



Sermon Notes | Unfaithful People. Faithful God. | Romans 9:1-5

## **INTRODUCTION**

Why is Israel so hated, and so often attacked? It starts with Israel's unbelief: God's own people disbelieving in God's Son. They continue to reject God's Messiah! Therefore, they stand in judgment. Yet they endure, not because of their own doing, or their own strength, for they were the least of all people, but because they were/are a 'chosen' people by God.

Deuteronomy 7:6-7

*"For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples..."*

They endure because of the 'faithfulness' of God. They endure because they have 'protection' by God's very nature. They endure because God repeatedly protects them—because He promised to do so. Yet their ongoing 'rejecting' of Messiah, God's Son, remains the greatest Human tragedy since 'The Fall' in the Garden. And the Apostle Paul grieves this matter, has anguish of heart and sorrow, concerning this state of his fellow brethren.

But there is more yet to be said concerning God and Israel. Paul presents Israel's 'blessed' position as God's chosen people.

Romans 9:1-5

*"I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 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. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen."*

Father, as we consider these words, let us be reminded of Your faithfulness, and the glory of Your Son. God, You are over mankind, and especially over Your people, Israel. And we are reminded that "Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." Amen.

Romans 8:38-39

*"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

While Israel, the nation, has failed their role by rejecting Messiah, God Himself has not failed. Paul makes this point clear.

Romans 9:6

*"But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel..."*

Indeed, God has not failed, as we will see in the next chapters, and while one might assume that God would have 'given up' on Israel, in fact, God is 'not done' with Israel. But Paul demonstrates that the programme has now 'moved beyond' Israel. Salvation is now offered to all nations, Gentiles as well as the Jews.

Romans 1:16

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."*

Romans 2:13-16

*"For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus."*

Romans 2:28-29

*"For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 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."*

Romans 3:2-4a

*"Much in every way. To begin with the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means!"*

Romans 3:29-31

*"Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law."*

Romans 4:13-17

*"For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations'—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist."*

Romans 5:12-17

*"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men."*

And thus we see Paul's meaning, that God's 'salvation' programme is no longer focusing just on the Jews. The Gentiles are also included. That the programme had 'moved on beyond the Jews', was thinking that dominated the Middle Ages, and continues to be a presupposition of the Roman Catholic Church. Such thinking holds that Israel has been replaced. During a recent discussion on the topic of Israel, a Vatican trained priest commented that he "had not given thought to Israel having a future". Many modern Protestants also believe this is so. However, the reality is that Israel has not been forsaken by God. Israel is still around, and Israel remains still a people, in spite of wars and conflicts, and repeated genocide attempts, from Haman, to Hitler, to Hamas. Their many ongoing attempts to 'wipe the Jews off the face of the earth', have failed, and Israel has endured. Their perseverance as a people is nothing short of 'supernatural protection'. One theologian has aptly noted, "The enduring apologetics for the existence of God is the enduring existence of Israel."

Israel's enduring existence, especially in this current state of conflict, should cause every Christian to pause and consider how we look at Israel and what is going on. Initial global sympathies for Israel's situation are already turning, and not just about the sketchy hospital bombing reports. And yes, Israel is not free of guilt. It is not a situation that 'Israel can do no wrong'. In some sense, Israel is a 'champion of ungodliness' growing. Theologically, Israel is a nation in rebellion, having rejected their King. They are a nation under judgment, a nation in exile by God's Hand. But it is a temporary state, for Israel remains 'God's chosen' and nothing can change that. Israel will never be forsaken by God.

Nothing can separate us, or 'God's chosen people', from the love of God. (Romans 8:38-39) He will not forsake His own!

But this is what is missing for Israel. Corporate Israel does not have 'The Messiah', for they have rejected Him. Yet, the day is coming when Israel will turn to Him.

Zechariah 12:10

*"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn."*

So then, while we are currently concerned for Israel, we are not blind to their ungodly conduct, but 'divine' help and relief are coming to them. God will grant them repentance, and this is what Paul wants to focus on now as we turn to Chapter 9 of Romans. The Gentile programme does 'not' take away from God's plan for Israel. Rather, God's plan for Israel is irrevocable, as Paul explains in Chapter 11 of Romans, referencing from Isaiah 59:20-21.

Romans 11:25-27,29

*"Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written.  
'The Deliverer will come from Zion,  
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob;  
and this will be my covenant with them  
when I take away their sins.'  
For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."*

Isaiah 59:20-21

*"'And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression', declares the LORD. 'And as for me, this is my covenant with them,' says the LORD: 'My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring,' says the LORD, 'from this time forth and forevermore'."*

And so, God has not cast Israel aside, and the programme of Israel is not yet complete. The people, Israel and the Gentiles, are unfaithful. Unfaithful is who we are. But God will always be 'faithful'. That is who He is. Therefore, God is not failing, nor is His Word failing.

It is interesting to note, that in all the writings of Paul, almost 'one third' of Paul's references to the Old Testament are in the three chapters of Romans 9-11, pointing to God's 'faithfulness'.

Romans 9:6

*"But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel..."*

The Old Testament basis is not just support of Israel's future, it also is a proclamation that the Word of God has not failed. And therefore, Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, is not making the central issue of Romans 9-11 a matter of predestination, or a treatise on the Sovereignty of God, or a proof text for the Reformers, though it is helpful, of course, to these themes. No. The theme of Chapters 9-11 is that the Word of God has not failed.

Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, is critiqued as being 'anti-Jewish', but Paul himself is Jewish, and Paul is, in fact, in anguish for Israel. Paul's pain for Israel's 'unfaithfulness' is woven through these three chapters. He prays for his people to be saved, as he himself was.

Romans 9:1-2

*"I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart."*

Romans 10:1

*"Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved."*

Romans 11:1

*"I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin."*

Israel is 'unfaithful', but Israel's God is 'faithful'. Praise be to God!

### **I. THE PAIN FROM UNFAITHFULNESS: (vv. 1-3)**

Romans 9:1-3

*"I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in the heart. 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."*

We note that Paul does not say that he has 'great anguish' for Israel. Today we hear that, 'Oh, Israel!' Initially, because of the current conflict, we heard many platitudes of unbridled anguish, great statements of emotional reactions, but now thoughts are turning against Israel, and activist thoughts are fading. But Paul is not speaking of a passing whim. He is speaking spiritually. Paul is speaking about the promises of God with regard to Israel. And that will be his preoccupation over the next three chapters. He is speaking divine truth, truth in Christ Jesus, and of his own union in Christ. And he speaks of the 'anguish' he suffers because his own people, Israel, do not have Christ. He is genuinely 'sorrowful' about this truth. It is not something he can lie about. His conscience is clear.

Paul has been commissioned to 'proclaim the Gospel'; he is an Apostle to Israel, and to the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit bears witness of this fact, and Christ also. Two members of the Godhead are his witness. What a legal defence is that!

Acts 9:15

*"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'."*

Should the Promises of God, His very Word, be on trial because of Israel's state? Paul assures us, not so. God's inspired Word has not failed!

Romans 9:6

*"But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel..."*

And so Paul has 'great sorrow' of heart. He testifies of the pain of 'unfaithfulness', the pain of his nation's 'rebellion' and 'unbelief', the fact of their remaining 'blind'. Paul therefore has great 'anguish' over Judah's plight, as did the prophet Jeremiah before him. Jeremiah describes his anguish. And Paul identifies with Jeremiah's anguish.

Jeremiah 4:19-22

*"My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain!  
Oh the walls of my heart!  
My heart is beating wildly;  
I cannot keep silent,  
for I hear the sound of the trumpet,  
the alarm of war.  
Crash follows hard on crash;  
the whole land is laid waste.  
Suddenly my tents are laid waste,  
my curtains in a moment.  
How long must I see the standard  
and hear the sound of the trumpets?"*

How long, Israel?

Jeremiah 4:22

*"For my people are foolish;  
they know me not;  
they are stupid children;  
they have no understanding.  
They are wise—in doing evil!  
But how to do good they know not."*

Daniel also laments for Israel.

Daniel 9:3-6

*"Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy. I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, 'O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.'"*

Christ Himself lamented about Israel.

Matthew 23:37-39

*"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"*

Paul's excruciating lament calls out Israel's 'fallen sinful people' for their widespread, corporate, and national 'unbelief'.

'Unbelief' always proves painful. At its heart, it is the resistance to truth. It is hard work to suppress truth. And bottom line, 'unbelief' questions the character of God and His Word.

Paul recognizes that the 'future salvation plan' for Israel is the vehicle on which the greater plan for 'all nations' rides.

'Unbelief' is painful. It casts away hope and trust from the Promises of God. Therefore, it should not just be about Paul's aching heart. As enemies surround Israel, Christian, what about your heart? What about the state of your unbelief? Does your heart ache to return to God's Word and Promises, or do you yearn for the next news reports? Do you understand that 'future salvation' for Israel is directly tied with 'salvation for all nations', the 'remnant'?

Paul emphasizes his concern for 'his people', Israel.

Romans 9:3

*"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."*

And we pause. What is Paul saying?

**i.** Who is Paul referring to when he speaks of 'my brothers'?

Often this reference to 'brothers' refers to Christians, people of the faith, as in the case of these two references when Paul uses the term:

Romans 1:13

*"I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles."*

Romans 8:12

*"So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh."*

But in this case, he clarifies that he is not referring to fellow Christians. This reference to 'brothers' is referring to his 'kinsmen of the flesh'. This reference to 'my brothers' is ethnic, and therefore, 'Israel' is in view.

2. Paul states that 'for their sake' he wishes he could be 'accursed', that he could be set apart and devoted to destruction, that is to suffer God's punishment, so that his fellow Jews might be saved. (Likely he has in mind the Old Testament 'penalty' for anyone turning Israel away from God, when he says this.)

Deuteronomy 13:10

*"You shall stone him to death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."*

Paul, a Jew himself, now a follower of Christ, wants his Jewish brothers to also have Christ. He is not striving to lure Israel away from God, but is in 'anguish' because they have failed to follow through with God to their rightful inheritance. God's Promises to Israel have been fulfilled in Christ. The Gentiles are now enjoying the blessings promised to Israel, and Paul laments that Israel is not also. Christ Himself offered eternal life to the Gentiles, as he did with the woman of Samaria.

John 4:10, 13-14, 25-26

*"Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' ... Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' ... The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am he.'"*

If Paul were leading Israel away, then he would 'deserve' to be 'accursed' and legally damned. And concerning yourself, how many things would you say you would be 'accursed' from God for, if that was possible? But it is not possible. Paul assures us that 'nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus'.

Romans 8:38-39

*"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*



This is the heartbeat of 'penal substitution'. Christ voluntarily submitted to God's plan for justice and salvation. The One, Messiah, was penalized for the sake of all others. He took the place of substitution so that the big plan of God could go forth. He interceded and became the one sacrifice for all.

Paul, in anguish for his 'brothers', wishes he might do something positive to change their plight. Moses before him, having the heartbeat of substitution, interceded on behalf of Israel's sin during the wilderness years, hoping to make things right again with God.

Exodus 32:31-32

*"So Moses returned to the LORD and said, 'Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.'"*

But ultimately, and perfectly, Messiah became the 'penal substitution' for our sakes.

Isaiah 53:4-5

*"Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed."*

John 15:13

*"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."*

But, this is the heart of Christ's work! He took what we, the world, Jew and Gentile, deserved! Cursed and cut off for the sake of the nations, He bore this, on our behalf, so that we would not, and will not, be separated from the love of God, so that we would not be cut off from God. He took on the wrath of God for us. This is the heart of Christ, to take on pain and wrath, so that we would not have to.

Would you take another's place? Are you guided by 'self-preservation', or by 'substitution'? May self-preservation never be so.

## **II. THE PRIVILEGE FROM FAITHFULNESS: (vv. 4-5)**

Romans 9:4-5

*"They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen."*

Thus are the privileges that are Israel's. This is why Israel is such a tragedy: The rejection of the Messiah by the people so privileged, by the ones who should have been faithful and ready and willing to receive Him from their faithful God.

Israel was given their name by God. God chose them from among all other nations, and He named them His people. From the time of Jacob, God's people would be referred to as Israel.

Genesis 32:28

*"Then he said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.'"*

God's people, not to be called by their political name, 'Jew', but referenced by their Covenant name 'Israel', and now in Chapters 9-11, Paul sets forth all of the 'privileges' they have received from the Hand of God.

There is the 'ADOPTION' of the one nation; one nation, singular, not plural.

Exodus 4:22

*"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, '..."*

The New Testament refers to the 'adopted people' as a 'nation' called to be holy. They are a corporate body, a nation. God has 'adopted' them as sons and daughters, and has placed them in a promised land, having moved them from darkness into light.

I Peter 2:9

*"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."*

Next, Israel has been granted the 'privilege' of 'THE VISIBLE GLORY OF HIS PRESENCE AMONG THEM', on the mountain, before Moses, and filling the tabernacle.

Exodus 16:10

*"And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud."*

Exodus 24:16

*"The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud."*

Exodus 33:21-22

*"And the LORD said, 'Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.'"*

Exodus 40:34

*"Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."*

Next, they were given the 'COVENANT' on Sinai by Moses, and then the 'NEW COVENANT' by Christ. Their rejection of Christ does not nullify the 'New Covenant'. Individuals, faithful Jews and Gentiles, still experience 'New Covenant' blessings. And Israel, the first nation, has been promised 'repentance'; Israel will be 'corporately' attended to.

Israel was also 'privileged' with the 'GIVING OF THE LAW', receiving both the statutes and a 'relationship status'. Keep the laws, live them, do them, Israel, for you are called as a witness to the other nations.

Deuteronomy 4:5-8

*"See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?"*

Israel, possessing the Law, was called to be a witness to the nations, (and Gentiles are called to do likewise now). What other nation has such a privilege as 'The Law of God'?

The 'privilege' of 'WORSHIP' was also theirs, the full ceremonial system articulated by the Law, both in the temple and the home, living entirely unto Yahweh, both publicly and privately.

Deuteronomy 6:4

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."*

And, Israel was 'privileged' with 'PROMISES' for land, king, forgiveness of sin, and a new heart. God administered 'covenant promises' to Israel, for salvation comes to all nations through the Jews. Paul reminds the Gentiles of this fact.

Ephesians 2:12

*"...remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."*

Israel's Patriarch Fathers provided a line, according to the flesh, from which came Messiah, the Christ-child born.

Romans 9:5

*"To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen."*

Scripture shares how God brought about a new family line in Israel, through Ruth and Boaz, to include King David, and ultimately Christ Himself.

Ruth 4:21

*"Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David."*

I Chronicles takes a number of chapters to present the genealogy of the Tribes of Israel. Israel is certainly the focus of God's plans, from the point of Creation on, from Adam to Abram, from Abraham to Jacob, from Jacob's sons through to David.

Matthew Chapter 1 also provides genealogy, demonstrating/emphasizing Christ's descent from David and Abraham, and His link to the 'promised' Covenants with Israel through the Patriarchs.

Matthew 1:1-6a

*"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king."*

Paul acknowledges all of this, pointing out that the Patriarchs belong to Israel, and that Christ came from their line, but emphasizes that it was not just about Christ's coming through their race, but that Christ was God Himself, Christ, "who is God over all, blessed forever"! (Romans 8:5) Christ, who is the same God of the Old Testament. Paul provides proof of Christ's deity and a statement of His Sovereignty, in Colossians and other writings.

Colossians 1:15-20

*"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."*

"Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever" (Romans 9:5b), is the Messiah. Israel, as a corporate entity, cannot see this. They are blind. Their blindness has been bestowed and sustained upon them. It is 'Sovereign blindness' upon Israel, whether they are in captivity or in their lonely exile, and will last until their eyes are opened and they repent, finally, and corporately turning to Christ. The day is coming when Israel will corporately turn and embrace the Messiah.