
CGYG and LIFE Fellowship Bible Study December 2014
Romans 9:1-13

Romans 9-11 deals with the question, “What about Israel and her redemption?” What happens to them? Far more Gentiles are becoming believers than Jews. Has God walked away from all those promises He made to his people in the Old Testament? In the words of Paul (v. 6) has the Word of God failed? Can God’s promises to me be trusted if his promises to Israel did not seem to hold? While chapters 1-8 has been about the righteousness that has been provided for us by faith, chapters 9-11 answer the question, “Is God righteous in the way he is dealing with the Jews? In these three chapters, the righteousness of God is asserted and defended.

The extent of Paul’s Burning Passion for his kinsmen

(Verses 1-2) Why is Paul so emphatic in expressing his passionate conviction? How would you apply this conviction of Paul’s to your own life?

- *Note that Paul in ch 8:35 has just asked the rhetorical question, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” The expected answer of course is “No one, nothing!” He has just taught us that we are secure in Christ. Well then, what about the Jews?*
- *Now he asks for the impossible; that he could be separated from that love for the sake of his kinsmen.*
- *Paul has a reputation of going against Jewish conventions and traditions*
- *Paul refers to certain Jews as ‘dogs’ and ‘mutilators of the flesh’.*
- *Paul caused trouble in synagogues wherever he went, and taught that we have freedom from the law*
- *As a matter of interest, we know of one other person who prayed a similar sentiment – Exo 32:30-32*

The clear inference of v.1-2 is that the majority of Paul’s countrymen are under this anathema; i.e. they are not saved. Why (see Rom 10:3)? What must they do to be saved (10:9-12)?

- *They are not saved because although they have a zeal for God, it is not according to knowledge. This is a good argument against those who claim that sincerity is what God is looking for. However, this is not an argument against Zeal. It is an argument against zeal that is deficient of knowledge! Zeal WITH knowledge is good.*
- *Review how a person can get saved based on 10:9-12*

The Privileges that belong to Israel

(Verses 3-5) Notice the present tense of the verb. What difference can this make if the verbs had not been written in the present tense? Read Rom 11:25-27 and discuss, is there a future for Israel? (Please see footnote)ⁱ

The tense of the verbs may indicate that these privileges have not been rescinded. God still regards Israel as his people and is not finished with them. Certainly when coupled with Rom 11:25-27, we can safely conclude that God is not finished with Israel yet. It should be pointed out that the question, “Who is the true Israelite” has been opened in Romans 2:28-29.

Consider each item in the list of privileges that belong to Israel. Some of them are linked to Old Testament passages. Depending on how much time you have, discuss how each of these items were a privilege or blessing.

Adoption- Exo 4:22-23, Hos 11:1

Glory –Exo 24:16, Exo 40:34.

- *Glory is used in the OT to describe God's "visible presence among his people"*

Covenants Which covenants were particularly made with the nation of Israel?

- *No specific covenant is mentioned, thus this is to be taken as a general category. The word covenants and promises share a lot of overlap.*

The Law - how can the law be regarded as a privilege when we have learned that by the knowledge of the law is the knowledge of sin, and that the law arouses sinful passion?

- *The law reflects the holy moral character and purpose of God. It sets a universal standard.*

The Worship

- *to the Jew this involves the liturgy and rituals surrounding their feasts, their sacrifices, the priestly work in the temple, all of the temple activities*

The Promises – What did the original audience think when hearing this? What promises are theirs?

- *this no doubt include the promises made to the Patriarchs. I*

“To them belong the patriarchs (fathers)” How is being a descendant of these patriarchs a particular blessing? See also Matt 3:9, and relate this verse to the bigger picture. How do you resolve the tension?

- *Through the patriarchs come the major promises of a land, a people and a kingdom*

(Verse 5) Why does Paul use the phrase “according to the flesh”? For the answer, see v.5b.

- *Paul is making sure that his readers realize that Christ's descent was not JUST human, but divine. This is one of the clearest statements asserting the divinity of Christ.*

God's Purposes Remain 9:6-13

The verses in Rom 9:1-5 state the problem – What God seems to have promised is in fact not happening i.e. the salvation of Israel. In fact they seem to be going in the opposite direction. Has God's word failed? And is our own calling as the church thus in jeopardy?

(Verse 6) In this context why would anyone say that the Word of God has failed?

- *Obviously Jews are not being saved; Jesus is not yet returning to rule in the promised kingdom. Something must be wrong.*

(Verse 7-13) Two examples Isaac vs Ishmael and Jacob vs Esau

Verses 7: See Gen 21:12. If Isaac was chosen before he was born, what does this say about the basis of God's election? In verse 8 Paul makes a distinction between children of the flesh and children of promise. What is that distinction? Where does this distinction come from? Read Gal 4:23, 28

Verse 13

We have strong language in this passage, indicating that God loved Jacob and hated Esau. How are we to understand this? (This is a quote from Mal 1:2-3)

- *In Malachi, The Lord is referring to nations, not individuals*
- *In Semitic languages, apparently to reject is synonymous with hate, or to prefer one over another is to hate*
- *Note Jesus expression in Luke 14:26. Clearly Jesus here means to prioritize one over another*

What have we learned so far?

1. Do we have a heart of compassion for our countrymen like Paul did for his?
2. No, the Word of God has not failed. The final chapter on Israel is not yet written.
3. The blessings of Israel lie in her many divinely given privileges
4. God has a specific purpose, and it is his purposes that determine the choices He makes (election)
5. Election is a difficult but a very biblical doctrine.

ⁱThe Privileges that belong to Israel)

There are differing views to the meaning. Two views about this passage are:

1. Paul is speaking about the Israelites according to the flesh and speaking of what they had in the Old Testament. This view, then, understands this text to speak to the ethnic Israel and would understand “are Israelites” (Rom 9:4) as a reference to Israel still having adoption, glory, covenants, etc. This view, then, is the literal view.
2. Paul is answering the larger question of what happens to Israel, but he re-defines what he means by Israel, both in Romans 2:28–29 and Philippians 3:2, and, thus show how everything promised to the nation of Israel is fulfilled in Christ because He is the perfect Israelite and, thus, to those who are in Christ. This view is the typological view.