

Exegetical Notes - Romans 9:1-5

## **“Great Sorrow and Overwhelming Anguish”**

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

#### **Verses 1-4a**

***I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—<sup>2</sup> I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.<sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race,<sup>4</sup> the people of Israel.***

- Paul’s attention now turns to the fate of the Jews, the nation of Israel, and their position before God under Christ. The basic question in the following chapter of Romans is -- are Jews saved apart from faith in Jesus Christ given their deliberate rejection of Jesus as Messiah. Are there two paths to salvation: one for Jews and one for non-Jews?
- Paul opens the discussion by confessing his personal sorrow and anguish for his fellow Jews. He says that he wishes that he was cursed and cut off from Christ for their sake that Israel might be saved. The words, “sorrow, anguish, cursed, cut off” show the depth of his concern for his people. If there was another path to salvation for Israel other than through Jesus Christ, there would be no need for Paul to be so concerned. His sorrow and anguish over Israel, clearly shows that without Jesus, they are lost.

#### **Verses 4b-5**

***Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.<sup>5</sup> Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.***

- God had adopted the people of Israel as his sons (children). God had revealed his glory through his involvement with Israel. The early covenants of God were made with Israel. Israel had been given God’s law through Moses. Israel had been blessed with God’s earthly house, the Temple. The promises of God were made through Israel.

- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (whose name was changed by God to Israel.), the patriarchs, came from the people of Israel. Jesus, the Messiah, was a Jew. God showed his faithfulness to Israel.
- To make his point clear, Paul proclaims that Jesus was and is GOD! Jesus was and is the Messiah. For Jesus, God the Father should be praised. Jesus is “The Way, The Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Him” (John 14:6). These words are true for Jew and non-Jew alike.
- If any people should have recognized Jesus as God’s Messiah, given their special relationship with God, it should have been Israel.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Great Sorrow and Overwhelming Anguish*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Interim Senior/Lead Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship* & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)