

Sermon Outline

“ABBA! FATHER!”: KNOWING GOD AS OUR BELOVED FATHER

GIFTS OF THE FATHER’S LOVE (ROMANS 9:1-5)

I. Introduction

II. Israel the Adopted Son of God

- A. Romans 9 teaches God’s sovereign choosing of his people.
- B. Paul discusses predestination alongside another question: “Who truly belongs to Israel, the people of God?”
- C. Paul addresses the issue of why some Israelites do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
—Does the fact that so many Israelites do not believe in Christ therefore mean that God has forsaken his people Israel?
 - 1. Paul’s answer to that question is, By no means.
 - 2. “...not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring...” (Rom 9:6, 7).
 - 3. In the end, only those whom God has chosen with Christ since the very beginning will become true Israelites, true children of Abraham, true sons and daughters of God (cf. Eph 1:4).
- D. How does Romans 9:1-5 relate to our study on the fatherhood of God?
 - 1. This passage sheds light on the entire Old Testament.
 - a. It teaches us that God’s adoption of human beings in Christ began expressing itself in this world through the adoption of the people of Israel for himself.
 - 2. This passage shows us the tangible gifts of love that our Father has given to us.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What is Paul’s grand subject in Romans 9? (2) In Romans 9, how does Paul relate the question of “Who belongs to Israel?” to the doctrine of God’s sovereign choosing? (3) How does Romans 9:1-5 relate to our study on the fatherhood of God?

III. Paul Grieves for His Fellow Jews (Romans 9:1-3)

- A. Paul begins with these words: “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” (vv 1, 2).
- B. Why is Paul in so much anguish?
 - 1. Based on verse 6, you can tell that Paul’s anguish has to do with how his own people—the Jews—are treating their God-given Savior.
 - 2. Paul is grieving because not all of his fellow Israelites are *true* Israelites in the eyes of God.
 - a. By refusing to receive Jesus as Lord, by refusing to bow to Jesus as the rightful King of the Jews, these Israelites are denying their own King.
 - b. They are demonstrating that they are not truly Israelites, however much they think they are.
 - c. Paul later explains that the reason these Israelites are *not* truly Israelites is because they are not chosen by God (Rom 9:15).
 - d. Yet, the sovereign choosing of God does not prevent Paul from grieving over the sins of his fellow Jews.
- C. Paul is so disturbed that he wishes he was “accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (v 3).

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Why has Paul so much anguish in his heart over his fellow Jews? (2) What is the ultimate explanation for why some Jews do not believe in Christ? (3) What can we learn about Paul’s grief for his fellow Jews?

IV. Israel, God’s Adopted Son (Romans 9:4)

- A. Paul has such intense feelings for his countrymen because “They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises” (v 4).
- B. Paul feels so strongly for the Israelite people because Israel is the most special nation in the world—“to them belong the adoption.”
- C. The word “adoption” here is the same word that was used in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:5, *huiiothesia*.
 - 1. Israel as a nation is the adopted son of God.
 - 2. Out of all the nations of the world, God chose Israel for adoption.
 - 3. God chose Israel to be his beloved son, the heir to his name and his property.
 - 4. In Greco-Roman society of the time, adoption bestowed honor, power, and rank upon the one adopted.
 - 5. By adopting Israel, God has made Israel his son, his prince among the nations.
- D. Affectionate love is an important aspect of adoption.
 - 1. Adoption is not merely a clinical, legal undertaking.

2. Adoption is an undertaking of great love and affection.
 - Deuteronomy 7:7: “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, but it is *because the LORD loves you* and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”
 - Deuteronomy 10:14-15: “Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet *the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them*, you above all peoples, as you are this day.”
 - Hosea 11:8: “How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? *My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.*”
- E. God’s love is not merely choice or duty—it is a love that is “warm and tender.”
- F. God lovingly adopted Israel as his child.
 1. God’s adoption is an adoption of love.
 2. Israel is loved, cherished, and valued by God, not because of any good Israel had done, but because God had chosen Israel for himself.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Why does Paul have such intense feelings for his fellow Israelites? (2) In Greco-Roman society, what did adoption give to the poor and weak? (3) What does Deuteronomy 7:7; 10:14-15, and Hosea 11:8 teach us about the nature of God’s adoption of Israel? How does God “feel” toward his people?

V. The Father’s Gifts to His Adopted People (Romans 9:4, 5)

- A. We now look at some of ways God has manifested his warm, fatherly love toward his people.
- B. The Lord has given “the glory” (*hē doxa*) to his people.
 1. The glory most likely refers to the glory of God.
 2. In the Old Testament, God drew near to his people in visible splendor and majesty.
 3. This visible splendor took the form of a cloud, or a blazing pillar of fire.
 - a. In the case of 1 Kings 8:10-11, it was a cloud: “And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for *the glory of the LORD* filled the house of the LORD.”

4. While other nations had weapons, wealth, and empires, Israel had the most important treasure of all—the Lord God himself!
 5. God was enthroned in the temple as the Holy King and the Divine Father of the nation of Israel.
- C. The Lord has given Israel “the covenants” (*hai diathēkai*).
1. The covenants include the promises made to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Sproul, *Romans*, 308).
 2. An underlying intent in the covenants is the assurance of redemption.
 3. While Adam and Eve had led the human race astray, God will save a remnant of the human race for himself.
 4. This remnant will form the new humanity, a new race of kings and priests that will once more rule the world for God (Rev 1:6; 4:10).
- D. The Lord has given Israel “the law” (*hē nomothesia*).
1. The Law are the instructions given to the prophet Moses and set down in his five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
 2. The Law was given by God to teach his people how to live.
 3. The Law was given by God to show his people his awesome holiness and goodness.
 4. When we read the Ten Commandments, we behold our heavenly Father!
 - a. Our Father is the only God there is.
 - b. Our Father is a God who is protective of his own glory.
 - c. Our Father is a God who desires our worship—he is a God-centered God, committed to the glory of the community of the Trinity.
 - d. Our Father is a God who loves the human race intensely.
 - i. He gives laws that protect human relationships, the very fabric of human civilization.
 - ii. The Ten Commandments are the basis of human rights and justice.
 - iii. The only way for humans to even have rights is to make sure that God himself is always the King of our lives.
 - iv. If we reject God, it would only be a matter of time before we reject one another—for God is the One who commands us to do good to one another.
- E. The Lord has given Israel “the worship” (*hē latreia*).
1. Worship refers to the service of God, specifically in the temple.
 2. Since our Lord Jesus has fulfilled the functions of the temple, many of the laws concerning temple worship are no longer directly applicable to us.
 3. That said, key principles are still in place.
 - a. God’s laws for worship teach us that we are to come to God through the mediator of God’s choosing.

- b. The laws of worship teach us that we are to come to God through the Lord Jesus Christ, his sacrifice for our sins and his obedient life, which covers all our disobedience.
- F. The Lord has given Israel “the promises” (*hē epanggeliai*).
 - 1. The promises may overlap with the covenants mentioned earlier.
 - 2. The promises emphasize the good things that are to come.
 - 3. They refer to the new age that will appear when God comes to save his people from their sins. The promise may refer to the Gospel itself.
- G. The Lord has given Israel “the patriarchs” (*hoi pateres*).
 - 1. The patriarchs were of course Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the three great fathers of Israel.
 - 2. The patriarchs are important because it was to them that God gave the promises and the covenants.
 - 3. Israel always looked back to the patriarchs for their sense of assurance and identity.
- H. The Lord has given Israel “the Christ” (*ho Christos*).
 - 1. Christ is the Lord’s greatest gift to his people.
 - 2. The Christ or Messiah is the ultimate King and Prophet from God.
 - a. Christ is the heir to the throne of David.
 - b. Christ will usher in the new age of God’s peace and rule.
 - c. Christ will receive the royal authority from God and share it with God’s people (Dan 7:18).
 - 3. Many Jews simply thought of Christ in human terms—he is the supreme Israelite.
 - 4. The great surprise is that Christ is actually the incarnation of God himself.
—Paul acknowledges the Lord Jesus as, “God over all, blessed forever” (ESV) or “...Christ...who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God” (NKJV).
 - 5. Why is Christ the greatest of the Father’s gifts?
 - 1. Christ carries in himself the fullness of God’s nature (Col 1:19).
 - 2. Christ is the fulfillment of the Law’s requirements (Rom 10:4).
 - 3. Christ is the fulfillment of God’s promises to the patriarchs.
—*Christ Jesus is the Kingdom of God in human flesh.*
 - 6. We can see why Paul feels so much sadness for the Jewish people.
—The Jews have rejected their long-awaited Savior King!

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Based on Rom 9:4, 5, what are the gifts of God’s love to his people? (2) What do each of the terms refer to? (3) Why is Christ the supreme gift?

VI. Homecoming

If you have put your trust in Christ, all those precious gifts of adoption are now yours! God the Father has given to you his glory, his covenants, his law, his worship, his promises, the fathers of his people, and most of all, his very own Son, Christ Jesus, in whom is the salvation of the world.

- A. As Paul will later say in Romans 9:25, 26, those who once did not belong to the people of God have now become the people of God.

²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea [Hos 2:23],

“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’
and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’”

²⁶ “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called ‘sons of the living God’” [Hos 1:10]

1. Although many Israelites have rejected their God and King, others who were not Israelites have come to embrace the God and King of Israel.
 2. Those non-Israelites who embrace the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will become the sons and daughters of God.
- B. What does it mean for us Gentiles now to have these gifts?
1. It means that we are not forsaken by God. It means that we do not have to look to the world for our validation, or our affirmation, or our acceptance.
 2. *Because we have the glory of God dwelling in us (1 Cor 6:19)*, we do not need the acceptance or affirmation of the world
—the glory of God is sufficient!
 3. *Because we have the covenants and the promises of God (Eph 2:12)*, we do not have to fear.
—We can have real peace, joy, and comfort amid the difficulties of life.
 4. *Because we have the law and the words of God (Jn 6:68)*, you and I are not lacking in wisdom and guidance.
—God calls us to let his Word lead us.
 5. *Because we have Abraham as our patriarch (Gal 3:29)*, we are not lacking in identity.
—We are the people and household of the Lord.
 6. *Because, we have the Lord Jesus Christ*, nothing in the universe can now separate us from the love of God (Rom 8:39).
 - a. Victory, salvation, and glory are assured for the believer.
 - b. “And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified” (Rom 8:30).

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What lessons does Paul draw from Hosea 1:10 and 2:23 (Rom 9:25, 26)? (2) What does it mean for you to have the gifts of the Father's love? How does each of the gifts mean for you? Which gift means the most to you at this point in your life? (3) What does the gift of Jesus Christ mean for the Christian?