

ISRAEL AND ROMANS 9

In Romans 9:1-5, Paul expresses his great sorrow over the current state of Israel. They have been a uniquely privileged people and yet, because of national disobedience, they have not yet entered into the good of it.

Romans 9:6–7 (NKJV)

6 But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,

7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.”

Paul’s point here is that God’s promises to Israel have not failed. We need to understand that while Israel is the elect nation, not all Jews are part of the “remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 11:5). Only those individuals in the nation that have true faith can claim the covenant blessings. It is not enough to just be a physical Jew; the “true Israel of God” (cf. Gal. 6:16) is that remnant of Jews who have a spiritual relationship with God on the basis of a saving faith (cf. Jn. 8:33-44, Rom. 2:28-29, 11:5-6, Phil. 3:3).

It is not enough to merely be a physical descendant of Abraham. One must also share in Abraham’s faith (cf. Rom. 4:16). Paul, in chapter 9, uses 3 illustrations to make the point of ELECTION. Election means “**to choose**”, and the choice here is made by God.

1. **Isaac** v. Ishmael (cf. 9:7)
2. **Jacob** v. Esau (cf. 9:8-13)
3. **Moses** v. Pharaoh (cf. 9:15-18)

Election is God’s PREROGATIVE.

Romans 9:11 (NKJV)

11 (for the children [Jacob and Esau] not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),

The emphasis here is on God’s choice in accordance with His purpose. This is the God-side of things that is past finding out. The emphasis here is that God’s choice was not dependent upon any external factors or circumstances. Somehow, in a way that is beyond our comprehension, election and faith intersect (cf. Rom. 4:13). However, the emphasis here is on God’s sovereign choice.

Romans 9:15–16 (NKJV)

15 For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.”

16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

Paul doesn't present rational arguments or resort to human philosophy to try to explain God's ELECTION. He simply presents Scripture (cf. Ex. 33:19). God alone gives the definitive answer on His character and His ways. And in conclusion, Paul will tell us in Rom. 11:33 that God's ways are past finding out.

In verse 15, the divine prerogative **“I will”** is expressed 4 times. God is never under obligation to extend mercy. It's completely at His discretion.

He is God and He will do as He wishes. No one can **“will”** the mercy of God or act independently to make it theirs. It is extended only according to God's prerogative.

The bulk of Romans 9 is making the point that God has sovereignly CHOSEN Israel. They are the chosen nation and nothing can change that fact. God has determined it within Himself and therefore, it will stand. God is God and He can do as He pleases. He brings to pass that which He purposes (cf. Isa. 46:11, 48:3).

In Romans 9:25-29, Paul quotes from Hosea and Isaiah to show that Israel's present alienation and Gentile inclusion is consistent with OT revelation. This was all in keeping with God's sovereign plan which was foretold. Through it all, God always has a REMNANT in Israel. So, what has happened does not nullify God's Word, but rather affirms it (cf. 9:6, 30-31, 10:1, 11:1).

Israel's UNBELIEF does not nullify God's Word on election. Rather, election has always involved the concept of a REMNANT. Furthermore, restoration of national Israel is yet future, which will bring to completion the fullness of God's promises (cf. 11:12).

Romans 9:30–32 (NKJV)

30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of **faith**;

31 but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

The Gentiles were essentially indifferent to the things of God, but when they heard the gospel they responded to it in faith. The KEY is “***the righteousness of faith***” which is centered in Christ. The way we acquire the righteousness of God is on the basis of FAITH ALONE.

v. 30 Gentiles...righteousness of faith

v. 31 Israel...law of righteousness

God’s way of being right with Him is on the basis of faith alone (cf. Rom. 1:16-17, ch. 4, Phil. 3:9, Heb. 11:6), not on the basis of law-keeping. This is what the Jews failed to understand.

Romans 9 Summarized:

God always has a remnant (cf. 9:6-7).

The remnant is based on God’s election – not on human works (cf. 9:11).

Mercy is extended on the basis of Divine Prerogative (cf. 9:15).

People are wrong to challenge God’s Prerogative (cf. 9:20).

God’s righteousness is acquired by faith alone (9:30).