

## **Kingdom Perspective: Living out God's Grace in a Divided World**

*The Heart of Salvation*

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# **The Heart of Salvation**

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### **Romans 9:1–5 (NLT)**

With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it. My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief 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.

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. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned. And he is God, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

### **7 truths about the Jewish people that are still applicable in our New Testament reality:**

1. The Jewish people are chosen to be God's adopted children.
2. God revealed His glory to the Jewish people.
3. God made covenants with the Jewish people.
4. God gave the Jewish people His law.
5. God gave the Jewish people the privilege of worshiping Him.
6. The Jewish people received God's wonderful promises.
7. Jesus, in His human nature, was an Israelite and a descendant of Abraham.

### **1. Israel is God's chosen land, and the Jewish people are God's chosen people.**

### **Romans 9:30–33 (NLT)**

What does all this mean? Even though the Gentiles were not trying to follow God's standards, they were made right with God. And it was by faith that this took place. But the people of Israel, who tried so hard to get right with God by keeping the law, never succeeded.

Why not? Because they were trying to get right with God by keeping the law instead of by trusting in him. They stumbled over the great rock in their path. God warned them of this in the Scriptures when he said, “I am placing a stone in Jerusalem that makes people stumble, a rock that makes them fall. But anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.”

### **Romans 10:1–(NLT)**

Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don’t understand God’s way of making people right with himself.

Refusing to accept God’s way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God.

## **2. Jesus put an end to performance for acceptance.**

### **Romans 10:5–13 (NLT)**

For Moses writes that the law’s way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. But faith’s way of getting right with God says, “Don’t say in your heart, ‘Who will go up to heaven?’ (to bring Christ down to earth). And don’t say, ‘Who will go down to the place of the dead?’ (to bring Christ back to life again).” In fact, it says, “The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart.”

And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

### **Deuteronomy 30:6 (NLT)**

The Lord your God will change your heart and the hearts of all your descendants, so that you will love him with all your heart and soul and so you may live! ...

### **Deuteronomy 30:11–16 (NLT)**

This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you, and it is not beyond your reach. It is not kept in heaven, so distant that you must ask, “Who will go up to heaven and bring it down so we can hear it and obey?” It is not kept beyond the sea, so far away that you must ask, “Who will cross the sea to bring it to us so we can hear it and obey?” No, the message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart so that you can obey it.

Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster. For I command you this day to love the Lord your God and to keep his commands, decrees, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy.

### **3. Declaring Jesus as Lord is surrendering everything in our lives to Him.**

#### **Philippians 2:5–11 (NLT)**

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.

When he appeared in human form, <sup>8</sup> he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross.

Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

# Small Group Guide: The Heart of Salvation

## Opening Question

What's something you've had a deep passion or burden for in your life—something that stirred you enough to sacrifice time, energy, or comfort?

## God's Heart for Israel

In Romans 9 and 10, Paul expresses deep grief for his people, the Israelites. Think about the vulnerability of his words—he says he would give up his own salvation if it meant they would be saved (Romans 9:3). Beyond just theological, this is deeply personal. It shows us the Father's heart for His people.

Paul then goes on to list seven truths about the Jewish people that still apply today (Romans 9:4–5). (See full list in sermon notes)

Paul makes it clear: God has not rejected Israel. Jesus didn't lose His Jewish identity after the resurrection. He is, forever, a resurrected Jewish man. Understanding this helps us confront both subtle and blatant antisemitism—even among some in the church.

Many antisemitic ideas have grown out of replacement theology—the belief that the Church has replaced Israel in God's plan. But Paul reiterates that God's promises still stand. As believers, we are grafted in—not replacing, but joining.

## The Gospel's Invitation

Romans 10 brings the focus back to how we are saved—not by effort, heritage, or performance—but by believing and confessing:

*If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)*

Salvation is not about being good enough. It's about surrendering to Jesus, who was perfect *for us*. Whether a Jew trying to fulfill the law or a moralist thinking their good behavior is enough, it always comes down to Jesus.

Paul's words are a reminder that salvation is deeply personal, always by grace, and rooted in God's faithfulness. We are called not just to believe it—but to live it, love people through it, and stand against any lie that opposes God's heart, especially toward the people He first called His own.

## **For Discussion**

1. **Read Romans 9:1–5.** What stands out to you about Paul’s emotional burden for the Jewish people? How does that challenge or inspire your love for others?
2. Why is it important to remember that Jesus is still a Jewish man? How does that shape your understanding of God’s faithfulness and the danger of antisemitism?
3. Have you ever felt like you needed to earn God’s love? How does it change things to realize that Jesus already fulfilled what you never could?
4. **Read Romans 10:9–13.** What does it mean in your life to “declare Jesus as Lord”? In what areas are you still learning to surrender?

## **Activation: Intercession for Israel and the Jewish People**

As a group, take time to pray for the Jewish people, both in Israel and across the world. Pray for their protection, for the rise of antisemitism to be resisted, and most of all—for them to know Jesus as their Messiah.