

- (25) As indeed He says in Hosea,
 "Those who were not My people I will call, 'My people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'" (Hosea 2:23)
 "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.'" (Hosea 1:10)
- (27) And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel:
 "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, for the Lord will carry out His sentence upon the earth fully and without delay." (Isaiah 10:22, 23)
- (29) And as Isaiah predicted,
 "If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah." (Isaiah 1:9)
- (30) What shall we say, then? That Gentiles --- who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith --- but that Israel, who pursued a Law that would lead to righteousness, did not succeed in reaching that Law! Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written,
 "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." (Isaiah 28:16)

Think on These Things:

- 1) From a Jewish perspective, the world is comprised of the Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles). The Jews are God's people, and no one else. When it comes to Jehovah ("YHWH," pronounced "Yahweh"), the Gentiles are seen as outside of God's interest and purview. Is this a valid perspective? See Genesis 12:1-3.

No, it's not. God's Promise to Abraham was that through him ALL the earth would be blessed.

- 2) The book of Hosea is a very interesting book. God made Hosea's life an object lesson for Judah and Israel. Hosea was directed to marry a local prostitute named Gomer, and she bore him 2 sons and a daughter. She then ran away and resumed prostituting herself, and God sent Hosea to her pimp to buy her back. The object lesson of Hosea is that God remains faithful even when His people continually "prostitute" themselves by believing in other cultures' deities. What do you think is God's purpose in the two Hosea quotes found in vs. 25-26?

There seem to be two purposes in these quotations from Hosea. The first one appears to be God telling the Jews that since they were such an unfaithful people to Him, He planned to open the door of relationship with Him to the non-Jews (Gentiles). The second one appears to be God telling these Gentiles that though they were afar off and not considered "His people," they would, in fact, become to Him "Sons of the Living God." The salvation of the Lord was being extended to them through the illustration of Hosea and Gomer's lives.

- 3) Read Romans 9:6-9 and 11:25-26a. Now look at today's 9:27. Will all Jews be saved? Explain how you understand these passages together.

Romans 9 clarifies that though Abraham had several sons (8 total, Genesis 25:1) beyond Ishmael and Isaac, **ONLY** the descendants through Isaac --- his son of promise --- were considered true "offspring" to inherit the covenant and promises of God (Romans 9:8).

Romans 11 teaches that Israel will experience a "partial hardening" of heart, during which time the "fullness of the Gentiles" will be added into God's family. Gentiles were and are not physical descendants of Abraham --- but they are his descendants by faith.

So, when it says "And in this way ALL Israel will be saved," we must understand two things: 1) to be a true descendant of Abraham, one must be a believer in the one, true God (of Israel); and 2) "ALL" Israel is not just a Jewish group --- it includes a 'fullness of Gentiles' also.

- 4) What do we know about God's promises and purposes with His Word (v. 28)?

God's Word will always be fulfilled. If He declares something will happen, it will happen. It will also happen in God's timing (i.e., without delay --- when it's supposed to happen!).

- 5) What do you make of v. 29, comparing the Jews of Israel with Sodom and Gomorrah? (The key is mentioned in v. 28.)

Without "true descendants" of Abraham --- people of faith --- all Israel would have descended into the same wicked cesspool of humanity that brought condemnation to Sodom and Gomorrah.

- 6) Paul concludes that Gentiles have found the righteousness of God, but the Jews have not. What is the problem with the Jews? Do you think this is a problem for Christians, too?

The Jews developed a wrong understanding of relationship with God. They came to view God as a Creator carrying a checklist to monitor their lives, believing that good works were what God really wanted from them. They sought to prove their worthiness as God's people because they didn't grasp the pervasiveness of sin in life. They didn't realize how futile it is to put one's own righteousness before God's scrutiny.... V. 32 says they failed to "attain the righteousness" God requires of everyone because they sought to 'achieve' it by good works, and not 'receive' it by faith in Jesus (their Jewish Messiah [Greek term is 'Christ'], their promised deliverer).

- 7) What is this stumbling block referred to in Scriptures? See Acts 4:8-12, Ephesians 2:19-22, 1 Corinthians 1:22-24 and 1 Peter 2:6-12. What is the cause for this?

V. 32 says that Jews stumbled over 'the' stumbling stone! Especially in Acts 4:11-12, Peter declared that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was 'the stone' rejected by the Jews, in whom --- and in no other --- salvation is provided for all mankind. Ephesians confirms that JESUS is God's Cornerstone for a holy temple comprised of believers being built for God by the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians Paul says we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews. Peter shows that God placed Jesus as His chosen and precious cornerstone in Zion (Jerusalem), and no one who believes in Him will be shamed. His condemning remark regarding 'rejection' is that they stumble in this way because they "disobey the Word, as they were destined to do" (v. 8).

People and situations I want to pray for this week: