

REMNANT CHURCH SERMON NOTES – ROMANS 9: 4-5 (PART 1)
PREACHED ON AUGUST 16, 2026, BY REV. B.B. ANUM-HIGHER

3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

➤ **INTRODUCTION**

- Last week, we saw how Paul expressed his anguish concerning the unbelief and apostasy of his own people, the nation of Israel. Not too long ago, the apostle had told the Roman Christians that no powers and no suffering can separate the Christian from the love of God in Christ Jesus. But in verse 3, Paul says he wished he were separated from God if it would lead to the salvation of his people. If the only way for my people, the nation of Israel, to be saved is for me to be separated from God, Paul says I am willing to do that and go to hell on their behalf. This statement must not be taken lightly, because the greatest thing Paul treasured in his life was his relationship with Christ, and here he says he would sacrifice it if that were the only way for his people to believe the gospel.
- The man who once said that, “Indeed, I count everything as loss or garbage because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ,” now says that he is willing to lose his treasured possession for the sake of his people. Paul’s love for his people was so great that he could forego everything for their salvation. Paul took his faith seriously, and evangelism was one of his priorities.
- We don’t see the same passion among professing Christians in our generation. Even among professing Christians, it is a scandal to take your Christianity seriously. Professing Christians value vacation, sports, and politics more than their faith. They are ashamed to go out publicly about what they believe, but Paul was different. How can the non-Christian take us seriously when we do not show them that we place a great value on what we believe? How can the unbelievers we work with, interact with daily, live in the neighborhood with find our faith attractive and want to know more about Christ when we don’t pour out our love and everything into our faith?
- Paul then tells us in verses 4 and 5 why he has a great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart for his unbelieving people, the nation of Israel. He stated that the Jews had all the privileges and advantages among all the nations of the world to know about God’s salvation. To Paul, it is a great tragedy for the nation of Israel to miss such an opportunity after all that they know about the Messiah. He

gives 7 privileges the Jews had that no other groups of people had, and we will consider 4 of these privileges this morning and the rest next week.

- You might be wondering why we should spend our time studying the Jews or this portion of Scripture. The reason why we should pay careful attention to these words is that they are God's inspired words useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training us in righteousness. We are to see ourselves in these verses and see how they apply to us individually and collectively as a church. We are to examine ourselves and ask how these privileges apply to me, how I am behaving like the Jews, and why I must repent if I am walking in the same path they walked. We have so many people who grew up in a Christian home, spent their lives in Biblical churches, went to Christian schools, made a profession of faith, have been baptized, are surrounded mostly by Christians, and yet have never responded positively to the Gospel they outwardly claim to believe. They outwardly claim to be members of the church, but have never truly believed in Jesus Christ. Their end is just as pathetic as the Jews'.

➤ **FIRST PRIVILEGE: THE NATION OF ISRAEL WERE ADOPTED BY GOD.**

- In verse 4, Paul says, "Theirs is the adoption as sons." Imagine two little girls living in the same orphanage, both waiting to be adopted. One is taken into the home of a cruel and heartless man who mistreats her and leaves her clothed in rags. The other is welcomed into the family of a wealthy and loving father who cherishes her, provides for her every need, and delights in calling her his own. The difference between those two homes is immeasurable. The almighty Creator of heaven and earth chose that nation to be His own son. In Jeremiah 31:9, God declared, "I am a father to Israel." In Hosea 11:1, the Lord said, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son."
- God declared in Exodus 4:22 when Moses went to Pharaoh, "Israel is my firstborn son. Let my son go and worship Me." Out of all the nations on earth, He set His love upon them. Not mighty Egypt, nor powerful Babylon, nor fearsome Assyria, but the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—a comparatively small and insignificant people—were chosen to bear the privilege of being God's covenant children. They were the people upon whom He set His affection, whom He protected with His mighty hand, and to whom He continually spoke through His prophets. He brought them into a land flowing with milk and honey and surrounded them with countless expressions of His covenant faithfulness. Paul could therefore say, "These adopted people are my people." What an honor to belong to the nation whose Father is the living God.
- Yet if such were the privileges of God's adopted people under the old covenant, how much greater are the blessings enjoyed by God's children under the new covenant. The apostle John, himself a Jew, writes to predominantly Gentile believers and exclaims, "See what kind of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1).

In effect he is saying, "I am a Jewish Christian, and you are Gentile Christians, but together we are all God's beloved children." Our position under the new covenant surpasses that of the old. We are no longer living under the preparatory discipline of the Mosaic covenant, which served as a guardian until Christ came.

- Israel's adoption pointed forward to greater blessings still. Our adoption is the fulfillment of all that they anticipated. We enjoy the full rights and privileges of God's sons and daughters. We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Through the Spirit we freely enter our Father's presence and cry, "Abba, Father." We are welcomed with joy into His presence and received with the very love with which He loves His own Son. Every blessing of sonship belongs to us. We have a Father's unfailing provision, a Father's constant protection, and a Father's wise discipline—His loving correction, instruction, and care. What an unspeakable privilege it is to belong to the household of God and to live as sons and daughters in His everlasting kingdom.

➤ **SECOND PRIVILEGE: THEY HAD A REVELATION OF THE DIVINE GLORY.**

- God had also revealed His glory to Israel and not to any other nations. "Theirs is the divine glory." Paul is referring to the visible manifestation of God's glorious presence, the radiant cloud that appeared repeatedly throughout Israel's history as a testimony that the living God was dwelling among his people. By night, it went before them as a pillar of fire, and by day as the majestic cloud that guided their journey through the wilderness. It descended upon the Tent of Meeting whenever Moses entered to commune with God. It filled the tabernacle with such overwhelming splendor that no one could enter. Above the mercy seat, in the Holy of Holies, the glory of God rested as the sign of his covenant presence.
- There was even that unforgettable occasion when Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock, and the Lord caused a glimpse of his glory to pass before him. God revealed only as much as Moses could bear, for the full blaze of his glory would have consumed him. Yet even that partial revelation so transformed Moses that, after speaking with God, his face shone with reflected glory. The people could scarcely look upon him, and he was compelled to wear a veil whenever he addressed them. Later, when Solomon dedicated the temple, the glory of the Lord once again descended and filled the house so completely that the priests could not continue their ministry. No monument of Egypt, no palace of Babylon, no temple of Greece or Rome, no pyramid or ancient wonder was ever visited by the glory that rested upon Israel. This was the unique privilege of God's covenant people: the Creator himself dwelt among them and made his presence known.
- Yet the glory revealed under the new covenant surpasses even these remarkable displays. No longer was God's glory chiefly associated with the tabernacle or the temple. It was revealed perfectly in the person of his Son. As John declares, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." The true

Shekinah glory now shone in Jesus Christ. In him, the glory of God was displayed not only in majesty but also in mercy, compassion, saving power, and redeeming love.

- Think of the night Christ was born. The shepherds outside Bethlehem suddenly found themselves surrounded by the glory of the Lord as heaven announced the arrival of the promised Savior. A virgin had conceived and brought forth the Son of God. Then consider the Mount of Transfiguration, where Christ's face shone like the sun, and his garments became dazzling white beyond anything earthly hands could produce. There, Moses and Elijah appeared with him, speaking of the redeeming work he was about to accomplish through his death and resurrection in Jerusalem. They conversed together in the very radiance of heaven.
- How much greater are our privileges today? The prophets longed to see what has now been revealed to us, but they saw it only from a distance. We have beheld what even Isaiah and Elijah could only anticipate. We have seen the Son of God bearing the sins of his people upon Calvary's cross, reconciling guilty sinners to a holy God. We have witnessed the glory of his finished work, his triumphant resurrection, and his victory over death itself. This is the glory we proclaim to a world searching for meaning and splendor in all the wrong places. We point men and women to Jesus Christ, in whom the glory of God shines most brightly. No wonder the redeemed in heaven forever sing, "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood... to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." Revelation 1:5.

➤ **THIRD PRIVILEGE: GOD MADE COVENANTS WITH THEM.**

- God had also entered into a covenant with them. "Theirs are the covenants." Throughout Scripture, a covenant is a solemn bond established by God. It is a sacred relationship, often ratified by the shedding of blood. Covenants are not casual agreements but binding commitments that define the relationship between the parties involved. In the ancient world, two tribes or nations might negotiate a covenant of peace and friendship, sealing it with a sacrifice. At other times, a powerful king or conquering nation imposed the terms upon those under its authority. In either case, a covenant establishes enduring promises, responsibilities, and obligations.
- When God makes a covenant with his creatures, however, the situation is altogether different. He alone is sovereign, and therefore, he alone determines its terms. His covenants are never negotiated between equals. Consider God's covenant with Noah. After the flood, the Lord graciously promised never again to destroy the whole earth by water. Noah did not bargain with God or suggest the terms. The promise originated entirely with the Lord's sovereign mercy. Likewise, after Adam and Eve broke the covenant of works in the Garden of Eden, God did not consult with them about what should happen next. He himself pronounced

judgment, drove them from the garden, and yet, in astonishing grace, announced the first promise of the coming Redeemer, the Seed of the Woman in Genesis 3:15. Even in the midst of judgment, God revealed his covenant of grace.

- Every covenant God establishes rests ultimately upon his own faithful promises. The prophets looked forward to the New Covenant, especially Jeremiah, who declared that God himself would establish a covenant unlike the one made at Sinai. In the fullness of time, God fulfilled that promise by sending his own Son into the world. Jesus Christ came to accomplish everything that the earlier covenants anticipated. He gave substance to the shadows and fulfilled all that the sacrifices, ceremonies, and types had pointed toward. As the Mediator of the New Covenant, he offered himself as the once-for-all sacrifice for sin. He perfectly obeyed God's law, and as the second Adam—the representative Head of his people—he secured every covenant blessing: forgiveness of sins, peace with God, adoption into God's family, and everlasting fellowship with him in the new creation. Those blessings are now freely bestowed upon all who trust in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile.
- This glorious truth lies at the heart of the Epistle to the Hebrews, especially chapters 7 through 10. There, we learn that God has brought into effect the fullest and final administration of his eternal covenant of grace. It is a better covenant, founded upon better promises. It rests upon a better sacrifice, offered by a better High Priest, ministering in a better sanctuary. It provides a better hope than the former covenant ever displayed so clearly—the sure promise of eternal life in "a better country, that is, a heavenly one." Such were the covenant privileges entrusted to Israel, and they formed yet another reason why Paul was grieved about his people's unbelief.

➤ **FOURTH PRIVILEGE: GOD GAVE THEM THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.**

- God had also entrusted his Word to Israel. Out of all the nations of the world, God chose Israel to receive the way human society should be ordered and how people should live their lives. "Theirs is the giving of the Law." To possess the very words of the living God was Israel's highest distinction, and for devout Jews it remains a treasured privilege to this day. Even in our modern times, when thousands of Orthodox Jews gather each summer either in May or June, many devote hours each morning to the study of the Law and the Talmud. It is called the Festival of Weeks. These Orthodox Jews celebrate the giving of the first five Books of the Old Testament, also called the Torah, at Mount Sinai. Many Jewish communities stay up all night the first night, studying Torah and reading the Ten Commandments in their synagogues. In the synagogue, one of the most solemn moments of worship by the ancient Jews is the procession of the scrolls of God's Word through the congregation. They rejoice that God has spoken. He has revealed his character, declared his will, and made known what he requires of his people.

- Israel understood that they had not been created to live autonomously, making their own rules and determining right and wrong for themselves. They were created to live theonomously—that is, under the authority of God's law or divine government. Far from regarding this as a burden, faithful Israelites saw it as their highest privilege, greatest delight, and solemn duty to obey the Lord who had redeemed them. The Law reflected God's own holy character. It revealed the conduct he delights in and the sins he hates. Our Lord Jesus summarized the entire moral law in two great commandments: to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Through God's Word, Israel knew what such love looked like in practice. What an extraordinary privilege that was.
- The Law itself contained several distinct parts. There were the civil laws, governing Israel's national life with remarkable wisdom, instructing them in matters ranging from justice and property to sanitation, public health, and the building of their homes. There were the ceremonial laws concerning sacrifices, priesthood, ritual purity, feast days, and dietary regulations. These prepared God's people for the coming of the Messiah, who would fulfill every one of those ceremonies as the true Lamb of God. Above all stood the moral law, summarized in the Ten Commandments. Unlike the other laws, these commandments were written by the finger of God upon tablets of stone so they could have them in written form. Two copies were placed within the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, signifying both God's covenant with his people and his enduring claim upon them. No other nation in the universe had this privilege or information.
- Jesus himself affirmed that this moral law remains permanent and universal. It binds every person at all times, not merely in outward conduct but in the deepest motives of the heart. It governs the mind, the will, the affections, and every faculty of our being. Wherever the law commands a duty, it also forbids the opposite sin; wherever it forbids a sin, it requires the corresponding virtue. God's law reaches beyond external actions to the very thoughts and desires of the soul.
- The moral law continues to serve God's people today in three important ways. First, it acts as a mirror. It reflects the perfect holiness of God while exposing the sinfulness of our own hearts. It shows us our guilt, reveals our desperate need for a Savior, warns us of coming judgment, and drives us to repentance and faith in Christ. Second, it serves to restrain evil in society. Though the law cannot regenerate the heart or give spiritual life, it enlightens the conscience, warns of judgment, and often restrains men from open wickedness. In this way, it promotes justice and preserves order in the world. Third, for those who have been born again and who love the Lord Jesus Christ, the law becomes the rule of grateful obedience. It teaches believers how they are to live in a manner pleasing to God. This is precisely what we find in passages such as Romans 12 and Ephesians 5 and 6, where the moral law is applied to every area of Christian living. The world may not know how to live for God, but his redeemed people do,

because he has graciously revealed his will to them. What an immeasurable blessing it is to possess the Word of God.

➤ CONCLUSION

- We have considered 4 out of the 7 privileges the Jews had and yet rejected Christ. They had the privilege of adoption to sonship by God. They saw the divine glory, including miracles that no other nations had seen before Christ. God established covenants with them to be their God and them being His people. Out of all the nations of the world, only the Jews were given the law that contains the information of God's standard for living. All these privileges did not automatically make the Jews committed believers; they didn't guarantee the salvation of the Jews, and they remained in their unbelief by rejecting their savior when He came to them. For 2000 years before the coming of Jesus Christ to the earth, the Jews looked forward to His coming, they talked about Him, read about Him from their written books, taught their children about Him and the salvation He would bring, but the majority of them rejected Him when He finally arrived. It's been 2000 years since Christ, and still, the majority of the Jews are outside of Christ.
- What do we learn from this tragic experience of the Jews? How can they reject Christ with all these privileges? One of the lessons is that we may have knowledge of Christ and not be saved. We might talk of Him all day, all week, and throughout our lives, and not be saved. We might preach about Him and not be saved. Like Simon the sorcerer, we can be baptized in His name and be a committed member of the church without being saved.
- Like the Jews, Christians have all the privileges in this world and even more. It is, therefore, a tragic thing to be outwardly associated with the Christians and yet never truly believe in Christ. It is a tragic thing to have all these advantages of being raised in a Christian home, attending Christian schools, attending church, but never believing in Jesus Christ. How painful it would be to hear these words on the Day of Judgment: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew (loved) you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" Matthew 7:21-23.
- What do we see in our own city and around us? Great churches have turned away from the Christ in the Scripture and have embraced a different Christ. Reformed churches have embraced the prosperity gospel, have adopted Pentecostal and Charismatic doctrines, and still call themselves the children of the Reformers. The children of Martin Luther, John Calvin, Charles Spurgeon, John Wesley, and John Knox, among others, have turned away from the Scriptures. They have embraced weak, soft, man-centered, sin-affirming, ear-

tickling, flesh-pleasing, self-help theology. Some no longer believe in the Creator but have embraced a human philosophy called evolution.

- To these people, the Bible is just a human book like all other books and not the words of God. They are ready to merge with false religions. They have more faith in men than they have in God Almighty. They believe in self-help rather than calling on the name of Jesus Christ. By their actions, they have rejected the Christ revealed in the Scripture. This should break our hearts that the children who came out of the Protestant Reformation have turned their backs on Jesus Christ. They know nothing about the Gospel, nor do they desire to know the true Gospel. They have settled for junk spiritual food from false preachers, and yet they call themselves the heirs of the Reformation.
- Is it not interesting that so many members of Reformed denominations are not very different from the Jews? The Jews were quick to tell others that they are children of Abraham to imply that their salvation was guaranteed, and I cannot count the number of times people in our city have proudly told me about their Reformed heritage because they have the Catechisms, Creeds, and the Confessions of Faith to imply that their salvation is guaranteed. How does being raised in and being a member of a reformed church save you? How does the memorization of the Heidelberg Catechism save you? How does a mere Profession of Faith save you?
- In Matthew 3:9, John the Baptist addresses the Pharisees and Sadducees, warning them against complacency in their identity as descendants of Abraham. He emphasizes that their lineage does not guarantee their standing with God. Instead, he states that God can raise up children of Abraham from stones, indicating that true belonging comes from repentance from sin and faith, not merely from ancestry.
- If you were raised in a reformed church, know the catechisms, have godly parents, and all these privileges, you have to thank God for them. Most importantly, you must know that these privileges are meant to lead you to Christ through repentance from your sin and believing in Christ and His finished work for sinners like you. We learn from the Jews that spiritual heritage and privileges alone are insufficient for salvation. Have you repented of your sins and believed in Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal Savior? This is what saves, not the many privileges you have. Amen.