



Romans 9:1-5 (ESV)

God's Sovereign Choice

9 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,^[a] 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.

Romans 9:1-5 (HCSB)

Israel's Rejection of Christ

9 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience is testifying to me with the Holy Spirit^[a]— ² that I have intense sorrow and continual anguish in my heart. ³ For I could almost wish to be cursed and cut off^[b] from the Messiah for the benefit of my brothers, my own flesh and blood. ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple service, and the promises. ⁵ The ancestors are theirs, and from them, by physical descent,^[c] came the Messiah, who is God over all, praised forever.^[d] Amen.

English Standard Version Bible - *Study Bible*¹

Romans 9:1-5

9:1-11:36 *God's Righteousness to Israel and to the Gentiles.* Paul has made it clear that God's saving promises have been fulfilled for the Gentiles. Indeed, the church of Jesus Christ now enjoys the spiritual blessings promised to Israel: the gift of the Spirit ([8:9](#)); adoption as God's children ([8:14-17](#)); future glory ([8:17, 30](#)); election ([8:33](#)); and the promise of never being severed from God's love ([8:35-39](#)). Paul now asks in [chs. 9-11](#) whether the promises God made to ethnic Israel will be fulfilled. If his promises to the Jews remain unfulfilled, how can Gentile Christians be sure that he will fulfill the great promises that conclude [ch. 8](#)? Paul answers that God is faithful to his saving promises to Israel ([9:6](#)) and that he will ultimately save his people ([11:26](#)).

1. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 9".

9:1-29 God's Saving Promises to Israel. God's saving promises to Israel are irrevocable since they depend upon his word of promise and his electing grace.

9:1-3 Paul suffers from great **anguish** because his Jewish kinsmen are unsaved (see also [10:1](#)). Indeed, if it were possible, Paul might almost choose to be **accursed** (to suffer God's punishment in hell) so that his fellow Jews would be saved (cf. Moses in [Ex. 32:30-32](#)). But he knows this would achieve nothing, for none but Christ could be any person's substitute to bear God's wrath.

9:4 In [vv. 4-5](#) the great privileges of Israel are listed. The six blessings here can be divided into two parallel lists of three:

Adoption	Law
Glory	Worship
Covenants	Promises

The **Israelites** became God's adopted people when God saved them from Egypt. **Glory** here probably refers to the glory of God in the tabernacle and temple. Israel received the **covenants** in which the Lord promised to save them. God gave his people his **law** at Mount Sinai, prescribed their **worship** in the Mosaic law, and gave them his saving **promises**.

9:5 The **patriarchs** (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) also come from Israel. Most important, Jesus the Christ is also from the Jewish people, and he is not merely a human being but is also fully **God**. Therefore, the fact that so many Jews have rejected Christ brings acute pain to Paul ([v. 2](#)).

Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*²

Romans 9:1-5

9:1-3 Far from being a traitor among the Jews, Paul insisted that he felt **intense sorrow and continual anguish** over Jewish national unbelief and would willingly forsake his own salvation if it could save his **brothers, his own flesh and blood**.

9:4-5 Paul began in [3:1-2](#) to list Jewish national benefits. Now he returns to list their privileges, the greatest of which is the incarnation of God in Jewish flesh.

2. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., HCSB Study Bible, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 9".

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

Romans 9:1-5

9:1-3 Paul expressed concern for his Jewish brothers and sisters by saying that he would willingly take their punishment if that would save them. While the only one who can save us is Christ, Paul showed a rare depth of love. Like Jesus, he was willing to sacrifice so others would be saved. How concerned are you for those who don't know Christ? Are you willing to sacrifice your time, money, energy, comfort, and safety to see them come to faith in Jesus?

9:4 The Jews viewed God's choosing of Israel in the Old Testament as being like adoption. They were undeserving and without rights as natural children. Yet God adopted them and granted them the status of his sons and daughters.

Life Application Concise New Testament Commentary⁴

Romans 9:1-5

God's Selection of Israel / [9:1-29](#)

The end of [chapter 8](#) marks the conclusion of the first major section of Romans. Paul has discussed the doctrines of our being made right with God and our ultimate future. But before Paul moves on to address practical concerns of local church life (in [chapters 12–15](#)), he feels compelled to speak about God's plan for the Gentiles and the Jews, Paul's very own people.

9:1-3 The words Paul writes bear the truth—he did **not lie** as his **conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm**. Paul reveals his depth of feeling here; as the apostle to the Gentiles, with his great zeal for preaching to the Gentiles, he was probably often accused of turning his back on his own people. Though his commission to preach the gospel took him outside Jewish boundaries, Paul never lost his love for his **Jewish brothers and sisters**. Paul's **sorrow** was so intense that he was willing to be **cursed and cut off from Christ** if, by doing so, the Jews would be saved. For his people's sake, Paul would have borne the curse himself if it would have ensured their salvation. Of course, he knew it would be impossible for God to curse him, but his expression shows the intensity of his affection for his people.

9:4-5 Paul lists the benefits of being a Jew. They were God's chosen nation. As such, they had witnessed his glory, received his covenants and his law, worshiped him, and received his promises. The ancestors had been **great people of God** and **Christ himself was a Jew** in fulfillment of all the promises. Christ was more than just a Jew, however, **he is God, who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise**. This was where the Jews got hung up.

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1909.

4. Barton B. Bruce et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 611.

Study and Discussion Questions

For Sept 19 – 26 (3 weeks)



God's Sovereign Choice - [Romans 9:1-29](#)

Topics: [Blessing](#), [Burdens](#), [Justice](#), [Opportunities](#), [Rejection](#), [Sovereignty](#)

Open It

1. When have you felt that you were judged unfairly in a contest?
2. *How do you react when someone brags that God is on his or her side?

Explore It

3. What strong emotion was Paul feeling? ([9:2](#))
4. What situation made Paul feel sad and anguished? ([9:2-3](#))
5. How far was Paul willing to go for his fellow Jews? ([9:3](#))
6. What gifts and opportunities had God given to the Jewish people? ([9:4-5](#))
7. How did Paul explain the difference between Jews who believe and Jews who do not believe? ([9:6-8](#))
8. Whom did God bless as the parents of the nation of Israel? ([9:7-9](#))
9. *What did Paul say to people who claim to be children of God merely because they are descendants of Abraham? ([9:8-9](#))
10. Who were the children of Isaac and Rebekah? ([9:10-13](#))
11. What decision did God make about Jacob and Esau before they were born? ([9:12-13](#))
12. *How did Paul defend the accusation that God is unjust in His treatment of people? ([9:14-15](#))
13. *What determines how God bestows favor on people? ([9:16](#))
14. What examples from history did Paul use to demonstrate God's choice of blessing? ([9:17-18](#))
15. What right do we have to question God? ([9:19-21](#))
16. Why does God show great patience with us even though we deserve His wrath? ([9:22-24](#))
17. What did the prophets Isaiah and Hosea tell us about God's patience and justice? ([9:25-29](#))

Get It

18. What burdens do you carry for friends or relatives who do not know Christ?
19. *How could a person come from a very religious background and still not have a personal faith in God?
20. In what ways do people depend on a religious heritage for their salvation?
21. What's wrong with depending on a religious background or heritage for favor with God?
22. What sacrifices would you be willing to make to give others a chance to know Christ?
23. Why do we tend to question God's actions toward us or anyone else?
24. According to this passage, why are Jewish people often resistant to the message of peace with God through Jesus Christ?
25. What does this passage teach us about God's character?
26. What implications does Paul's burden for Israel have for our lives today?
27. *On what basis does God choose people to inherit His promises?
28. How have you experienced God's mercy and patience in your life?

Apply It

29. *What sacrifices or efforts can you make this week to help a friend come to faith in Christ?
30. When can you take time this week to thank God for His acts of mercy and love to you?