

(1) 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. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

(4) They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is Christ --- who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

(6) But it is not as though the Word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son."

(10) And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad --- in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of Him who calls --- she was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Think on These Things

- 1) Why do you think Paul expressed deep sadness about the Jews? Keep in mind how they treated Jesus during His ministry, how do you understand people get saved.

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- 2) Describe the privileges and advantages pointed out here that the Jews had compared to other cultures. What would be God's expectation? See Genesis 12:3; Deuteronomy 28:15, 37; Isaiah 43:9-13 and Acts 13:46-47.

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- 3) Describe the privileges and advantages you think we have as American Christians. Do you think God puts expectations on us? See Matthew 5:13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:16-20; Philippians 2:12-15 and Isaiah 58:6-12.

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4) Explain your understanding of, “not all these of Israel are Israel.” (v. 6)

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5) How many sons did Abraham father? See Genesis 16:1-2; 21:1-5, 9-13; 25:1-6. In these verses, what keeps being repeated about Isaac (e.g., 25:5).?

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6) The Muslims are also descendants of Abraham through Ishmael, his firstborn son from Sarah’s Egyptian concubine, Hagar. “Father Abraham” is deeply revered, and they claim to serve the “God of Abraham” --- but not “Jehovah” (Yahweh), the God of the Jews. Read Genesis 16:3-16. From v. 13, can you understand how they arrived at their (imperfect) understanding of God? Also, what kind of man was Ishmael (v. 12)?

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7) What is your reaction to God’s “predetermined election” and the phrasing of v. 13: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” --- before the boys were born!

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People and situations I want to pray for this week: