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The Grief of Isra'el's Past Paradox

9: 1-5

The grief of Isra'el's past paradox DIG: In what ways does the Christian community overlook the Messianic community? Is "To the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile" (1:16) a command or a choice? How and why does Paul express his concern for his people? How should each of these benefits he mentions here have drawn the Jewish people to Messiah?

REFLECT: Do you have a burden for Jewish people? Why? Why not? Why did so many Gentiles find righteousness, while most Jews have not? How do you think the link with Abraham can help solve conflicts between Jews and Gentiles? How did Paul feel when he thought of his kinsmen being lost? How great is your grief over Jews being lost?

In explaining his grief and Isra'el's paradox, Paul spells out eight of her advantages.

Paul's emotion: I am speaking the truth - even as the apostle to the Gentiles (1:5-6; 11:13), as one who belongs to the Messiah, I do not lie; and also bearing witness is my conscience, governed by the Ruach Ha'Kodesh. Since Paul's ministry was to **the Gentiles**, perhaps some thought he would no longer be interested in **the Jews**. In this verse **he** affirms the sincerity of **his grief** over **Isra'el's** failure, as a people, to honor **their Messiah**. **My grief is so great, the pain in my heart so constant, always in the back of my mind, that I could wish myself**, if it were possible, to **actually** be **under God's curse** (Greek: *anathema*) and **separated from the Messiah**, if it would help my **brothers** who have rejected **Him, my own flesh and blood (9:1-3), the people of Isra'el!** The Greek word *anathema* corresponds to the Hebrew word *cherem*, meaning, *set apart for destruction*. **Paul** had that kind of concern for **his own people**.

When **Isra'el** apostatized and built **the golden calf**, **Moshe** prayed: **These people have committed a terrible sin: they have made themselves a god**

out of gold. Now, if You will just forgive their sin! But if You won't, then, I beg You, blot me out of the book which You have written. God's answer to Moses was: **Those who have sinned against me are the ones I will blot out of my book. Now go and lead the people to the place I told you about; my Angel will go ahead of you (Exodus 32:32-34a).** The Angel has been identified as the pre-incarnate **Yeshua Messiah**, and **the book** is none other than **the Book of life (Revelation 3:5, 20:12, 21:27).** **Every Rosh Ha'Shanah and Yom Kippur in the synagogue liturgy calls for Jews to pray that their sins will be forgiven and their names written in the Book of Life. Revelation 20:15** says that those whose names are not written in it will burn eternally in **the Lake of Fire, the second death.** Thus, **Moshe**, like **Paul** after him, was willing to be under **Ha'Shem's cherem judgment** if it would help **his fellow Jews.**²⁴⁶

The tragedy of **Isra'el's** present apostasy is compounded because **she** has so many advantages over the Gentiles. This subject was raised in **2:17-20** and again at **3:1-2** and **9.**

1. Isra'el was adopted and made God's children (9:4a). **Moses** was to say to **Pharaoh**, "This is what **ADONAI** says: **Isra'el** is my firstborn son, and I told you, 'Let My son go, so he may worship Me.' But you refused to let him go; so, I will kill your firstborn son" (**Exodus 4:22-23**). This is not only stated in **Exodus**, but is understood throughout the TaNaKh. **Isra'el's** national adoption has never been disinherited, nor can it be as the prophets point out (**Isaiah 63:16; Jeremiah 3:17-19, 31:9 and 20; Hosea 11:1**).

2. Isra'el has the Sh'khinah glory (9:4b). The **Sh'khinah**, the visible manifestation of **God's** presence, **has been with them** (see the commentary on **Isaiah, to see link click [Ju](#) - The Glory of the LORD Rises Upon You**). It was visible in **the pillar of fire** and **smoke** in the wilderness (**Exodus 13:31; 33:9; Numbers 12:5, 14:14; Deuteronomy 31:15**), and which was present in **the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:36-38)** and in **the Temple (Ezeki'el 1:28, 3:23, 9:3, 10:4 and 18-19, 11:22-23, 43:2-5, 44:4; First Kings 8:11)**. Having **YHVH** visibly present was an obvious advantage to **the Jewish people** in helping **them** understand **His** work and ways. The writer to the Hebrews in **Chapter 1 verses 2-3** declares to us: **But now, in the acharit-hayamim (last days), God has spoken to us through His Son, to whom He has given ownership of everything and through whom He created the universe. This Son is the radiance of the Sh'khinah, the very expression of God's essence, upholding all that exists by His powerful word; and after He had, through**

Himself, made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of Ha'G'dulah Ba'M'romim (the Majesty in heaven).

3. Isra'el has the covenants (9:4c). God made four unconditional **covenants** with **Isra'el**. **The Abrahamic Covenant** (see the commentary on **Genesis Eg - I am the LORD, Who Brought You Out of Ur of the Chaldeans to Give You This Land**), **the Sinai Covenant** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Fm - Renewal of the Covenant**), **the Davidic Covenant** (see the commentary on **the Life of David Ct - The LORD's Covenant with David**), and **the B'rit Chadashah** (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Eo - The Days are Coming, declares the LORD, When I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el**). Although not a formal partner of **the New Covenant**, the Gentiles in the Church "participate" when they make the Jewish **Messiah, Yeshua, Lord of their lives (Ephesians 1:13-14)**.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for having such great **love** to make a **New Covenant** where the instructions for how we are to live are not written on any type of paper nor parchment, but written on our hearts. **Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people (Jeremiah 31:32)**. Praise **You** for giving to all who **love** you **the Spirit of truth**, also called **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh**, to live in all believers to help and to guide them. **I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper so He may be with you forever - the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him. You know Him, because He abides with you and will be in you (John 14:16-17)**.*

*How gracious and wonderful to have **You**, our **Father God** living within those who **love You**. **Yeshua answered and said to him: If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him (John 14:23)**. **You** are a joy and a delight to please. Even when I am mocked for following **Your** ways, I will remember **Your** great sacrificial **love** by dying as my **sin** offering (**Second Corinthians 5:21**) and I will keep my heart focused on the shortness of this life's trials and the eternal joy with **You** in heaven. **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18)**. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*



4. Isra'el has the Torah (9:4d). The fourth advantage consists of two parts. First **the Torah** itself, containing the very words of **YHVH** for the guidance and edification of the nation, had been its constitution for more than 1,300 years when **Paul** wrote **Romans**. But second, and more important, is **the actual giving of the Torah**. This was the formative event which, together with **the Exodus** from Egypt, has shaped the destiny of **the Jewish people** throughout history. In that moment when **God** gave **the Torah** to **Moshe** on Mount Sinai, the divine and eternal met the human and temporal in a way equaled only by the birth, death and resurrection of our **Lord Himself**. **For the Torah was given through Moshe; grace and truth came through Yeshua the Messiah (John 1:17).**

5. Isra'el had the Temple service and the promises (9:4d). **The Temple service** (Greek: *latreia*) was not merely a daily reminder to **the Jewish people** of **God's** provision for **their** spiritual survival and continued existence, cleansing them from **sin** through the sacrificial system. This is an expression that is used specifically for Tabernacle and **Temple** worship. It is found in this sense in **Hebrews 10:1-3**. **The Temple service** includes offerings, the priesthood, and the **Levitical** offerings.

6. Isra'el has the promises of the prophets (9:4e). **The promises** of redemption, reconciliation and ultimate victory through **the Messiah** were made to **Isra'el** - for the TaNaKh is nothing if not a record of **God's promises** to **the Jewish people**. These include **promises** to **Isra'el** in general, and the **Messianic promises** in particular.

7. Isra'el has the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (9:5a). **And from them (Deuteronomy 10:14-15; Hebrews 11:1-12:2), Isra'el** received the promises above, and the faithfulness of **ADONAI** guarantees the fulfillment of those

promises (**Second Corinthians 1:20**). **Non-Messianic Judaism traditionally banks on their upright behavior, or “the merits of the Fathers,” as being advantageous to them,** though this is not the point here.

8. Isra'el has the Messiah (9:5b). Finally, then, **as far as his physical descent is concerned, came the Messiah, who is over all.** This is no cause for ethnic pride, since **Messiah** is for all mankind and not only for **Jews**; yet, it is a great honor and advantage which one would not have expected **the Jewish people** to ignore. Also, since **He** is **over all (Isaiah 9:6-7; First Corinthians 15:27-28; Colossians 1:15-19)** - which means that **He** is in charge of everything - all the more should **Isra'el** have heeded and accepted **Him**.

Praise be ADONAI forever. This is the language of a Jewish blessing; in Hebrew it would be, “*Barukh ADONAI l’olam va’ed.*” In Jewish liturgies a recital of **God’s** attributes or deeds, such as here, elicits a blessing.

Amen. This word instructs the congregation hearing **Paul’s** letter being read aloud to affirm the *b’rakhah* with their own *Amen*, just as “*And we say Amen*” serves the same function in the *Kaddish*.²⁴⁷