

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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## Preservation of the Seed

by Dan Trygg

“What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? <sup>23</sup> In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, <sup>24</sup> us, whom He also invited, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. <sup>25</sup> As He says also in Hosea, ‘I will call those who were not My people, “My people,” And her who was not beloved, “beloved.”’ <sup>26</sup> And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, “‘you are not My people,’” There they shall be called sons of the living God.’ <sup>27</sup> And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, ‘Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; <sup>28</sup> for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly.’ <sup>29</sup> And just as Isaiah foretold, ‘Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a seed, we would have ever become as Sodom, and would have ever been like Gomorrah.’ <sup>30</sup> What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; <sup>31</sup> but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. <sup>32</sup> Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as out from works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone...” Romans 9:22-32

Last time, we were talking about how **the thrust of this passage** is not about God unconditionally choosing some to go to heaven, and others to go to hell, ...instead, it is about God’s faithful dealings with Israel throughout the centuries. It was God’s purpose to choose specific lines of descent from the lineage of Abraham to bring the Messiah, ...**the promised seed** of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David (Gen. 22:17,18; 26:3; 28:14; 2 Sam. 7:12)..., into the world in order to bless *all* nations. God was *faithful* to His promise to these people. He faithfully carried out His gracious purposes and prophetic promises *in spite of* the unfaithfulness of many people in these family lines. God was not *unfair* to anyone, because what He did had nothing to do with their behavior, their choices, or any perceived or claimed special status on their part. God clearly said that it was solely about His deciding to bring about His purpose, and He was the One who got to choose which avenue, which line of descent, to work through.

Through His choices, His dealings with people, He revealed who *He* was, ...that He was a faithful, covenant-keeping God, a God who was greater than all the so-called gods of Egypt, a God who could influence and overpower powerful men, and could work out His will in human history. **Did He treat them unfairly? No. NONE deserved His grace. NONE deserved His blessing. ALL deserved to be judged. ALL deserved the consequences of their choices.** God told Pharaoh very clearly: “Though by this time I could have put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth” (Ex. 9:15,16). **It would have been just for God to take Pharaoh’s life, ...for his arrogance, His disobedience to God, and his abuse of people..., but in His mercy, God permitted him to live. He put up with his arrogance, for a greater purpose, ...namely, to reveal more of Himself.** He clearly demonstrated His power, not only to the Jews, but also to the Egyptians, and even to Pharaoh, himself.

Isn’t that where we ended up last time, talking about Romans 9:22-24? Paul presents it as a hypothetical question. “What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath fitted for destruction?” Why? “In order that He might make known the riches of His grace upon vessels of mercy, whom He has prepared beforehand for glory, ...us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.” **Yet, you can’t miss Paul’s argument! He is saying that God has put up with the corruption and disobedience of a great portion of the Jewish nation, in order to bring the Messiah Jesus into the world, so that through Him God could offer grace to others, ...to people from both a Jewish and a non-Jewish background.**

Paul continues on with his argument, loosely referring to Hosea. **There is not any specific verse in that book that precisely corresponds to Paul’s citation.** He is, rather, combining thoughts from 2:23 and 1:10 in a creative way to make his point. Believe me, he was *not* being sloppy. He was being very intentional. We have no known Hebrew text, or even the Greek Septuagint translation, that uses language that directly supports what Paul seems to cite. **If you look a little more closely at the language, he is not even claiming to directly quote Hosea. He uses a word of comparison to introduce his thought, “as” or “like”.** He is *not* saying, “This is what Hosea said...” He carefully and skillfully wrote, “As (or Like) also in Hosea it says, ‘I will call the (one) not My people, My people’ (Hos. 2:23), and the (one) not having-been-*agapē*-loved, having-been-*agapē*-loved.” **This last phrase does not occur in Hosea, at all.** Hosea used an entirely different word, a word that typically means, “mercy, compassion”, and translated by a different Greek word than Paul uses here. The range of meaning of the Hebrew word *can* extend to

include feelings of warmth and affection, but it is more referring to feelings of compassion, mercy and pity. So, technically, **Paul is not totally misrepresenting the original language, but he is stretching the picture in order to specifically use the Greek word, “agapaō” here. Why? Because he wants to tie the language back to verse 13, “Jacob I loved”. Why? Because he wants to reinforce the point that even the nation of Israel, ...who was apostate in Hosea’s time (740 BC), and was called “not My people” was reinstated into God’s favor, and once again called “My people”. Israel was the one in the original context of Hosea that was “not-having-been-loved” and was later called “having-been-loved” because of God’s amazing grace and faithfulness. BUT, could not God do the same with the Gentiles?** If He had grace on Israel when it became apostate and was rejected, so that it was no longer “My people”, and He reinstated *them* as His own, **could God not also call other “rejected peoples” to become “His people”?** Again, if Gentiles were called “you are not My people”, could not God cause *them* to be called “sons of the living God”? This latter citation is from Hosea 1:10. **Clearly Paul was making allusions to ideas, not quoting an actual passage from that book.** Again, like the previous reference, in the original context, it was Israel that had been rejected and called “not My people”. But **Paul is making a comparative application (“as”) to the Gentiles.** If God had brought *apostate Israel* from captivity, and reinstated *them* not only in the land of promise, but also had once again made them “My people”, could He not do something as amazing and incomprehensible for the Gentiles?

**Israel really had not deserved to be reinstated.** Paul refers to Isaiah 10:22. A fuller quotation would be: “For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, only a remnant within them will return; *a destruction is determined*, overflowing with righteousness.” **What Paul is saying is that the rejection of God’s covenant had happened with Israel before in history.** They had not responded to God before, and it cost them not only their land, but nearly all their people. **Only a small remnant survived the judgment determined by God at the time of Isaiah.** It did not matter how populous their people had come to be, by the time the dust settled, there was only a very small percentage who survived the destruction they had brought upon themselves by their sin and their resistance to God. As it says in another passage of Isaiah (1:9), “Unless the Lord of Hosts had left us a posterity, we would have become like Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah.” **The Greek Septuagint translation literally reads, “If the Lord of Hosts had not left to us a seed, we would have ever become like Sodom...”** Sodom and Gomorrah were the proverbial picture of sudden and complete destruction. Isaiah said that **it was only God’s grace, ...God working out His plan to preserve a seed, a promised lineage from Israel..., that kept the nation from complete destruction.** It was only God’s sovereign purpose to bring the Messianic seed through the descendants of Israel that had kept the nation from total obliteration, as had happened to other people groups in history. **The preservation of the promised seed was the basis for the preservation of the entire nation.** The Messiah had saved the lives of many thousands, *even before He was born!*

**Paul’s conclusion: “What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith” (Rom. 9:30).** *IF* it is amazing that the people of Israel had survived centuries of waywardness, disobedience, rebellion and unbelief toward God, ...and were rejected, cut off, and brought under judgment for those sins and unbelief, ...and could be reinstated once again, brought from faraway lands where they were exiled, ...restored to the land of their fathers, the land of promise, because of the grace and faithfulness of God, ... **SHOULD WE BE SURPRISED to find out that the seed which He had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would indeed become a blessing to people of all nations, as He Himself had said. Which is the more amazing story? The fulfillment of the promise? The preservation of the promised seed through the centuries? God’s determination to work out His plan, and to faithfully carry it out over generations?** The grace and faithfulness of God which has suffered long and patiently endured stubborn, stiff-necked, sinful, self-willed people in order to bring His long-term plan of blessing and salvation *to thousands*, ...to the people of promise, the physical descendants of Abraham, ...and to the OTHER people of promise, the people from *other* national backgrounds who will believe on Jesus Christ, and experience the blessing He came to provide? **Truly, God was willing to demonstrate His wrath, and to make His power known** (and He *did*, on many occasions, throughout biblical history), **yet He endured with much patience vessels of wrath, having-fitted-themselves for destruction. He did this in order to make known the riches of His grace upon vessels of mercy**, people whom He had in mind from ancient times, people whom He prepared beforehand, people who would *hear* the story of God’s grace and faithful love and would *believe*. **This amazing God has called US, ...you and me, and people from every tribe, tongue, people and nation** (Rev. 5:9,10)...., **to believe and to become His chosen (His choice and select) people.** Peter wrote, “But you are a chosen (choice, select) race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup> **for once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy**” (1 Peter 1:9,10).