* it is to be cursed with a divine curse to be damned by God. This is the same word that Paul uses in Gal 1:8-9.

The word **cut-off** means to **separate**. Paul’s love for his fellow countrymen was so strong, he was **nearly willing,** to forfeit his own salvation **(if that were possible),** if it would mean the salvation of his countrymen.

*“It is the condition of my brothers and fellow-Israelites, and I have actually reached the pitch of wishing myself cut off from Christ if it meant that they could be won for God.” (Ro 9:3 Philips)*

Paul truly loved his fellow Jews (Israelites) and wants to see them come to faith in Jesus! **The Jews rejection of their Messiah, laid heavy on Paul’s heart!**

**He will say this in chapter 10:**

*“1 Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” (Ro 10:1-2 ESV*)

**Paul’s language here is reminiscent of Moses’ language in Exodus 32:30-32:**

Understand, what Paul understands, regardless of national descent, to reject Jesus Christ it to reject eternal life!

*“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."” (Ac 4:12 ESV)*

**Vs 4 -** For the next few verses Paul’s point is clear, namely the fate of so many Jews in his day, seems on the face to be incompatible with the many promises and privileges that were given to the Israelites in the Old Testament.

Paul is going to highlight the numerous gifts that God provided to the Jewish people, signs of His love for them, **tragically in spite of all that God had done, the nation for the most part had rejected the Messiah, and that is what is so disturbing to Paul.**

Paul’s **first term** stands as its **own clause** and serves as the head of the **three subordinate clauses**, each **with evidence:**

**Clause #1** – **Vs 4 -** ***They are Israelites!*** They descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they are part of the twelve tribes (Ge 32:24-28 ESV).

**Clause #2** - **Vs 4** - ***to them belong,*** and thenPaul provides a listing of six gifts:

1. **Adoption –** Paul was reminding the Israelites present in the church of Rome that **Israel was God’s firstborn son** (Ex 4:22-23).

The New Testament Believer:

*“15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,” (Ro 8:15-16 ESV)*

1. **Glory –** Paul is likely referring to the presence of God when He met with His people (Ex 24:16-17 ESV).

The New Testament Believer:

*“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (Ro 8:18 ESV)*

1. **Covenants** – This is plural and is likely referencing multiple covenants, one example (Ge 17:2-7 ESV).

The New Testament Believer:

*“16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," 17 then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." 18 Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. 19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,” (Heb 10:16-19 ESV)*

1. **Giving of the law** – Tragically Israel broke God’s law (2:23) and by the deeds of the law no one will be justified (3:20). But Israel had the MASSIVE privilege of having been given God’s laws.

The New Testament Believer:

*“3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” (Ro 8:3-4 ESV)*

1. **Worship** – Paul is likely referring to all the **prescribed ritual observances,** the **prescribed sacrificial system** that were given to the nation of Israel. These were all real acts whereby they were to worship God and were **pointing them forward to the coming Messiah** (Ex 12:25-27 ESV).

The New Testament Believer:

*“1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Ro 12:1-2 ESV)*

1. **The promises** – Obviously many different promises made to the nation. Countless, I mean countless promises were made to the nation of Israel. I will go back to the promise made Genesis 17:2-7.

New Testament Believer:

*“6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? 7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."” (Ga 3:6-8 ESV)*

**Clause #3** - **Vs 5** - ***to them belong*** the **patriarchs**, the **forefathers**.

God’s gift to Israel involved the fathers, the patriarchs, it involved God raising up man after man after man to lead the Jewish nation. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, just to name a few.

What a blessing, a string of Godly men all followers of Yahweh! **What a heritage for the nation of Israel!**

**Clause #4** - **Vs 5** - ***from their race, according to the flesh*** (from them) ***is the Christ.***

**The savior of the whole world, in his humanity was a Hebrew!** The savior of the world could have come from any nation, he could have been Chinese, Greek, Armenian, Korean, or Albanian (to name just a few).

But he was the child given to an **Israelite mom** (immaculate conception) and he was raised by an **Israelite dad**!

But there is more isn’t there? He is not only an Israelite according to the flesh. **He is the Israel’s God, in the flesh!** WOW, and the mystery, majesty, and kindness of God! **Notice, Jesus who is God, who is blessed forever!**

**This is in line with what Paul told Titus:**

“11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,” (Tit 2:11-13 NKJV)

Now one important point. The church has not taken any gifts from Israel, they have not become Israel, rather the church has **realized (by faith)**, what **Israel should have realized (by faith).**

Do not forget the promise to Abraham (Gen 17:5, that Abraham would be the father of many nations) and what Paul said to the church in Galatia:

*“And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Ga 3:29 ESV)*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, 7 and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." 8 This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. 9 For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son." 10 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad —  in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls —  12 she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."***

**Vs 6**-7 - Have many in Israel rejected God’s plan? **Yes.**

Does this mean that God’s plan has failed? **Absolutely NOT!**

Obviously, there were Israelites who had believed the gospel (Paul is a great example).

First, being an Israelite **(a true spiritual Israelite)** has never been only about lineage. Think about all the wickedness we read about in I Kings. Those rulers and people were Jews.

**Paul says plainly here, not all who descend for Israel, really belong to Israel.**

Paul said it this way in earlier in Romans:

*“28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.” (Ro 2:28-29 ESV)*

**Vs 7 –** To make his point, Paul recounts what is recorded in Genesis:

*“But God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” (Ge 21:12 ESV)*

This serves Paul’s point, and he shows that even at Abraham, there was a distinction. Not in Ishmael, but in Isaac, shall the **offspring be named**.

**It is significant to note that the distinction was made by God.**

**Vs 8-9** - It is not the children of the flesh (biological descent), but the children of promise who are the sons of God. Isaac, being the prototype of a child of promise.

To articulate Paul’s point: Those people who fulfill God’s promise to Abraham and are children of the promise, children of Abraham, and thus God’s children, are not those who simply descend from Abraham.

But we have known this to be true, we see it throughout the Old Testament!

Now at this point, you may be thinking sure, Ishmael was born of Hagar the slave, so this make sense. But hang on, Paul is about to step forward one additional generation to prove the same point!

**Vs 10-12 -** OK, so now we advance to Isaac and Rebekah, so surely all of their children are children of promise, for they descend from the one man, our forefather, Isaac and his one wife.

Paul’s point, gets even clearer here, that God’s choice has nothing to do with biological descent!

Yet, Rebekah had twins (full brothers) from the same mom and dad. Before they were ever born, before they had done anything good or bad.

**Vs 12 -** God told Rebekah that the ***“older would serve the younger.”***

**All of this happened, according to Paul, that the purpose of God according to election might stand.**

The Greek word translated election is **ἐκλογή** (ekloge). It means to **pick out**, to **choose**, a **thing that you choose**.

A couple of examples of the use of this word:

*“Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.” (2Pe 1:10 ESV)*

*“13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.” (Ac 9:13-15 ESV)*

So here, the child of promise is one of the twins of Isaac and Rebekah, God “chooses” the younger.

This choosing by God is: ***not because of works but because of him who calls.*** Again, Paul wants to be sure that his audience understands this is not about human performance or merit. It is about God showing mercy.

Now it a sense we understand this. God chose Abraham and called him out of Ur of Chaldees.

God chose Moses, there on the backside of the Median desert. God chose him, God commissioned him, and God sent him back to Egypt. **This is Paul’s point about God’s free choosing.**

**Vs 13** - ***As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."***

This is a paraphrase from Mal 1:2-3:

*“1 The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. 2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How have you loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob’s brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob 3 but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert."” (Mal 1:1-3 ESV)*

The term **hated** is surprising, startling, unsettling, and harsh. I would say that it is also hyperbole and we are familiar with comparisons that are so stark they can be explained in this way:

*“"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” (Lu 14:26 ESV)*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***14 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." 18 So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.***

**Vs 14 -** On the face all of this may seem arbitrary, unfair, and worse even unjust. Paul, knows what his readers are thinking and heads it of before it even gets started with one of his traditional...

**BY NO MEANS! Absolutely not! Never! God forbid!**

**Vs 15 -** As Paul says this, we recognize this is true, the Bible is filled with stories of God showing up, in mercy to who he chooses, I would grow tired of listing them Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Sampson, etc.

This to as you can see is a quote:

*“17 And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." 18 Moses said, "Please show me your glory." 19 And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” (Ex 33:17-19 ESV)*

**Vs 16 -** There is nothing on the human side of the ledger that merits or demands God’s mercy. Rather, because we are all under the judgment of God, it is all about God showing mercy!

**Vs 17 -** Paul lays hold of the Pharaoh of the exodus of Israel out of Egypt, for he serves as a great example and even case study of Paul’s point.

But even more than that notice what Paul says: The scripture says to Pharoah is clearly stated in Exodus:

*“13 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. 14 For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. 15 For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. 16 But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.” (Ex 9:13-16 ESV)*

**Vs 18 -** Moses and Pharoah serves as examples of Paul’s undeniable point.

**As you think about this. Go back to my analogy of the boat tied to the dock and the river pulling against the hull, God simply unties the headline and nudges the boat and off it goes, the direction that human desire and external consequences take it.**

God punishes people by further hardening a hardened heart. (Romans 3)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***19 You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" 20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? 22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory — 24 even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?***

**Vs 19 -** Paul now all of a sudden jumps to second person singular and takes the place of someone hearing this argument and the charges they might make against it. Paul has done this throughout the letter.

**Vs 20 -** Paul’s response back to the imagined person arguing against his logic is surprising. Who are you “o man” to make demands of God about why he does the things that he does.

Here, he pictures the one whose own hardness of heart resulted in God giving them over, lifting up his fist and saying God this is all your fault. You made me like I am!

**Vs 21 -** Here God is pictured as a potter working clay on a wheel.

Does he not have the right to take one lump and make one vessel for glorious use, to serve as a drinking vessel for a king, while to take the next lump a drinking cup for a poor child (menial use).

**Of course, God has this right.**

Now, let’s get Paul question: **Does God have the right to hardened individual unbelieving Jews, in spite of all their privileges, in their sin of rejecting the Messiah?**

The obvious answer... Of course, He does. **God has done no wrong here.**

**Vs 22-23 - What if God has put up with all of this for two main reasons:**

1. To reveal his powerful wrath and his patient endurance against sin and more specifically against sinners
2. To reveal his great mercy for those who despite their sin place faith in Jesus Christ and receive his unmerited mercy

What if God has two main reasons for allowing wicked and sinful men to continue on. **For these are His reasons!**

As you think about this, and you think about individuals right now, caught up in sin, separated from God.

**I hope you see the patience of God, that patience, that kindness is meant to lead men and women out of sin and rebellion and into a relationship with God.**

**Vs 24 -** This new body is comprised of both Jews and Gentiles, those whom God has called, as we said before **through the Gospel**.

Paul has argued that being a child of God has nothing to do with who your dad is (Isaac and Ishmael), or even who your mom and your dad are (Jacob and Esau).

It is not a matter of biological descent of physical birth, **rather it is a result of the call of the Gospel and you and I answering that call.**

Remember:

*“14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 ¶ and if children, then heirs —  heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” (Ro 8:14-17 ESV)*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***25 As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’" 26 "And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’" 27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, 28 for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay." 29 And as Isaiah predicted, "If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah."***

**Vs 25-26 -** Paul now brings forward a quote from Hosea, which like many verses within the Old Testament point to an amazing reality that many Jews missed.

In this case the amazing truth can be stated in two ways, that all make the same point:

God intends to bring into his family, those who are his people, people who were previously not his people. We can state this in another way that is possibly more dramatic, God intends to bring into the listing of His people, other non-Jewish people groups!

The first part of Paul’s quote is a promise, articulated by the prophet Hosea in Hos 2:23, it is a time when God will have **mercy** on the ones who had seen **no mercy** and God will say to those who are **not his people**, **you are my people**:

*“and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, ‘You are my people’; and he shall say, ‘You are my God.’"” (Ho 2:23 ESV)*

The second part of what Paul is quoting comes from Hosea 1:10:

*“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," it shall be said to them, "Children of the living God."” (Ho 1:10 ESV)*

Paul’s point in this composite of slightly altered quotes from Hosea is twofold and serves to bolster what he has said so far:

1. God has the right to show mercy on whom He wills!
2. God’s choice of whom He will show mercy to, is often surprising!

**Vs 27-28 -** Here Paul shifts to quote the prophet Isaiah, this comes from Isaiah 10:22-23:

*“22 For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness. 23 For the Lord GOD of hosts will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth.” (Isa 10:22-23 ESV)*

Here God is promising two things:

1. He would judge Israel through the Assyrian invasion, because of their sins
2. God would spare of remnant who had been faithful to him

What Isaiah is prophesying is in line with what the nation of Israel was experiencing when Paul wrote this. Judgment had fallen on the nation, but God had a remnant who were His!

**So now to make Paul’s point, God promises have not failed. God has been faithful to his promises to Abraham. Jews who are enjoying the mercy of God through the gospel (like Paul) and are proof of His mercy.**

**Vs 29 -** God’s judgment of the northern tribes in 722 BC was devastating! But God had preserved a surviving remnant.

God’s promises to Abraham had not failed but were secure in a surviving remnant.

This quote is from Isaiah 1:9:

*“If the LORD of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we should have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.” (Isa 1:9 ESV)*

God’s judgment would fall, but faithful survivors would be left. This was true in 722 and again in 586.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***30 What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; 31 but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."”***

**Vs 30-31 -** Here we find yet another rhetorical question. Like most of them, this is the question that would be forming, especially in the mind of Jewish believers.

OK, so Gentiles are now outpacing Jews in coming into the Kingdom, we see that God had foretold this, and the reality that only a remnant were coming in was consistent with God’s judgment upon the nation in the past.

Then he responds to his own rhetorical question:

1. That Gentiles, who were not pursuing God, or his righteousness, all of a sudden through the gospel have not only found God, but have received his perfect righteousness (by faith).
	1. This is true, this is what happened for you and I and all Gentiles... OHH the mercy of God!
2. But Israel who was pursuing righteousness through the keeping of laws, did not succeed in reaching their ultimate goal.

**Vs 32-33 -** How could this have happened? **They sought to be justified by their works and not by faith.**

Even when works failed them and they clearly saw that they could not perfectly keep the law, they failed to seek to be justified by faith (like Abraham and like David). **They stumbled over the stumbling stone...**

**To summarize Paul’s point: Within the nation of Israel there are those who have rejected the gospel (God’s method of justification) and have focused on keeping the law as the way to be justified before God, although this have proven to be something they have not been able to accomplish.**

What they were essentially saying is “no thanks God”, I can and will do this on my own! **Their overzealous pursuit of the law caused many to completely miss what God was offering in Jesus the Messiah!**

Paul then says, in doing this they have stumbled at the stumbling stone: “as it is written.” The imagery is tripping over a stone that is in one’s path.

Now he is going to quote the Old Testament on this very point. What he actually does is combines two different verses, although both slightly altered to make his points. **First let’s look at Is 28:16 (a promise of what God will do):**

*“therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’” (Isa 28:16 ESV)*

Here a positive prophecy, that God would lay a foundation stone, in Zion, a precious cornerstone, and whoever believes in him will not be scurrying about.

Notice when Paul quotes this verse he says: ***whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.*** This is the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ, a foundation stone and those who believe in Him will not be put to shame.

The second quote comes from Isaiah 8:

*“13 But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. 14 And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken."” (Isa 8:13-15 ESV)*

Here Isaiah prophecies that the LORD, will become a stone of stumbling to both houses of Israel and to Jerusalem. Many will stumble at this stumbling stone and be broken, snared, and taken.

This fits with what Paul says first: ***"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense***

**To summarize the Lord would come as described in Isaiah 8 and lay a sure foundation in Zion, those who believe will not be put to shame. But that same foundation will become a stumbling stone and a snare to those who rejected it.** Paul said, this is exactly what God had said would happen.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**THEOLOGY BREAK:** The Bible declares that Jesus is God. A few verses for consideration:

*“1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 ¶ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” (Joh 1:1-5 NKJV)*

*“15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,” (Col 1:15-19 NKJV)*

*“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Ge 1:1 NKJV)*

If Jesus created all things (Joh 1:1-5) and (Col 1:15-19), then who is the God in Genesis 1:1 who created the heaven and the earth?

*Joh 10:24-33 NKJV and Joh 5:18:* The Jews fully understood what Jesus was declaring. So much so, that we have what they did (took up stones to stone him) as well as what they said, we are going to stone you “because you, being a man, make yourself God.”

*Phil 2:5-11: Form of God, form of man, every knee bows to Him, every tongue confesses that He is Lord.*

This is actually a quote from Is 45:23. Which is it, will all bow to Yahweh or all to Jesus? Or is Jesus God in the flesh?

Jesus Himself, takes the name of God: *“Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”” (Joh 8:58 NKJV)*