



# A Study of Romans

## Month 9: Romans Chapter 9 God's Faithfulness to Israel



### Overview

1. Romans chapter 9 starts Paul's focus on the place of Israel in God's plan. He continues his theological theme of divine adoption from Chapter 8 and applies its principles directly to Israel. Paul emphasizes the correct understanding of divine adoption (or "sonship") as not by ethnicity or physical descent, but by one's election, promise, and faith to the Spirit. Only the chosen portion of Israelites that accept the gospel are called forth into that the divine promise to become "children of the living God". To make his point and carry the weight of his argument between himself and a hypothetical adversary, Paul spends much of his writing quoting the Old Testament. Nearly 40% of Chapter 9 is composed of Old Testament quotations. Paul uses Jacob and Esau to make his point that God's promise to Israel could never exclusively be tied to biological lineage. He writes "it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring". Paul affirms that the promises given to Abraham and his descendants are still available through Jesus Christ, not only because He is a descendent in the physical sense, but also because He is the true Son of the Covenant (*Bar Mitzvah*).

## **1. God's Gift to Israel (9:1-5)**

- 1 *I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—***
- 2 *I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.***
- 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.***

### Key Points:

- Paul is deeply grieved by the unbelief of his own race.
- Paul desires to imitate Christ by suffering in order to become a blessing to others.
- Israel received adoption to sonship by God through the divine covenants made with the Jewish patriarchs.

### Questions:

1. What is meant by Paul's wish to be "*cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people*"?
2. What is the point Paul makes by writing "*...the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all...*"?

## **2. God's Purposes in History (9:6-13)**

- 6 *It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.***
- 7 *Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."***
- 8 *In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.***
- 9 *For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."***
- 10 *Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac.***

**11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand:**

**12 not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.”**

**13 Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”**

Key Points:

- Divine sonship rests on God’s calling and promises.
- God’s children are those who are of the promise, not the physical descendants of Abraham.
- Paul cites Malachi 1:1-3 to explain God’s love of Israel and his condemnation of Edom.

Questions:

1. What is meant by “*For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel*”?
2. How does God’s message to Rebekah about “the older will serve the younger” affirm God’s purpose in election?
3. How are Jacob and Esau used by Paul to make his point that God’s promise to Israel could never exclusively be tied to biological lineage?

### **3. The Freedom to Show Mercy (9:14-18)**

**14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all!**

**15 For he says to Moses,  
“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,  
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”**

**16 It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.**

**17 For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”**

**18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.**

Key Points:

- Paul reiterates that God’s elections are just.
- God’s choosing is not based on human merit, but on God’s mercy.
- Paul quotes Exodus 10:1 as an example of God’s use of Pharaoh to reveal His power.

### Questions:

1. What are your thoughts about God's mercy not being dependent *on human desire or effort...?*
2. What does Paul mean by *God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden?*

#### **4. The Potter and the Clay (9:19-29)**

- 19 ***One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?"***
- 20 ***But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"***
- 21 ***Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?***
- 22 ***What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction?***
- 23 ***What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory—***
- 24 ***even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?***
- 25 ***As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one,"***
- 26 ***and, "In the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'"***
- 27 ***Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved.***
- 28 ***For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality."***
- 29 ***It is just as Isaiah said previously:***
- "Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah."***

### Key Points:

- Paul uses the analogy of humans as clay being formed by God the potter.
- It is certain that no one can resist God's will.
- Whether Jew or Gentile: those with faith will be saved, those without faith will not.

Questions:

1. How does the issue of man's free will play into Paul's question about who is able to resist God's will?
2. What is Paul referring to by quoting God telling Hosea that those who "are not my people" will be called "children of the living God"?

**5. A Stone in Zion (9:30-33)**

**30 *What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith;***

**31 *but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal.***

**32 *Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone.***

**33 *As it is written:***

***"See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble  
and a rock that makes them fall,  
and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame."***

Key Points:

- Righteousness of Gentiles is acquired with much less trouble than righteousness obtained by Jews.
- Jews pursued the Law to attain righteousness, which it was impossible to do.
- Paul cites Isaiah, Psalms, and Peter about laying a stone in Zion

Questions:

1. Why does God receive Gentiles and reject Jews who "pursue the law"?
2. What is Paul referencing when he writes "they stumbled over the stumbling stone"?

----- **END OF LESSON** -----

NEXT MONTH – read Romans 10: 1- 21 (Israel's Response to the Gospel)

Covering: Christ the End of the Law; The Righteousness of Faith; Israel's Unbelief as Disobedience