

# **Romans 9:1-13—What About Israel? Has God rejected them?**

## **Memory Verse**

Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

## **Introduction**

In Romans chapters 1 through 8, Paul clearly and effectively showed that every man is a sinner, and described in detail God's glorious provision of the Saviour that we all so desperately need. Now, while still talking about the gospel, in Romans chapters 9-11, Paul now answers the question of, "What will become of the nation of Israel?" seeing that they, as a nation, rejected or missed their Messiah. This is an important question. Consider the following quotes:

"What does it mean that Israel has missed its Messiah? What does this say about God? What does it say about Israel? What does it say about *our* present position in God? The question goes something like this: How can I be secure in God's love and salvation to me when it seems that Israel was once loved and saved, but now seems to be rejected and cursed? Will God also reject and curse me one day?" (David Guzik)

"If God cannot bring his ancient people into salvation, how do Christians know that He can save them? Paul is not here proceeding to a new and unrelated subject. These three chapters are part of the way he makes plain how God in fact saves people." (Morris)

"Paul had argued in Romans 8 that the believer is secure in Jesus Christ and that God's election would stand (Rom. 8:28–30). But someone might ask, "What about the Jews? They were chosen by God, and yet now you tell us they are set aside and God is building His church. Did God fail to keep His promises to Israel?" *In other words, the very character of God was at stake. If God was not faithful to the Jews, how do we know He will be faithful to the church?*" (Warren W. Wiersbe)

## **Avoiding confusion**

Some verses or sections of Romans 9-11 can be confusing if taken out of context. Romans chapter 11 gives us the context and conclusion of the matter: God has not cast away His people—He has, is, and will continue to allow them to experience the consequences of their rebellious choices. However, God has not, is not, and will not ever ever cast them away from Him—the Israelites will always be the chosen people of God.

Romans 11:1-2a NKJV

I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.

Romans 11:1-2a NLT

I ask, then, has God rejected his own people, the nation of Israel? Of course not! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham and a member of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> No, God has not rejected his own people, whom he chose from the very beginning.

The rest of chapter 11 continues in this theme, and at the end of the chapter, Paul rejoices that God is so good because He keeps His promises and will have mercy on all. Chapters 9-11 continue the theme that nothing can separate us from the love of God: once the people of God, always the people of God, and, once a child of God, always a child of God. As we go through chapters 9-11, keep this overarching theme in mind.

### **A general outline of Romans chapters 9-11**

Israel is the only nation in the world where God has revealed their past, present, and future.

- Chapter 9: Israel's *past* election—God is sovereign
- Chapter 10: Israel's *present* rejection—God will judge sin wherever it is
- Chapter 11: Israel's *future* restoration—God keeps His promises, He is faithful even when His people are not

### **Outline of Romans chapter 9**

In Romans chapter 9, Paul defends the character of God. He looks at Israel's past history and shows how God's dealing with Israel actually demonstrate four attributes of God's character:

- God's Faithfulness (vs 1-13)—“Well then, has God failed to fulfill his promise to Israel? No...” (v 6 NLT)
- God's Righteousness (vs 14-18)—“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!” (v 14)
- God's Justice (vs 19-29)—“You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault?” (v 19)
- God's Grace (vs 30-33)—“What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith” (v 30)

### **Romans 9:1-13 NKJV**

**I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, <sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; <sup>5</sup> of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.**

**<sup>6</sup> But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, <sup>7</sup> nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” <sup>8</sup> That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. <sup>9</sup> For this is the word of promise: “At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.”**

**<sup>10</sup> And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac <sup>11</sup> (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), <sup>12</sup> it was said to her, “The older shall serve the younger.” <sup>13</sup> As it is written, “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”**

## 1. Paul's sorrow over Israel's refusal to accept Christ as their Messiah.

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

I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, <sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; <sup>5</sup> of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

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

With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it. <sup>2</sup> My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief <sup>3</sup> for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them. <sup>4</sup> They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's adopted children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his wonderful promises. <sup>5</sup> Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned. And He [Christ] is God, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

v 1 **I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit:** Paul is going to speak to us about something that is very dear to his heart, something that is incredibly important to him.

v 2 **I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart:** What could cause Paul to have such **great sorrow and continual grief in his heart**, especially after the glorious climax of Romans chapter 8, where Paul declares that nothing can separate us from God's love? We will find out that it is because his nation, the unbelieving children of Israel, have rejected Jesus as their Messiah and Saviour, and so are separated from God's love.

v 3 **I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren (NKJV), I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them (NLT):** This is the ultimate sacrifice that anyone could give—not just their own physical life, but also their own eternal life with God forever. Paul is saying that he loved his fellow Jews so much, that if it were possible (which it isn't), he would give up his own salvation and suffer in the Lake of Fire for eternity if that would result in at least one of them being saved and living in the presence of God for eternity.

“This is a dramatic declaration of Paul's great love and sorrow for his brethren. Paul says he himself is willing to be separated from Jesus if that could somehow accomplish the salvation of Israel.

This great passion for souls gave Paul perspective. Lesser things did not trouble him because he was troubled by a great thing—the souls of men.” (David Guzik)

Consider that the greatest good we can wish or desire for people is that they be saved. Therefore, the real evidence of our love for people is what we do for them so that they can be saved. *Do I share the gospel with them? Do I make every effort to demonstrate the love of Christ to them. Do I die daily, take up my cross, and follow Christ so that my walk with God is real to others and I draw them to Christ?*

Moses was another in the Scriptures that walked closely with God, and so also shared God's heart's desire for people to be saved. *"Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin; but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."* (Exodus 32:31–32 NKJV)

Of course, the ultimate example of self-sacrifice is of course Christ Himself, who didn't just wish that He could suffer in our place so that we could be saved, He actually did it. All praise be to God for His wonderful and priceless gift.

Galatians 3:13 NLT

But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

*Application: The secret to loving the unloveable—more time in the Word and prayer*

Let's consider who Paul was willing to give up his salvation for. Do you remember how the Jews treated Paul? They constantly harassed and persecuted him, chasing him from town to town, lying about him, stirring up violence against him and much more. When it came to ministry, the Jews were actually Paul's worst enemy. Consider Jon Courson's summary of the situation:

"The Holy Spirit testifying to the truth of his words, Paul said, "I would go to hell for these guys if only they could be saved." Would you say that concerning the person who's coming down on you, regarding the person who wants to do you in? It might be [your spouse,] a teacher, a parent, a neighbour, a co-worker, or an old girlfriend. It might be someone who's done you wrong, lied about you, hurled insulting stones at you, wanted to grab hold of you, and if possible would annihilate and destroy you. Think about the person who is most difficult for you to deal with. How do you honestly feel about him? Would you go to hell eternally if that person could go to heaven?

Paul's words absolutely amaze me. To the Philippian believers, Paul said, "I'm craving heaven, but for your sakes, it's needful for me to stick around here on earth" (see Philippians 1:20–24). Commendable indeed! But to me how much more powerful is his statement to the very ones who were out to get him when he said not only, "I won't go to heaven," but "I would go to hell for you if it were possible."

How did Paul develop such love for people who wanted only to do him in? And how can we develop the same love? How can we overcome our bitterness and disappointment, our anger and hostility toward people who come against us, disappoint us, or hurt us?"

The answer is found in Romans 10:1, *"Brethren, my heart's desire and [continual] prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved."* (NKJV)

It's so important to understand that prayer does two things. It changes outcomes, but more importantly, it changes us by changing our attitude towards others—we become more Christlike (patient, loving, and unselfish) in the way we think. This is why Jesus commands us to pray for our enemies, those whom we find it hardest to love.

Matthew 5:44-45a NKJV

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

To be a *son of* something means that you are like that thing or person. We are like, or sons of, our Heavenly Father when we show compassion and kindness to those who hate us, just as God did for us. Consider what Christ prayed as He was being crucified for the sins of the very people who were crucifying Him—“*Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”*” (Luke 23:34 NKJV)

Also consider what Jesus continues to do for us, even though we are often unfaithful and sin against Him every day—He prays for us constantly.

Hebrews 7:25 AMP

Therefore He is able also to save to the uttermost (completely, perfectly, finally, and for all time and eternity) those who come to God through Him, *since He is always living to make petition to God and intercede with Him and intervene for them.*

So what is the secret to be able to love and have a true and genuine concern for the salvation of people’s souls—we spend time with God and pray constantly for them, every day. If their eternal salvation is our greatest concern, then the temporary problems and irritations will fade into insignificance. So if I am angry with someone, if I am allowing temporary problems and hurts to cause me to have a bad attitude towards them, then it’s a clear sign that I need to spend more time with God in His word, and pray for them much more. Jon Courson describes this well:

“You see, when I pray for people who bug me, I realize my praying will not only affect them, but it will affect my own attitude, my own tendency toward cynicism, my own critical spirit, my own bitterness. In other words, prayer will change *me*.

So why should you pray for the person who’s bugging you, who’s letting you down or trying to do you in? Because it will make you a better person. It will keep you soft and tender. It will make you a loving man, a loving woman. That’s why Jesus said, “Don’t preach at, argue with, or analyse your enemies. Just pray and bless them.”

### How God has blessed Israel

v 4 **Who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises:** When we consider just how much God has blessed the children of Israel, it helps us to understand why Paul is so agonised over what they have missed out on. Let’s consider some of the many ways that God blessed the nation of Israel.

v 4 **The adoption:** We have seen from Romans 1-8 that the adoption we (the gentile church) receive is all of grace. We don’t deserve to be welcomed into God’s family, but He accepts us anyway.

What about Israel? Did Israel deserve to be adopted as God’s special people? Did they earn the privilege of becoming God’s chosen people? Or like the church, was it given to them unconditionally (only because of God’s grace)? Consider the following Scriptures; not only was Israel the least of all the peoples or nations, but they were also stiff necked and obstinate by nature.

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 NKJV

“For you *are* a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup> The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; <sup>8</sup> **but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath [the unconditional promise] which He swore to your fathers,** the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 9:6 NKJV

Therefore understand that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked [obstinate and rebellious] people.

v 4 **The glory:** This refers to God's Shekinah glory, the "cloud of glory" that was visible in the temple and represented God's presence among them.

““Glory” refers to the Hebrew word *chabod*—which means weight, substance, heaviness. The *chabod* was the cloud over the Jews as they traveled through the wilderness by day. The *chabod* was also the pillar of fire that went before them by night. It was the glory that filled the tabernacle as well as the glory that filled the temple. It was the visible, tangible presence of God, the substance people still crave in their hearts. The *chabod* is what every man is looking for when he searches for something weighty, something substantial, something real.” (Jon Courson)

v 4 **The covenants:** How blessed were the Israelites to receive the promises of God first given to Abraham, and then to Isaac and Jacob. The covenants or unconditional promises include: the nation, the land, and the Messiah (see Genesis 12:2-3, 7). Additional covenants including both conditional and unconditional promises were also given to Moses and David.

v 4 **The giving of the law:** Another huge blessing that the Israelites enjoyed was the Scriptures. Today, as believers, the Scriptures are most precious to us; they are God's revelation of Himself to us, and also His invitation to receive His great gift. Just imagine what life would be like without God's written revelation of Himself and His plan of salvation.

v 4 **The service of God:** This is the ministry in the tabernacle and the temple. The many 'pictures' or 'types' (sin offering, bread, incense etc) helped the people to understand and look forward to Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (see John 1:29).

v 5 **Of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came:** The Israelites have an amazing human legacy: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David etc, and finally Jesus, all heroes of the faith. They had amazing role models to follow.

v 5 **Christ ... who is over all, the eternally blessed God, Amen:** Not only is Jesus a human descendant of Abraham, but He is also God. Jesus is the God-Man, 100% God and 100% man

“The purpose of all of this blessing was that Jesus Christ, through Israel, might come into the world. ... All of these blessings were given freely to Israel and to no other nation.” (Warren W. Wiersbe)

#### *With privilege comes responsibility*

The Jewish nation had great blessing and privilege, and with that comes great responsibility. It may seem harsh when we see how God is disciplining His nation, but in the light of all the divine revelation and blessings that they were given, it's actually very fair; they really did deserve to be cast away—but God wouldn't and couldn't do that because He had already made promises to them that He must keep. There are at least two things that God cannot do—He can't lie and He can't break His promises. These things would have been very close to Paul's heart, as he was one of those who rejected the Messiah and then also actively persecuted the church.

Consider that the same is true for the church. We to have been given great blessing and privilege, and with that comes great responsibility; as God judged or disciplined the nation of Israel, He also promises to judge or discipline His church.

1 Peter 4:17 NKJV

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

## **2. God's faithfulness to His chosen nation Israel—He has not broken His promises to them**

Romans 9:6-13 NKJV

**But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect [has failed to come to pass]. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, <sup>7</sup> nor are they all children because they are the seed [physical descendants] of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” <sup>8</sup> That is, those who are the children of the flesh [physical descendants], these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. <sup>9</sup> For this is the word of promise: “At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.”**

**<sup>10</sup> And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac <sup>11</sup> (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), <sup>12</sup> it was said to her, “The older shall serve the younger.” <sup>13</sup> As it is written, “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”**

v 6 **It is not that the word of God has taken no effect [has failed to come to pass]:** Paul is heartbroken that Israel as a nation has rejected their Messiah (vs 1-3), despite all the blessings that they had received (vs 4-5). However, he now goes on to say that God's promises concerning them still stand. How?

### Children of the promise

v 6b-7a **For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed [physical descendants] of Abraham:** Simply put, Paul is saying, “Not everyone who says that they are a Jew is really a Jew”. Israel means “governed by God”. That's why God changed Jacob's name from Jacob (which means heel-catcher or deceitful), to Israel (governed by God). The time when Jacob wrestled with God was when God finally brought him to submission—Jacob quit running and scheming and finally started to trust God (see Genesis 32:24-31 and Hosea 12:3-4).

Again, simply put, not all of the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were governed by God. However, those Jews whose hearts were soft and were *governed by God* did actually believe—not all the Jews rejected their Messiah. The Bible also tells of a future time when the Jews, as a nation, will accept Jesus as their Messiah. When Jesus comes back at His Second Coming the entire nation will be *Israel*, or *governed by God*. We will learn more about that later.

v 6-9 **For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, <sup>7</sup> nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” <sup>8</sup> That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. <sup>9</sup> For this is the word of promise: “At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.”:** The children of the promise are those with soft hearts who repent and put their faith in God.

“Paul shows that merely being the descendant of Abraham saves no one. For example, Ishmael was just as much a son of Abraham as Isaac was; but Ishmael was a son according to the flesh, and Isaac was a son according to the promise (**At this time I will come and Sarah will have a son**). One was the heir of God’s covenant of salvation, and one was not. Isaac stands for the **children of the promise** and Ishmael stands for the **children of the flesh**.” (David Guzik)

Application: Not every Christian is a Christian

“Paul tells us that no one is truly Israel unless he is governed by God. We have a parallel situation with the word ‘Christian.’ Not everyone who is called a Christian is truly a follower of Christ.” (Smith) Consider the words of Jesus Himself:

Matthew 7:21-27 NKJV

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ [makes a profession of faith] shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.<sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’<sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who [continually] practice lawlessness!’

<sup>24</sup> “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:<sup>25</sup> and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

<sup>26</sup> “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:<sup>27</sup> and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

What does this mean? The issue is one of repentance—the evidence of a changed or believing or repentant heart will be a changed life. Romans 8:29 promises that those who belong to Christ will be practically sanctified or conformed to the image of Christ. Jesus started His earthly ministry with the simple message, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent [turn from your sin and turn to God instead], and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:15 NKJV) It’s now 2,000 years later and the gospel still hasn’t changed. For a person to be a true believer in Christ, they must both repent and believe. Remember that **true repentance is a change of heart at the time of salvation that leads to a change in attitude and behaviour after we are saved.**

The Jewish leaders rejected Christ when they refused John the Baptist’s call to repent

With the Jews, John the Baptist came before Jesus and baptised them with a baptism of repentance—he told them to turn away from their sins. However, the Jewish leaders refused John’s baptism (see Matthew 21:23-27), and John the Baptist had some nasty words for them. John explicitly warned the Jewish leaders that just because they were physically descended from Abraham, it didn’t mean that they were safe from God’s wrath and the judgement of condemnation which will come upon all unbelievers.

Matthew 3:7-11 NKJV

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, <sup>9</sup> and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. <sup>10</sup> And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>11</sup> I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance, but He [Jesus] who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.

In the same way, a person is not a Christian just because they go to church, or keep certain rituals, or identify with a particular denomination. It goes much deeper than that.

## God's faithfulness to His people does not depend on their obedience

vs 10-13 **And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac** <sup>11</sup> (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), <sup>12</sup> it was said to her, “The older shall serve the younger.” <sup>13</sup> **As it is written, “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”**: The following is a great summary of these often hard to understand and misunderstood verses by Warren W. Wiersbe.

“God chose Jacob before the babies were born. The two boys had done neither good nor evil, so God’s choice was not based on their character or conduct. Romans 9:13 is a reference to Malachi 1:2–3 and refers to nations (Israel and Edom) and not individual sinners. God does not hate sinners. John 3:16 makes it clear that He loves sinners. The statement here has to do with national election, not individual. Since God’s election of Israel does not depend on human merit, their disobedience cannot nullify the elective purposes of God. God is faithful even though His people are unfaithful.”

v 11-12 **Not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election [predestination] might stand, not of works but of Him who calls,** <sup>12</sup> it was said to her, “The older shall serve the younger.”: God predestinating or electing only the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as His chosen nation had nothing to do with anything that they had done, good or bad—they hadn’t even been born yet—it was **not of works**. It was simply God’s sovereign choice as to whom would be His chosen nation to bring the Messiah into the world—the reason was solely in **Him who calls**. This is an example of God’s sovereignty over the *nations*. As we have already learned from Romans 8:29, *individuals* always have the free choice to accept or reject God’s free gift of salvation (see John 3:14-21).

However, the point Paul is making here is that, if there was nothing that Israel could do to gain their unique status as God’s chosen nation, then there is also nothing that they can do to lose it either. It’s simple, God decided that Israel would be His chosen nation, so they were, and so they will ever be. This is why, “God is faithful even though His people are unfaithful” (Warren W. Wiersbe).

v 13 **Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated**: Remember that this is a quotation from Malachi 1:2-3, which in context refers to God choosing between two nations, Israel (Jacob’s descendants) and Edom (Esau’s descendants, see Malachi 1:1-4) to be His chosen nation to bring the Messiah into the world. We can think of **loved** as *accepted*, and **hated** as *rejected*, in the context of which nation God sovereignly chose to be His own special people.

We know that God didn’t hate Esau as an individual, because God blessed Esau with material wealth (see Genesis 33:8–16), and he also became a great nation with many great kings and princes (see Genesis 36), though just not God’s chosen nation. Again, Esau was only rejected only in the sense that God didn’t choose his descendants to be the chosen nation to bring the Messiah into the world.

### Conclusion and summary

Paul had a great love for his people because he constantly prayed that they would be saved. This enabled him to overlook their offenses against him and continue to love them no matter what how badly they treated him. God does the same for us. Jesus is always praying for us, and will never leave or forsake us no matter how unfaithful we are. If my heart is not right towards someone, then it means that I need more time in the Word, and more time in prayer for that person so my heart will change to become more Christlike.