

Rom. 9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

This verse is a statement emphasizing the truth of what Paul is about to say. Truth is according to Christ and the word of God—not the word of Paul or of men.

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Psalms 31:5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life....

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

When we speak the truth, our conscience is clear and we experience no guilt or conviction of the Holy Spirit—unless we are speaking with a wrong attitude.

Rom. 9:2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

What Paul is about to say is a source of great sadness and continual grief to him. It's not just of general concern or something that bothers him once in a while. This is a very convicting statement to me regarding my "burden" for my people and my nation.

Rom. 9:3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Rom. 9:4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

Paul is grieving over his people, the Israelites, those to whom he is related physically by blood. He is so concerned that he would rather be accursed from Christ (condemned in judgment without eternal life) himself than for his own people to be spiritually lost. I don't think I could honestly ever make a similar statement.

It was the nation of Israel that God first chose as His own peculiar people.

Deuteronomy 14:2 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.

The process of choosing a child as your own is adoption. This choice placed the people in a position of glory (dignity, honor) before the other nations of the world.

After He had delivered them from slavery in Egypt, the nation of Israel was privileged to have the “glory” of the Lord dwell with them physically through the cloud that led them in the wilderness and rested over the tabernacle when they were camped. That glory was later manifested in Solomon’s temple.

1Kings 8:10-11 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the 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 had filled the house of the LORD.

The nation of Israel was singled out for a covenant relationship with the Lord beginning with Abraham and on to Moses and David. God’s final covenant with Israel (Jeremiah 31:33-37) is yet to come. Some of His covenants with the nation were conditional, but the covenant with Abraham was unconditional. Once Abraham stepped out in faith to leave his land, God’s promise was sure.

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

This unconditional covenant was confirmed to Jacob.

Genesis 28:13-15 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

The Israelites were privileged to receive the revelation of God’s law—the oracles of God (as stated by Paul earlier in 3:2). They were singled out for the privilege of *serving* God; the Greek identifies this service as “worship.” This service included the responsibility of presenting God to the Gentiles and demonstrating how submission and obedience to Him would result in blessing.

“the promises” – At first you might think this is a repeat of the Abrahamic covenant and the promises it included. I think it goes on to embrace all the promises in scripture associated with the conditional covenants and promises related to specific acts of love and obedience such as delighting in God’s word (Psalm 1). These promises will culminate for Israel with the eventual establishment of the Messiah’s Kingdom and the establishment of the nation under the new covenant.

Rom. 9:5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Several of the translations I read for this verse reference the Patriarchs— Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This makes sense to me. This nation came from specific physical descent as designated by God. He often refers to himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Exodus 3:6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Exodus 4:5 That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

Matthew 22:32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Paul is clear that Christ, Jesus the Messiah, was descended from these same fathers. As he speaks of Christ, he can't help but acknowledge that He is Lord as blessed by God the Father.

“Amen” = What Paul has said is just said is firm, trustworthy and sure.

Rom. 9:6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

As Paul looks at the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel at the time of this letter, it would seem that God's word had been proven not true. He makes clear that is not the case. Now he begins to elaborate on the truth he presented in chapter 2. Not everyone who is an Israelite by birth is a true Israelite—a part of that chosen family of God.

I found a quote by Arnold Fruchtenbaum that I wanted to include here.

“It is important that this verse is not misunderstood. Paul is not distinguishing between Israel and the Church or between Jews and Gentiles. Rather, he is distinguishing between Jews who believe in the Messiahship of Yeshua and Jews who do not believe or between the Remnant and the non-Remnant. The first expression, *all Israel*, refers to the believing Jewish Remnant, which is the believing, natural seed of Abraham. The second expression, *of Israel*, refers to the entire nation, the whole natural seed. There is one Israel which comprises the entire nation and, within the whole of physical Israel, there is a spiritual Israel. Spiritual Israel is never stated in Scripture to be the Church. Spiritual Israel is always those Jews, within the nation as a whole, who believe.”

Rom. 9:7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Rom. 9:8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

It would seem that these verses are defining the difference between the spiritual heritage of Israel and the physical heritage of Israel. Abraham was God's chosen man to father the children of faith. Abraham had other children in the flesh. Isaac, however, was unique in that he was the child of promise that was birthed through the supernatural provision of God in light of Abraham's faith.

Isaac represents the father of the physical seed of Israel as represented by the circumcision. You can't be born by flesh into the family of God; you can only become a child of God through faith. The physical descendants of Israel through Isaac/Jacob represent those who will eventually experience the fullness of the physical "seed" as promised in the verses from Genesis 28 above (comments on verses 3-4). Isaac was the child of promise to Abraham and Sara that was born through faith; therefore, all who become followers of God through faith are considered the true children of Abraham.

Rom. 9:9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.

Rom. 9:10 And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

Rom. 9:11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

Rom. 9:12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

Isaac was born in due time according to the direct revelation of God to Abraham (Genesis 18). Isaac fathered twins, Jacob and Esau, through Rebekah. It was God's choice that Jacob would be the son through whom the covenant with Abraham and Isaac would continue. Paul makes it clear that this decision was made before the babies were born—before they had done either good or evil. Jacob wasn't better than Esau—he was just privileged to be God's choice.

From the beginning God was clear that salvation was a matter of grace through faith and not works. Salvation is a gift according to the will and plan of God.

Rom. 9:13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

This whole chapter is difficult and this verse one of the most difficult. I finally feel like I got some understanding when I first really studied the story of Rachel and Leah. We automatically associate the word *hate* with the most horrible of thoughts; the Greek, however, includes the thought of "loving less." This understanding is supported by the scripture concerning Leah.

Genesis 29:30-31 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years. And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.

That really solidified my thinking in this area. I know that God is not willing that any should perish according to His word. (cf comments on Romans 8:28) God chose Jacob to a position of privilege and honor, just as Jacob loved Rachel

more than Leah. It doesn't mean He didn't love Esau at all—just that He loved him less in connection with the covenant. That is a choice we have no right to question of a Sovereign God.

Rom. 9:14 What shall we say then? *Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.*

Rom. 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Paul is trying to anticipate the questions of those who would receive this letter. He assures them that God's choice of Jacob was not an act of unrighteousness. God is Sovereign. He has the authority to make choices as it pleases Him. These choices don't involve right or wrong; EVERY choice God makes is right. God was very clear with His people regarding His sovereignty from the very beginning, and Paul quotes from the Torah to establish that truth.

Exodus 33:19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

Rom. 9:16 So then *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*

I liked the Complete Jewish Bible translation of this verse: *Thus it doesn't depend on human desires or efforts, but on God, who has mercy.*

The questions begs, "Who are the people to whom God shows mercy?"

Psalms 25:10 All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth **unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.**

Psalms 86:5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy **unto all them that call upon thee.**

The Psalmist declares that those who obey the word of God and those who come to God seeking forgiveness always receive His mercy. As he continues to develop his thoughts, Paul will eventually emphasize that last point. Any unbeliever who comes to God in faith will receive His mercy.

Romans 11:32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Rom. 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

"the scripture saith" – The scripture is the word of God as inspired to its writers through the Holy Spirit.

2Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God...
“inspiration” – divinely breathed in

The scripture being referenced is found in Exodus.

Exodus 9:13-16 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. **And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.***

God knew Pharaoh’s heart before He ever created him. Knowing his heart, God raised him up specifically to a position of power at a specific point in time in order to accomplish His purposes in magnifying His name through the mighty miracles He performed to finally force Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave Egypt and to protect them on their journey toward Canaan.

That God achieved His purpose was verified by the words of Rahab the harlot who was spared at the battle of Jericho.

Joshua 2:9–11 *“And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.”*

Rom. 9:18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

It is God’s sovereign choice to be longsuffering in mercy and allow the door of opportunity to remain open for one to respond to Him in faith. It is God’s sovereign choice as to when to close the door of opportunity for any individual to respond to Him in faith and repentance. It is God’s sovereign choice to “harden” a person’s heart so that he/she will stubbornly reject any opportunity to turn to Him in faith. The opportunity for faith and repentance is available for all for a period of time. This has to be true for God’s word to be true.

Ezekiel 18:32 *For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*

Ezekiel 33:11 *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live:*

2Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Some harden their own hearts, and others have their hearts “hardened” by God according to His divine plan.

Psalm 95:8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

Again, I firmly believe that election is based on God’s foreknowledge as stated in chapter 8:29, and I strongly believe that His choice to “harden” one’s heart is based on that same knowledge. (But I’m just a simple believer and not a great theologian.)

Rom. 9:19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Again, Paul is anticipating the questions of the readers of this letter. The question—If God hardens someone’s heart, how can He condemn that person for something over which he had no control?

Rom. 9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Rom. 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Paul is firm in his reply that we have no right to question the authority of God. God Himself answered this thought through the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 18:3-6 Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

And the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 29:16 for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

(Note: This is a rhetorical question with an obvious answer—NO.)

God creates every person according to His own purposes. That purpose includes the ability to choose whether or not to follow God in faith and obedience. Each person has an inner understanding and a declaration through creation of the Creator (cf chapter 1).

Rom. 9:22 *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:*

Rom. 9:23 *And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,*

These verses just build on the thoughts presented above in my opinion. It is important to note that the word “what” is not in the original; sometimes the translators make understanding more difficult by the words they add. In fact, it sounds like Paul is saying that God “endured with much longsuffering” the wickedness of those who chose to reject Him. These are vessels “fitted to destruction”—condemned for eternity.

John 3:18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Why was He so longsuffering? To make use of these wicked vessels to demonstrate His wrath (punishment, vengeance, anger) and His power in order to declare Himself and draw to Himself “the vessels of mercy,” those who would turn to Him in faith and repentance.

There has to be a contrast between good and evil for man to recognize his need for a Savior. God purposed through men of faith to demonstrate the contrast of blessing for following Him in faith and obedience and judgment for those who choose to reject Him.

“afore prepared unto glory” – This takes us back to Romans 8:29-30.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Rom. 9:24 *Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*

Rom. 9:25 *As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.*

“Even us” = vessels of mercy

Paul is saying that the children of faith, the vessels of honor, would consist of Jews and Gentiles. Through the inspiration of the Spirit, Paul declares this to be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Hosea.

Hosea 2:23 *And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people [the Gentiles], Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.*

Rom. 9:26 And it shall come to pass, *that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.*

This is another quote from Hosea.

Hosea 1:10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

I tend to think this verse is emphasizing the restoration of the people of Israel to relationship with Jehovah. He had scattered them to the far ends of the earth and this is a promise that they will once again be brought back to the place from which God dispersed them—the land of Israel—as children of the living God, part of the family of faith.

Rom. 9:27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

Rom. 9:28 For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

Paul again quotes from the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 10:21-22 The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

I included verse 21 to help make the connection between the word *return* in Isaiah and the word *saved* used by Paul. In both cases the context is that of turning to God in faith and repentance, which results in salvation.

Interestingly enough, some of the other translations of Isaiah 10:22 seemed to make a better connection to verse 28 than the KJV.

Darby – “for [he] is bringing the matter to an end, and [cutting [it] short in righteousness; because] a cutting short of the matter will [the] Lord accomplish upon the earth.”

Young – “for a matter He is finishing, and is cutting short in righteousness, because a matter cut short will the Lord do upon the land.”

I think there is a direct connection to Matthew 24 with these two verses.

Matthew 24:21-22 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but **for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.**

In these verses from Romans, Isaiah, and Matthew the context is concerning the remnant of Israel (referenced as the *elect* in Matthew) that will be restored in fellowship to Jehovah at the end of the tribulation period, the 70th week of Daniel (still future and described in great detail in Revelation).

“finish the work” – This is referencing the completion of God’s plan. I think Daniel defines it most clearly.

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

(cf comments in journal on the book of Daniel)

The phrase “cut it short in righteousness” caught my attention this time through. In looking for help in understanding I ran across the Amplified version and thought it was helpful.

“For the Lord will execute His sentence upon the earth [He will conclude and close His account with men completely and without delay], rigorously cutting it short in His justice.”

In other words, upon the completion of the execution of God’s wrath through the judgment of the 7-year tribulation period, He will immediately establish the believing remnant of the nation of Israel in righteous standing before the nations.

Rom. 9:29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

Isaiah must have been one of Paul’s favorite books (as it is mine). Again, he quotes the prophet.

Isaiah 1:9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

Scripture tells us that Sodom and Gomorrah were completely destroyed by God never to be inhabited again. In fact, we have yet to identify exactly where those cities were located; the general location is at the southern end of the Dead Sea. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because evidently Lot was the only righteous man living there. He was delivered before their destruction. Israel has always had a preserving body of righteous men of faith. Paul is emphasizing that this remnant was a result of the work of God in His people.

I think point needs to be made that it is God who has preserved “a seed” (a remnant, a group of physical descendants of Israel) according to His covenant promises. (Cf with 11:5)

“Lord of Sabaoth” – Seems to be equivalent to the title “Lord of hosts.”
“Sabaoth” = armies; sabaoth (i.e. tsebaoth), a military epithet of God.

Rom. 9:30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

Rom. 9:31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

Based on all that Paul has just presented, what should we conclude? What is the state of things?

The Gentiles (who make up the “church”) from the wicked pagan nations have been imputed the righteousness of God through faith in the Son of God. The Israelites, who had begun as nation of faith, had resorted to focusing on the keeping of God’s law and had failed (as does everyone who tries to live by the law).

Rom. 9:32 Wherefore? Because *they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;*

Rom. 9:33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Why did they fail? Because they were trying to work their way into God’s good graces through ritualistic practices instead of just following Him in faith and obedience as Lord.

Again, Paul quotes from Isaiah.

Isaiah 8:13-14 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And **he shall be** for a sanctuary; but for **a stone of stumbling** and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

In Isaiah 8 the “LORD of hosts” is identified as the stone of stumbling. In Isaiah 28 YHWH states He will lay a “precious corner stone” in Zion. Isaiah 28 is a passage about the Messiah and serves to equate Him to the Lord of hosts.

Psalms 118 is another Messianic passage that is referenced by the Apostle Peter in his great sermon recorded in Acts 4. He identifies this stone as Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Psalms 118:21-22 I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

Acts 4:10-11 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by

him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

In the book of 1Peter, the Holy Spirit connects all the dots.

*1Peter 2:5-8 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by **Jesus Christ**. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, **Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious:** and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, **the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence,** even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*

The people of Israel were so caught up in their legalistic practices of empty ritual, that they rejected Jesus the Messiah when He came. They (the nation as a whole) refused to accept Him as the promised Messiah in spite of His many miraculous proofs.

Why were they so eager to reject Jesus as the Messiah? It's like they never had read Isaiah 53. They were so eager for Messiah the King to deliver them from the bondage of Rome, that they were blinded to the truth. They just didn't expect the suffering servant. They were so proud of their adherence to the law, that they couldn't understand the message of salvation through faith that Jesus taught.

As I thought about this some more, I thought again about how false expectations impact us. The people of Israel were so focused on a deliverer who would become their king that they rejected the scripture that spoke of Messiah's suffering. They just didn't understand that He had to die and conquer death through the resurrection to atone for sin before He could set up His Kingdom. The suffering servant was to become the king. As a result, they rejected the Messiah. Their response to Him was based on their desire and expectation rather than the truth. God had given them the truth through His prophets, but they chose to accept only part of that truth—not the whole truth.

The "church" today has the same mindset. We want to interpret God's truth according to our desires and expectations. That doesn't change the truth. It just puts us in the dangerous position of missing out on the blessings of God and in many instances in leading people away from true saving faith. I am continually asking the Lord to help me read and hear His word without prejudice and with an open heart to His truth. It is only through knowing His truth as revealed to us by the Spirit through His word that we can develop a growing relationship with the Savior and live a life of victory and obedience over sin. It is dangerous to try to box God in to our expectations of Him from a human mindset. His wisdom is so very far beyond our understanding.