

Romans 9-11 - An Expository Study

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Having rejected Messiah Jesus at His first coming, Paul answers the question, *What about Israel? Has God's Word failed?* Paul shows that God's promises to Israel still stand, even after her rejection of Messiah Jesus. God's sovereign promises to Israel in the Old Testament are as good as His promises to New Testament believers today.

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Romans 9:1-5 - Paul's Sorrow Concerning Israel

9:1-2 - Paul's Sorrow

- **Topics Many Christians are Uncomfortable With**

These three chapters (Romans 9-11) are foundational to an understanding of the role of Israel in the plan of God after having rejected her Messiah. Paul emphasizes two key doctrines which many find unsettling:

1. the sovereignty of God,
2. the uniqueness of the nation of Israel in God's plan.

- **A dramatic shift in Paul's presentation.**

The chapter break is evident in the transition which occurs from the lofty heights of [Romans 8:35-39](#) and the dark valley of Paul's anguish over Israel. This transition serves as an *exclamation mark* to us as readers: **take note!** *What follows is very important teaching close to Paul's heart and also that of the Holy Spirit!*

9:3 - Accursed from Christ

- **Accursed from Christ for his brethren**

"Accursed" is *ana'thema* : to be slain, doomed to destruction, without hope of redemption. (This is the term applied by the Roman Catholic church to those who are placed outside of the salvation of the church--they are considered lost.) If it were possible, Paul would trade his own salvation in order to see Israel accept Messiah Jesus. Paul may have had the similar offer by Moses in mind

([Ex. 32:32](#)) .

- **"according to the flesh"**

Paul is sorrowful over his "countrymen" (*sungenw'n = together/with + kind/race = relatives*) **according to the flesh** . Paul is being especially careful that the reader understands that he is speaking of the *nation* of Israel, *Jews*, and not some "New Israel" or "Spiritual Israel" as some teach in error.

- **National Israel**

The meaning which Paul attaches to Israel here and *throughout the New Testament* is that of the physical offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Paul knows nothing of the idea that "the church replaces Israel."

9:4 - Adoption

- **"the adoption"**

"Adoption" is *huiiothesi'a*. *Huios* = "son," *thesi'a* is from *tithemi* = "to place as." Israel has "sonship" under God.

- **Israel's Adoption**

In Egypt, Israel was adopted by God ([Ex. 4:22](#)) . She was called out of Egypt at her adoption ([Hos. 11:1](#)) The nation became God's special treasure ([Deu. 14:2](#)) .

- **Believers are Adopted**

The security of a believer as God's adopted son ([Rom. 8:15](#) , [23](#) ; [Gal. 4:5](#) ; [Eph. 1:5](#)) extends also to the *national* adoption of Israel. If God can "unadopt" Israel, then he can "unadopt" New Testament believers and our salvation is insecure! The security of adoption is based upon:

1. promises God has made (to believers and to Israel),
2. the character of God,
3. God is the One doing the work.

9:4 - Glory

- **"the glory"**

This refers to the visible manifestation of God's localized presence, often called His *shekinah* (dwelling) glory. His glory descended upon Mt. Sinai at the giving of the Law ([Ex. 24:16](#)) . His glory filled the tabernacle of Moses ([Ex. 40:34-38](#)) and Solomon's Temple ([1K. 8:11](#)) . His glory will illuminate the New Jerusalem ([Rev. 21:11](#) cf. [Rev. 22:5](#)).

9:4 - Covenants

- **"the covenants"**

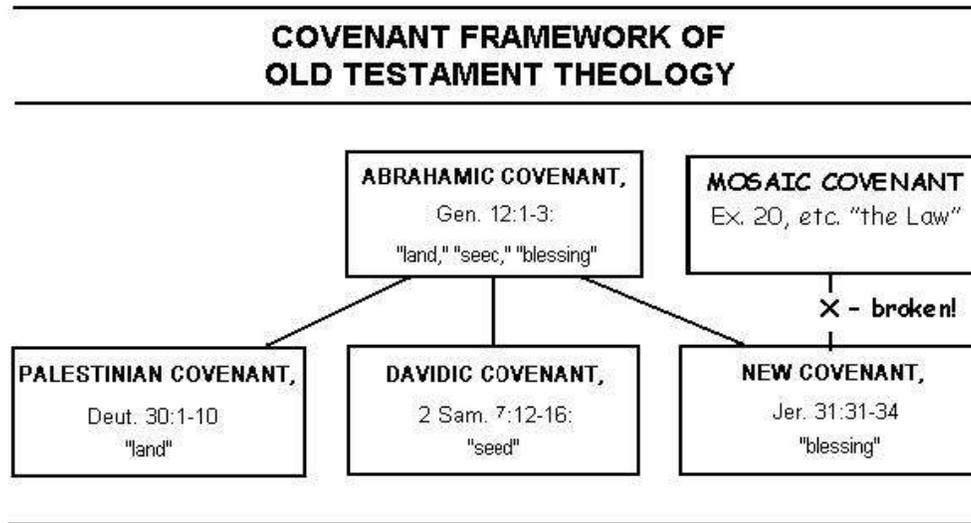
Various covenants (plural) were made between God and the nation Israel:

1. Abrahamic Covenant - between God and Abraham ([Gen. 12:1-3](#) ; [15:18](#) ; [17:2-10](#)),

2. **Mosaic Covenant** - between God and Israel as a nation, ([Ex. 24:7-8](#) ; [34:27](#)),
3. **Land Covenant** - permanent possession of the Promised Land ([Deu. 29-30](#)) ,
4. **Davidic Covenant** - between God and David ([2S. 7:12-16](#) ; [Jer. 33:20-25](#) ; [Ps. 89:3](#) , [34](#)),
5. **New Covenant** - Initially made with Israel, believers participate through Jesus ([Jer. 31:33](#) ; [Mtt. 26:28](#) ; [Heb. 8:6](#)).

- **Jewish Covenants**

These covenants are with *Israel* --even the New Covenant. Apart from the work of Christ, Gentiles would forever remain strangers from these formal promises made with Israel ([Eph. 2:12](#)) . [[VIEW DIAGRAM OVER INTERNET](#)]



Source: Paul Enns, [Moody Handbook of Theology](#), p. 35 (Mosaic Covenant added by instructor.)

9:4 - Giving of the Law

- **"the giving of the law"**

This refers to the Law of Moses given on Mt. Sinai, which includes the Ten Commandments ([Ex. 20](#) ; [Ne. 9:13-14](#) cf. [John 1:17](#)) . Paul spoke of this earlier when he discussed the advantage of the Jew: " Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles (*lo'gia*, utterances) of God. " The Gentiles were without the law ([Rom. 2:14](#)) .

9:4 - Service of God

- **"the service of God"**

"Service" is *latrei'a* : religious service based in worship. The service of God took place in "God's House" -- the Temple. The service of God in the Temple would be meaningless if it were not for the fact that the glory of God (His localized presence) resided there.

9:4 - Promises

- **"the promises"**

Paul has already mentioned the *covenants*. Now he speaks of additional promises which are not explicitly included in the formal covenants.

- **The Coming Messiah**

Intertwined with the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants, many additional promises concern the *coming of the Messiah* (e.g., [Deu. 18:15](#) ; [Isa. 9:6-7](#) ; [42:1-7](#)). Many additional promises relate to the coming kingdom on earth, the *Millennial Kingdom*. These promises concern topics such as:

1. the Messianic reign from Jerusalem ([Isa. 2:1-4](#) ; [Mic. 4:1-8](#)),
 2. the gathering of Israel to *permanently* possess the Promised Land ([Amos 9:8-15](#) cf. [Isa. 11-12](#) ; [Eze. 37:21-25](#)),
 3. the restoration of Jerusalem, a time of great blessing ([Isa. 65:19-25](#) cf. [Isa. 62](#) ; [Zec. 8:1-8](#)).
- **How do we become aware of these promises?**
We become aware of these promises made to Israel by:
 1. carefully reading the entire Old Testament,
 2. paying attention to Jewish expectations at Christ's first coming (e.g., [Acts 1:6](#)).

9:5 - The Fathers

- **"of whom *are* the fathers"**
This refers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through whom the Abrahamic covenant was passed down to the offspring of Jacob (who is the man "Israel" ([Gen. 32:28](#)) . By mentioning "fathers" (plural), Paul is excluding other descendants of Abraham who are not the recipients of the promises to Abraham, for example:
 1. Isaac's brother Ishmael - from whom the Arabs and Muhammed claim descent,
 2. Jacob's brother Esau - from whom the Edomites and Idumaeans, including Herod the Great, descended.

9:5 - From Whom Christ Came

- **"according to the flesh"**
Paul uses the same phrase he used when describing his countrymen ([Rom. 9:3](#)) . Paul describes the dual origin of Jesus, born of a virgin by the Holy Spirit. He is both *God* and *Man*. According to his human nature, He came in the the line of the Jews ([Mtt. 1:1-18](#) ; [Luke 3:23-38](#)). According to his divine nature, He is from eternity ([John 1:1-3](#)) .
- **the importance of His Jewish lineage**
If Jesus were not a Jew by birth:
 1. He would not qualify as the promised Messiah,
 2. believing Gentiles would remain strangers to Israel's covenants ([Eph. 2:12](#)) !

Our participation in salvation (the New Covenant) hinges upon the Jewishness of Jesus because the New Covenant was given to the Jews ([Jer. 31:31](#)) .

9:5 - Eternally Blessed God

- **"the eternally blessed God"**
There are three general ways the Greek of this phrase has been understood:
 1. "the blessed Christ is God."
 2. "Christ is blessed by God."
 3. "Christ is over all, God be blessed."
- **The original Greek**
Differences in translation are not due to differences among Greek texts, but due to differences in how the phrase is parsed.
- **Context favors Christ as the subject or object of blessing**
The context of Paul's lament concerning the special privileges of Israel reaches a climax in her production of Messiah. The focus is on *Christ* and especially Israel's failure to accept her own Messiah. It makes less sense for the last phrase to be taken as a doxology of the Father ("God be blessed").

Romans 9:6-13 - Children of Promise

9:6 - Israel Rejected Messiah

- **Promises and Failure**
Israel has all these privileges:
 1. the adoption,
 2. the glory,
 3. the covenants,
 4. the giving of the law,
 5. the service of God,
 6. the promises,
 7. the fathers,
 8. the Messiah.Yet she rejected her Messiah!

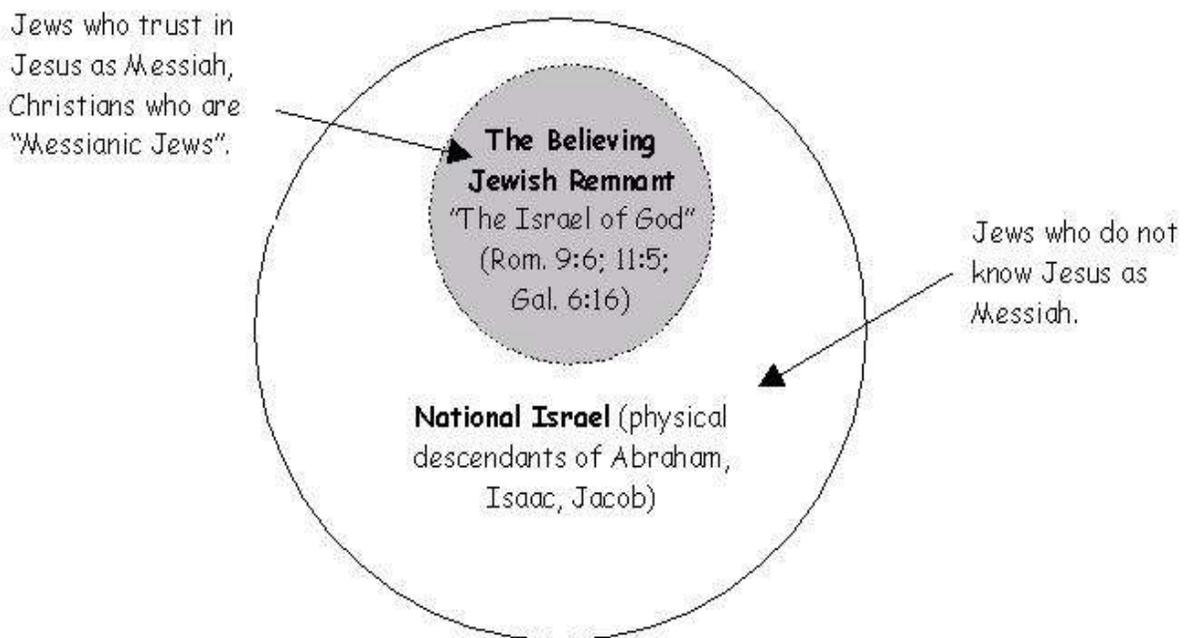
9:6 - God's Word Hasn't Failed

- **"it is not that the word of God"**
"It is not" is *Ouk hOIon de* = "but not such as" or "but not in a similar way." In other words, the Word of God has not stumbled in a similar way as Israel when she rejected her Messiah.

- **"has taken no effect"**
 "Has taken no effect" is *ekPEPtōken* : having fallen away ([Gal. 5:4](#)), to drift off-course and run aground ([Acts 27:17](#)).
- **The Question**
Can the church of Jesus Christ--God's people--rely upon God's Word when it failed the Jews?

9:6 - Not All Israel

- **"they are not all Israel who are of Israel"**
 A strict superset/subset relationship.
 1. **Superset:** those who are "of Israel " (Jacob's *physical* descendants).
 2. **Subset:** those who are "of Israel" , but who are "not Israel" (the faithful remnant *among* the Jews).
- **The Believing Remnant from among National Israel**
[\[VIEW DIAGRAM OVER INTERNET\]](#)



9:7 - Seed of Abraham

- **"nor are they all children"**
Why is God the God of "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" ([Ex. 3:6](#) ; [Mtt. 22:32](#)), but not the God of "Abraham, Ishmael, and Nebajoth" (Ishmael's firstborn, [Gen. 25:13](#))? Because the line of promise started at Abraham ([Gen. 12:3](#)), went to Isaac ([Gen. 17:19](#) ; [21:12](#)), and then to Jacob ([Gen. 28:13](#)).
- **"In Isaac your seed shall be called."**
Paul quotes [Genesis 21:12](#) where God promises to build a nation called by God through Isaac. (Ishmael will also father a nation, but not a *called* nation.) The calling of the *Jewish nation* is similar to the calling of the *individual believer* ([Rom. 8:30](#)), but differs in that it involves a *physical line of descent* which individual salvation does not.

9:8 - Flesh vs. Promise

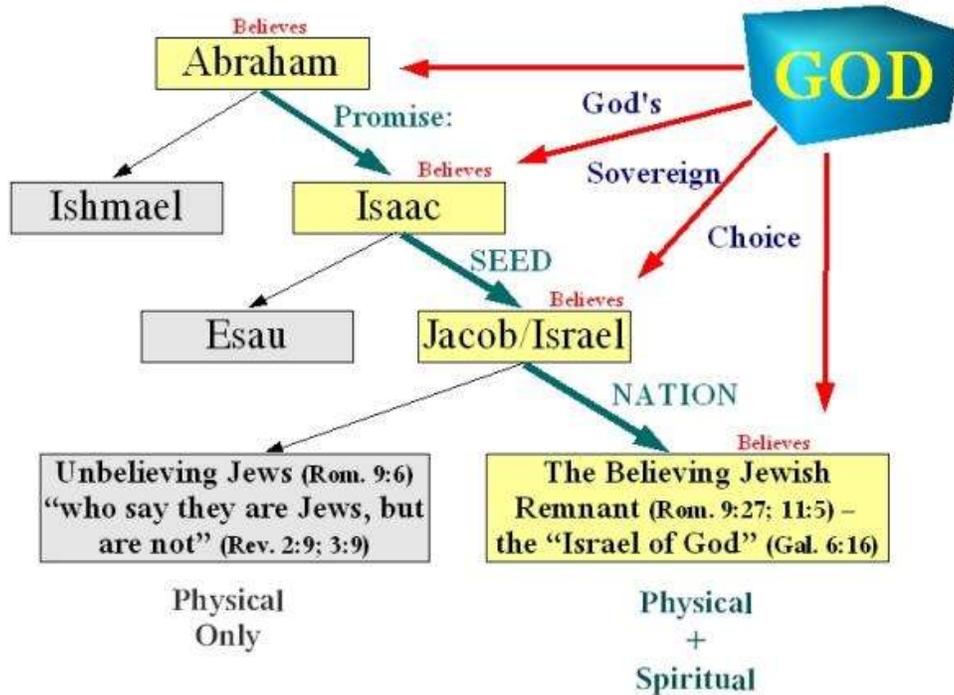
- **"children of the flesh"**
This refers to the physical descendants of Abraham who were not party to the promise, including the offspring of *Ishmael* and *Esau*.
- **"children of the promise"**
These are the physical descendants of Abraham in the line of promise through *Isaac* and *Jacob*.

9:8 - Children of God

- **Not a comparison between Spiritual and Physical**
Paul is making a comparison **between two physical lines** of descent to illustrate God's sovereignty. He then uses this analogy to illustrate a difference among individuals **within a physical line** (the Jews). The believing remnant are the "children of God," the others are the "not all Israel" ([Rom. 9:6](#)).
- **An Analogy**
The *physical line of promise* from the line of Abraham is analogous to the *spiritually faithful remnant* within the line from Israel.
- **"counted as the seed"**
"Counted" is *loGIZetai* : "to think according to logical rules," "to look on as."
[\[VIEW DIAGRAM OVER INTERNET\]](#)

Children of the Promise (Rom. 9:6-13)

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9:9 - Word of Promise

- **"Sarah shall have a son."**

Although Abraham longed for Ishmael to be recognized by God ([Gen. 17:18](#)), the promise--initiated by God--identifies Sarah's offspring, not the offspring of Hagar ([Gen. 18:10](#)).

9:10 - By One Man

- **"And not only this"**

The connective phrase indicates that Paul is giving another, more powerful example to illustrate his point.

- **"by one man"**

"Man" is not the typical *anthropos* or *andras* (man, husband), but *KOItēn* . This is *extremely significant*. Unlike Ishmael and Isaac who were of a single father, but *two mothers*, Esau and Jacob had the same mother *and father*. More than that, they were *twins* -- conceived in the same act of union ([Gen. 25:21-24](#)) .

9:11 - According to Election

- "the purpose of God according to election might stand"
"Purpose" is *PROthesis* : "setting forth," "putting out," "presentation."

"Election" is *ekloGEN* : "divine selection for a purpose or task."

"Stand" is *MEne* : "to abide, " "continue, " "remain."

That the visible divine purpose according to God's divine selection might continue.

- "not of works, but of Him who callers"
"Him who calls" is *tou kalOUNtos* from *kalEō* , which recalls the "glory train" which applies to every believer ([Rom. 8:30](#)) .
- Paul's Examples Compared

Attribute	Isaac and Ishmael	Jacob and Esau
Father	Abraham	Isaac
Mother	Sarah and Hagar	Rebecca
Sexual Union	Two events.	One event.
Election Declared	After Ishmael born.	Before birth.

9:12 - Older Serves Younger

- "the older shall serve the younger"
Not only is the blessing of Jacob over Esau determined *before birth*, but it also involves a *reversal* of the norm (normally the firstborn has precedence). This is true of both of Paul's examples-- further emphasizing the sovereignty of God.

9:13 - Jacob I Have Loved

- "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."
"Loved" is from *agaPAō* . "Hated" is from *misEō* .
- **Comparative Use: Favor vs. Disfavor.**
These two terms often appear together in a comparative way ([Deu. 21:15, LXX](#)) . Jesus said those who would follow Him must "hate" their father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and their own life ([Luke 14:26](#)) . Yet we are clearly to honor our mother and father ([Ex. 20:12](#)) and sacrificially love our wife ([Eph. 5:28-33](#)) . The election of Jacob over Esau occurred before their birth ([Gen. 25:23](#) ; [Rom. 9:12](#)) . The statement that God "hated" Esau refers to his offspring, the nation of Edom ([Mal. 1:1-4](#)) and occurs in response to their sinful actions. Here again, we see the juxtaposition of **divine sovereignty** and **human responsibility** .

- **Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility**

God is *fully sovereign* over history and man is *fully responsible* for his actions. Examples:

1. Judas' betrayal of Christ ([Mtt. 26:24](#)) .
2. Crucifixion of Jesus by men according to the purpose of God ([Acts 2:22-23](#) ; [Acts 4:27-28](#)) .

Application

1. **God is Sovereign** - We can do nothing of substance without His involvement ([John 15:5](#)) .
2. **The Word Cannot be Broken** - The Word of God is absolutely dependable. He knows the future. He cannot lie. It will come to pass! We can trust our lives to it.
3. **Elect within Israel** - Even now, as at all times, God is working with a believing remnant *within national Israel*. Although they are part of the body of Christ, the Church, His promises to the nation continue in them.

Romans 9:14-24 - The Potter and the Clay

9:14 - Is God Unrighteous?

- **"Is there unrighteousness with God?"**

Paul anticipates our line of thinking. God's right to choose *seems* unjust from our perspective. We elevate our own ideas of justice above God's electing purposes and divine sovereignty. This tendency of man to question his Maker is illustrated in Job ([Job 40:7-8](#)) .

- **"Certainly not!"**

The Greek phrase is *me GEnoito* , "not it should become!" The optative mood stands apart from the conditional clause to express the strongest possible wish regarding an event. Other examples of this usage include: [Rom. 3:4](#) ; [6:2](#) ; [11:1](#) ; [1Cor. 6:15](#) .

9:15-16 - Mercy on Whomever

- **"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy"**

The setting is God's revelation of His character to Moses ([Ex. 33:18](#)) . This statement is connected with God revealing His *glory* (honor, splendor, reputation) and his *mercy* (undeserved favor). His favor is extended according to His sovereignty and purpose.

- **"not of him who wills, nor of him who runs"**

His favor is not according to the will or decision of man, nor does it depend upon human exertion (works). Those who *do* exhibit works favorable to God only do so by His empowerment ([Php. 2:12](#)) , having already been the recipients of His choosing.

- **"but of God who shows mercy"**

His mercy is extended according to His sovereign purpose, to achieve His desired outcome ([John 1:11-13](#)) .

9:17 - For This Purpose

- **"I have raised you up"**
Pharaoh was only Pharaoh because God had placed him there for His purpose. It is God who appoints kings ([Pr. 21:1](#) ; [Isa. 44:28](#) ; [Dan. 4:32](#) ; [Rev. 17:17](#)).
- **"that I may show My power in you"**
"Might show" is *enDEIKnumi* : "to give outward proof, demonstrate." Power ([Gen. 9:16](#)) is *Kochiy* , "the working power of Me:" a visible manifestation of God's power through the life of Pharaoh.
- **"that my name may be declared in all the earth"**
God's sovereign favor and determination are not arbitrary. Nor does His choosing of individuals indicate they are inherently better than others. His actions are for His *own sake* -- to reveal His glory and character. What God is doing with Israel is *not about Israel*, but **about God!**

9:18 - Whom He Wills

- **"whom He wills He hardens"**
Having a sinful nature, we have a tendency to harden our own hearts ([Ps. 95:7-11](#)).
- **Pharaoh's Hardening**
 1. God predicts **He** will harden Pharaoh's heart ([Ex. 4:21](#) ; [7:3](#)).
 2. **Pharaoh** is said to harden his own heart ([Ex. 7:13](#) ; [8:15](#) , [19](#) , [32](#)).
 3. The **LORD** hardened Pharaoh's heart ([Ex. 9:12](#)).
 4. **Pharaoh** hardened his own heart ([Ex. 9:34](#)).
 5. The **LORD** hardens Pharaoh's heart ([Ex. 10:1](#) , [20](#) , [27](#) ; [11:10](#)).
- **Other passages where God hardens hearts.**
 1. Sihon, king of Heshbon ([2:30](#)).
 2. Cities of the promised land ([Jos. 11:19-20](#)).
 3. Men of Israel ([Isa. 63:17](#)).
- **Sovereignty and Judgment**
When numerous passages are taken into account, there is both a *sovereign aspect* where God initiates hardening and a *judicial aspect* where God responds by hardening (e.g., [Rom. 1:24-32](#) ; [Rom. 11:5-8](#)).

9:19 - Why Does He Find Fault?

- **"You will say to me then"**
Paul anticipates our tendency to: (1) judge God; (2) elevate our puny logic over God's wisdom; (3) require an answer from God for His actions (like Job). Here we meet again with the tension between *divine sovereignty* and *human responsibility* ("free will"). **The Bible teaches both** which we are unable to fully reconcile ([Mtt. 26:24](#) ; [Acts 2:22-24](#) ; [4:27-28](#)).
- **Sovereign vs. Judicial Hardening**

Take note! If God's hardening is *always* judicial (in response to man's initial rejection) then this verse is unnecessary for no accusation would be made. Furthermore, man's response would be determinative of history rather than God's predestined purpose.

- **A Dog and his Tail**

The bottom line will always be this: *Does the tail wag the dog or the dog wag its tail?* Wherever we minimize God's sovereignty and elevate man's "freedom," we will have the "tail wagging the dog" and the creature is indirectly determining the actions of the Creator. God is no longer sovereign.

9:20 - Who Are You To Reply?

- **"who are you to reply . . . ?"**

"To reply" is *antopoKRINomai*, *anta* = "against," + *apo* = "away from," + *krinō* = "to judge." Who is man that he should **talk back** or **contradict** God ([Job 40:2-5](#)) ?!

- **"the thing formed say to him who formed it"**

Paul emphasizes the *Creator vs. creature* distinction. "Thing formed" is *PLASma* from *PLASSō* from which we get our word "plastic". It is something which can be formed or molded by an external agent.

- **"Why have you made me like this?"**

Why does the Creator create? Because He has a **purpose!** The thing created does not impose its own purpose upon the Creator--the pot exists only by the potter's initiative. This phrase recalls several Old Testament passages emphasizing God's sovereignty over His creation, especially mankind ([Isa. 29:15](#) ; [45:9-11](#) ; [64:8](#)).

9:21 - The Potter and the Clay

- **"the potter . . . the clay?"**

The larger context of this passage is reinforced by the Old Testament context regarding the *potter* and the *clay*. These typically refer to God and **Israel** ([Isa. 29:1](#) ; [45:11](#) ; [64:8-11](#) ; [Lam. 4:2](#) ; [Jer. 18:1-6](#)). Remember that Paul is still speaking about *Israel* and her failure to accept Messiah, although the principles of sovereign election apply to all men ([Rom. 9:24](#)).

- **"Does not the potter have power over the clay"**

"Power over" is *exousia*, "the right to act decide, or dispose of one's property as one wishes," a technical term, especially in wills.

- **"the same lump"**

"Lump" is *fuRAMatos*, "that which is mixed or kneaded" (from *furAō*). The raw materials are *uniformly mixed - the same*. This is analogous to the "by one man" (one sexual union) in [verse 10](#). The difference is *not found in the clay itself*, but *in the purpose of the potter*. All of the clay is sinful and deserving of judgment and inclined away from God. None of the clay would choose God without His calling ([John 6:37-39](#) , [64-66](#)).

9:22 - The Potter and the Clay

- **"wanting to show . . . to make known"**

God's election and sovereign purpose is intended to demonstrate:

1. His wrath and power,
2. His riches of glory and power.

These are both aspects of His character. When we minimize one or the other, we are guilty of misrepresenting Him and presenting a caricature of God.

- **"wrath"**

Wrath is the divine reaction toward evil. God's wrath has two primary aspects. He has an *ongoing* wrath which abides on those who reject Him ([John 3:36](#)), and there is a specific future time where God's wrath will be exhibited toward the ungodly (e.g., [Rev. 6:15-17](#))

- **"endured with longsuffering"**

"The withholding of His grace from the non-elect is but the negative cause of their perishing, just as the absence of a physician from the sick man is the occasion, not the efficient cause, of his death." Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, 115.

9:22 - Vessels of Wrath

- **"vessels of wrath prepared for destruction"**

"Prepared" is *katērtisMENa* , a perfect passive participle. Although it is conceivable the form is middle-voice (the vessels participated in their own preparation), the preponderance of evidence favors the **passive** form:

1. *Katartizō* is nowhere else used in the NT as a direct or reflexive middle. When coupled with the perfect tense, the verb implies something which is a "done deal" and that the vessels do not dynamically change their state over time.
2. The potter vs. clay motif is most naturally understood in a way where the potter is completely sovereign over the clay--the clay does not form itself, nor determine the potter's use.
3. Paul has specifically excluded the idea that God's election is dependent upon the actions or will of the individual ([Rom. 9:11](#)).

"The LORD has made all for Himself, Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom" ([Pr. 16:4](#)). Yet, **God is not the Author of evil!** He desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth ([Eze. 18:23](#) ; [1Ti. 2:4](#) ; [2Pe. 3:9](#)).

- **What about the Angels?**

The idea that God does not predestine all men equally to salvation is repugnant to some Christians. But what about fallen angels? Scripture records no possibility that *any* of the fallen angels may be redeemed. Why can we accept this fact with hardly any comment, yet stumble on the teaching of election concerning man? Could it be we are happy to support God's sovereignty so long as it doesn't involve us?

9:23-24 - Vessels of Mercy

- **"vessels of mercy prepared beforehand"**
"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy" ([Ex. 33:18](#)) . God is *demonstrating* in history what He showed Moses -- His reputation and character.
- **"He prepared beforehand"**
"He prepared beforehand" is *proēTOImasen* , used only of God's work in the NT. *Pro* = "before " + *hetoimAzō* ="to prepare." Those prepared beforehand are those who are called and predestined ([Rom. 8:30](#)) .
- **"even us whom he called"**
A different verb for preparation is used than for the vessels of wrath. This verb explicitly emphasizes the previous preparation in time past whereas the other is implied by the perfect tense. This verb is related to "predestine" *prooRizō* . This verb emphasizes the *means* whereas "predestine" emphasizes the *end* (*purpose*).

Application

1. **God's Sovereign Right** - God's sovereign right of determination dominates history. His plan and purpose is not dependent upon the will and actions of his creatures.
2. **When We Don't Understand** - When we don't understand God, how do we respond? Do we, who are unrighteous, dare accuse Him of being unfair?
3. **The Greater Purpose of History** - God's greater purpose in history is God's glory. Our job is to understand what He has revealed concerning His program of glory and to accept it fully--no matter where it leads and no matter our personal prejudice. His purpose is greater than our individual salvation or even the salvation of men.
4. **God's Election Within Israel Today** - The rejection of Messiah did not catch God by surprise so that He had to reinterpret or reapply His OT promises concerning the nation. The national aspects of the promises (e.g., promised land, restoration of Jerusalem) continue in the believing Jewish remnant.

Romans 9:25-33 - A Remnant will be Saved

9:25 - My People

- **"As He says also in Hosea"**
Paul quotes from Hosea [2:23](#) concerning the rejection and restoration of **Israel** . (See also Hosea [2:2](#) , [13-20](#) , [23](#) .)
- **The context of Hosea**
Hosea prophesied to the Northern Kingdom of Israel prior to its fall to Assyria in 722 B.C. He was told to marry a harlot (Gomer) who typifies the spiritual adultery of the nation. God instructs Hosea to prophetically name the children as an indication of how God will respond to Israel.
 1. A son named **Jezreel** meaning "God will scatter / sow."

2. A daughter named **Lo-ruhamah** meaning "not have mercy."

3. Another son named **Lo-Ammi** meaning "not the people of Me."

The people who are said to be "not My people" are *Jews* not Gentiles!

- **The Message of Hosea**

God is emphasizing his *unchanging love* for Israel, even in the face of her spiritual adultery. His promise of restoration is completely compatible with Paul's teaching in Romans 9-11 that Israel has merely *stumbled* but not *fallen* and has not been cast away ([Rom. 11:1](#)).

9:26 - Sons of the Living God

- **"You are not My people"**

Paul quotes Hosea [1:10b](#) . (See the passage: [Hos. 1:8-2:1](#) .)

- **The context of Hosea matches Ezekiel**

The context of Hosea concerns the rejection and restoration of **Israel** . Elements of Hosea's passage ([Hos. 1:11](#)) match what Ezekiel reveals concerning the restoration of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom:

1. The northern and southern kingdom will be joined ([Eze. 37:15-28](#)) .
2. They will have a single ruler ([Eze. 37:22-24](#)) .
3. They shall be God's people ([Eze. 37:23](#)) .

- **In the day of Jezreel**

Hosea establishes the time when this restoration will occur: in the day of "God's planting" (**Jezreel**). Jezreel is the name of Hosea's first child and is used in two primary ways:

1. God will *scatter* Israel among the nations in her disobedience.
2. God will *plant* Israel back in her own land in eventual restoration.

9:27 - A Remnant Saved

- **"Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel"**

Paul now quotes Isaiah [10:5-6](#) , [20-23](#) in support of the same theme. Isaiah compares Israel in number to "the sand of the sea" which is also mentioned by Hosea [1:10a](#) . The emphasis is on a comparison between what once was a large number, but what will eventually be only a remnant.

- **"The remnant will be saved"**

The reality that many among Israel would reject Messiah Jesus, but that a remnant would be preserved by God is a major theme of Paul's teaching in Romans 9-11. Paul is quoting these OT prophets to show that this was *all part of God's plan* and driven by His *electing purpose*. (See the similar theme in [1Pe. 2:9-12](#) which was written primarily to Jewish Christians.)

- **The True Israel**

The elect remnant of Jewish believers are the true Israel, the *Israel of God* whom Paul distinguished from the mass of unbelieving Jews in [Rom. 9:6](#) . The **national aspects** of the OT promises made to Israel (e.g., promised land, throne of David, restoration of Jerusalem) are preserved in the believing Jewish remnant according to God's election ([Rom. 11:5](#)) .

9:28 - A Short Work

- **"He will finish the work"**
"Work" is *LOgon*, which can be translated as "word" (NASB95). "Finish" is *sunteLŌN* meaning, "while completing," "while bringing to an end / close." God will carry out His Word, His predicted work--that which He prophesied concerning the *sand* versus the *remnant*.
- **"and cut it short"**
The original passage ([Isa. 10:21-23](#)), indicates: " The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts will make a **determined end** [kalah] in the midst of the land. " *Kalah* can mean "annihilation," "destruction," or "end." There will destruction, but not a complete destruction of Israel. God will set a *determined limit* to the destruction so as to preserve His elect remnant. This recalls the words of Jesus: "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" ([Mtt. 24:22](#)).

9:29 - A Seed Left

- **"Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed"**
"Seed" is *sperma* , a life-giving start. In the original OT passage ([Isa. 1:9](#)), the word is *sariyd* from *sarad* meaning "I escape." The seed is a *survivor from a great slaughter* , an *escapee* . The emphasis is on preservation from the midst of a great destruction. This is the time of Jacob's trouble ([Jer. 30:7](#)) which precedes Israel's final restoration.

9:30 - The Righteousness of Faith

- **"Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness"**
The Gentiles (or *nations*) did not have the Law of Moses and were not seeking to attain righteousness by it.
- **"have attained righteousness, even the righteousness of faith"**
Gentiles attained righteousness by a different means than the Law -- **by faith** . Faith is the *means* by which righteousness is attributed to the Gentiles ([Rom. 4:3-10](#) ; [Gal. 3:5-15](#)).

9:31-32 - The Law of Righteousness

- **"but Israel"**
Throughout Romans 9-11, Paul is continually contrasting those from Israel who rejected salvation with those from among the nations (Gentiles) who found salvation by faith. The temporary and partial casting away of Israel was part of God's plan to bring salvation to the Gentiles ([Rom. 11:15](#)).
- **"they did not seek it by faith . . . but by the works of the law"**
Israel became so enamored with the Law of Moses that she mistook the Law as a means of obtaining righteousness. The Law was a means of *righteous living* , but was never able to provide salvation--because man was unable to keep it ([Acts 13:38-39](#) ; [Rom. 3:19-22](#) ; [Gal. 2:14-16](#) , [21](#) ;

[Gal. 5:1-6](#)). The only exception was Jesus Who fulfilled the Law ([Mtt. 5:17](#) ; [Gal. 4:4](#)).

9:33 - A Stumbling Stone

- "I lay in Zion a stumbling stone"

The stumbling stone is a **person** . He is "the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel" ([Gen. 49:24](#)) . The Old Testament has many passages which refer to God as a "rock" or "stone" ([Deu. 32:15](#) ; [Ps. 118:21-23](#) ; [Isa. 8:13-15](#) ; [28:14-16](#) ; [Dan. 2:45](#)). Here, Paul cites [Isaiah 28:14-16](#) . Both Peter and Jesus indicate that this is the "chief cornerstone" which was "rejected by the builders" ([Mtt. 21:41-45](#) ; [Acts 4:8-12](#)). The "chief cornerstone " is **Messiah Jesus** Who was rejected by "the builders," the religious leaders of Israel.

- "whoever believes . . . will not be put to shame"

In the end, those who trust in the stumbling stone will prove to have made a sound investment--they will be vindicated. Their trust will not have been futile and vain. In the passage Paul quotes, ([Isa. 28:16](#)) , the phrase rendered here as "put to shame" is the word *yachish* from *chush* which can be translated as: "act hastily" (NKJV), "be disturbed" (NASB), or "panic" (NET). The majority among Israel failed to trust in the rock. They were offended by Him. Having rejected Jesus, they are the "not all Israel who are of Israel" ([Rom. 9:6](#)) . Others among Israel trust in Messiah Jesus--these form the elect remnant according to God's grace, the true Israel.

Application

1. **"Not My people" refers to Israel, not Gentiles** - The OT prophets foresaw a period of time when Israel would no longer be considered God's people, but also a time afterwards when Israel would once again be "My people."
2. **God's Unconditional Love for Israel** - Many in the church today embrace the first part of these OT prophecies (the rejection of Israel) and fail to account for the subsequent restoration of Israel. They deny the meaning of the original context and interpret the passages *spiritually* as applying to the Gentiles. Denying God's restoration of Israel is a serious matter since it distorts God's character by denying His unconditional love and electing purpose for Israel. The salvation of NT believers is only as sure as God's fulfillment of existing OT promises to Israel. We can take great comfort in the security of knowing He will uphold *all* His promises!
3. **Context versus Application** - We need to recognize the original context of any passage as the actual meaning. After we understand the meaning of the original passage, *then and only then* are we in a position to make a related application from the principles taught by the passage. Paul quotes the OT concerning the election, rejection, and restoration of Israel, not the Gentiles. The principle of those who are not God's people becoming God's people is an *application* which can be made to the Gentiles who attained the righteousness of faith which most in Israel missed.
4. **Self-Righteousness is No Righteousness** - Overemphasis on righteous works can blind us to the true means of salvation which is only found in the completed work of Jesus on the cross. This can never be earned or appropriated by works--only by faith. When we

mix our own efforts into salvation, we undermine the true gospel and count the perfect work of Christ as incomplete. Like Israel who rejected Messiah Jesus at His first coming, those who trust in their own righteousness will be crushed by the "stumbling stone."

Romans 10:1-13 - The Righteousness of God

10:1 - My Heart's Desire

- **"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer"**

Paul returns to the theme which opened chapter 9--his strong desire that Israel come to understand the gospel. The untranslated particle *men* correlates his statement with the previous passage recognizing that Israel has stumbled at the rock of offense:

" Brothers, [*men* = surely, nevertheless] the desire of my heart . . . "

- **A Passionate Prayer**

"Prayer is" *DEhsis* meaning a "plea," or "entreaty" -- a passionate prayer. This topic is near and dear to Paul's heart!

10:2 - Zeal without Knowledge

- **"not according to knowledge"**

"Knowledge" is *ePIgnōsis*: "intense religious or moral knowledge that is true." The zeal of the Jews was not in accordance with real knowledge.

- **A Double-Edged Sword**

God wants us to have zeal ([John 2:17](#)), but not apart from knowledge.

10:3 - Righteousness of God

- **"they being ignorant"**

"While being ignorant" is *agnoOUntes*: an ongoing, present-tense ignorance. They were remaining ignorant. This is the word from which we derive *agnostic* meaning "without knowledge."

- **"God's righteousness . . . their own righteousness"**

The Greek text compares the "of God righteousness" with the "of own righteousness." The righteousness in both these phrases is best understood as the righteousness *pertaining to* God and *pertaining to* self (objective genitives). The righteousness pertaining to God is **infinite** whereas the righteousness pertaining to man is **nonexistent** ([Isa. 64:6](#)). Righteousness involves not just *actions*, but *motives*. Man's righteousness fails on both counts.

- "seeking to establish their own righteousness"
"To establish" is *STĒsai*, "setting up," "weighing out," "putting forward." Ignorance of God's righteousness is a *requisite* for even presuming to put forth our own righteousness! Those who trust in their own righteousness have not even begun to see God accurately.

10:3 - Have Not Submitted

- "have not submitted"
"Submitted" is *hypoTASsō*, a compound word made up of *HYpo* (under, beneath) and *TASsō* (to appoint, order). This was a Greek military term meaning "to arrange in divisions." In non-military use it indicated a voluntary "giving in."
- "the righteousness of God"
This speaks of righteousness *provided by God* (subjective genitive). This righteousness, true righteousness, **cannot be provided by man!** This is the dividing line between Christianity and every other religion! Christianity alone recognizes man's total inability to please God requiring that righteousness, which cannot be earned, be given to man as a free gift by God.

10:4 - End of the Law

- "Christ is the end of the law"
The order of wording in the Greek emphasizes *end* by promoting it to the beginning of the sentence: "For the END of the law [is] Christ . . ." "End" is *TElos* which can mean:
 1. **goal** - that to which the law leads
 2. **fulfillment** - Christ fulfilled the law
 3. **termination** or **completion** - the law has come to an end as a means of righteousness
 The immediate context, and the fact that the Mosaic Covenant was broken and has become obsolete ([Jer. 31:31-32](#) ; [Heb. 8:13](#)), favor understanding *TElos* to mean that the law has been *terminated* or *abolished* as a means of righteousness.
- "for righteousness"
The law is not a means of obtaining righteousness before God. However, the law is "holy and just and good" ([Rom. 7:12](#)). Even after Christ, freedom remains to *practice* the law. For example, the Apostle Paul took a Nazirite vow ([Acts 18:18](#)), he was purified and paid vows for four men ([Acts 21:24](#)), and for practical ministry reasons he circumcised Timothy who had a Jewish mother but a Greek father ([Acts 16:3](#)). The freedom to practice the law is clearly set forth in the NT ([Rom. 14:5-6](#)).
- "to everyone who believes"
Believers, those who trust in Christ Who kept the law, will not be judged by their ability to keep the law. However, **the works of unbelievers are still judged by the law** ([Rev. 20:12-13](#)). Lacking true righteousness (sinlessness, [Mtt. 5:20](#)), they will be condemned by their inability to keep the law. This is why the Ark of the Testimony, containing the tablets of the law, is highlighted during God's final outpouring of wrath ([Rev. 11:19](#) ; [15:5](#)). It *testifies* of man's unrighteousness.

10:5 - Righteousness of the Law

- **"righteousness which is of the law"**
The "righteousness which is of the law" is contrasted with the "righteousness of faith" in the next verse. The righteousness of the **law** is unattainable by all men except one: Jesus Christ! The righteousness of **faith** is attainable by all men simply by trusting in the work of Jesus Christ.
- **"the man who does those things shall live by them"**
In context, this speaks of *righteous living*, not *salvation* ([Lev. 18:3-5](#) , [24](#)). Righteous living involves *works*, but because of the weakness of our sinful flesh, we cannot keep the law and therefore it cannot save ([Acts 13:38-39](#) ; [Rom. 3:19-22](#) ; [Gal. 2:21](#) ; [3:10-12](#) ; [Heb. 10:1-2](#)).
- **How were People Saved Prior to Christ?**
Men have never been able to attain righteousness and be justified before God based on keeping the law. Therefore **salvation has always been by faith and never by works** ([Gen. 15:6](#) ; [Rom. 4:2-5](#)).

10:6 - Ascent to Heaven

- **"righteousness of faith speaks in this way"**
This is righteousness which results from faith in God. It is not based on difficult works or mysterious knowledge, but is easily understood and completely accessible ([Deu. 30:9-14](#)). God has removed all man's excuses for claiming God's will is unknowable.
- **"to bring Christ down from above"**
Paul substitutes "Christ" for that which is to be fetched from heaven to be heard and obeyed: "the commandment . . . the word . . ." This echoes Jesus' title as the *Word* ([John 1:1](#) ; [Rev. 19:13](#)). In His incarnation, Jesus is the revelation of God ([John 1:14](#) ; [Heb. 1:1-3](#)). He is **Jacob's Ladder** -- spanning between God and man. He conveys the revelation of the Father down to man and atones for sinful men in His ascension to God. He is the **only conduit** by which man may rise to stand before God ([1Ti. 2:5](#)).

10:7 - Descent into the Abyss

- **"who will descend into the abyss?"**
"Abyss" is *Abusson*, a compound word made up from *ā* (without) and *bathos* (depth). It is "without depth" or "bottomless." Paul is contrasting the deepest possible place, corresponding to the place of departed spirits, with the highest possible place--heaven. This contrast is a frequent theme found in the OT (e.g., [Amos 9:1-2](#) ; [Ps. 139:7-10](#)). The *Septuagint* uses the same term for the "darkness over the face of the DEEP" ([Gen. 1:2](#)) and "the fountains of the great DEEP" ([Gen. 7:11](#)). In the NT, it is said to be the abode of demons ([Luke 8:31](#) ; [Rev. 9:1-2](#) , [11](#)) and the location from which the Beast ascends ([Rev. 11:7](#) ; [17:8](#)) and where Satan is bound during the millennial kingdom ([Rev. 20:1-3](#)).
- **"to bring Christ up from the dead"**
Paul emphasizes both ends of Christ's ministry in His first coming ([Rom. 1:1-4](#)) :

1. His descent to earth at His virgin birth.
2. His ascent back to heaven at His resurrection and ascension.

These events constitute communication between God and man -- the theme of Jacob's Ladder ([Gen. 28:12-13](#)).

10:8-9 - The Word is Near You

- **"the word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"**
Emphasis is placed on the *nearness* (accessibility) of God's commandments. There is an intimate connection between the heart and mouth. The mouth speaks forth that which is in the heart ([Mtt. 12:34](#) ; [15:17-19](#) ; [Luke 6:44-45](#)). Our problem is not one of **access** to God's will, but **obedience!**
- **"if you confess with your mouth . . . believe in your heart"**
"Confess" is *homoloGĒsēs*, a compound word made up of *homo* (same) and *LOgos* (word). Coming to faith involves agreement with what God has declared concerning His Son--that He is **Lord** . Jesus is not a "holy man" or a "guru," He is **very God!**
- **"that God raised Him from the dead"**
His resurrection is a declaration of His identity as the Son of God and His acceptability to God as the sinless sacrifice ([Rom. 1:1-4](#)) . Our salvation is only as good as His resurrection ([John 11:23-26](#) ; [14:19](#) ; [1Cor. 15:17](#)).

10:10 - With the Heart One Believes

- **"With the heart one believes unto righteousness"**
The moment we believe, we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Our sins are "covered" by His righteousness.
- **"with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"**
True conversion will eventually result in outward manifestation in the life of the new believer. Faith (in the heart) without works (e.g., what we say) is not true Biblical faith ([Jas 2:18-26](#)) . It is with our mouth that we speak forth:
 1. that which we believe,
 2. that which we call upon in time of need,
 3. that which we praise.
 Yet there is no fixed formula with specific outward signs or steps for salvation.

10:11 - Not be Put to Shame

- **"will not be put to shame"**
Those who believe will not be embarrassed or disappointed as when having trusted in something which proved to be vain or futile. In the passage Paul quotes ([Isa. 28:16](#)) , the Hebrew word for "put to shame" conveys the idea of "acting hastily" or "panicking." Trust in Christ will prove to be a reliable decision which brings peace. It will not result in panic when the believer stands before God and all is laid bare.

10:12-13 - No Distinction

- **"there is no distinction between Jew and Greek"**
This statement concerns *the accessibility and manner of salvation*. " There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one **in Christ Jesus** " ([Gal. 3:28](#)) . Paul is not saying that all distinctions between Jews and Gentiles ([Rom. 3:1-2](#) ; [9:4](#)) or between men and women ([Eph. 5:22](#) ; [1Ti. 2:12](#) ; [3:1-5](#) ; [Tit. 1:6](#)) have been done away with in Christ.
- **"whoever calls . . . shall be saved"**
Anyone and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Nationality, age, sex, race, and station in life are all immaterial in attaining salvation.

Application

1. **Self-Righteousness is No Righteousness** - To be saved, we must jettison our "self-righteousness" which is really no righteousness and place our faith in Jesus Who provides the righteousness of God. We must reject *religion* -- our own puny efforts to justify ourselves to God -- in favor of *relationship* with God through trusting in His Son.
2. **Only Jesus Bridges the Gap between God and Man** - Jesus is the only ladder between God and man. The ultimate revelation of God made understandable to man is found in the incarnation of Jesus: the God-man. Conversely, the only sufficient representation we have before God is standing in the righteousness provided by Christ. We will find no alternate avenue for salvation ([1Ti. 2:5](#)) .
3. **Salvation is Near** - The way of salvation is neither esoteric nor distant. It is not found in a mountain cave in Tibet, by acts of deprivation, or by "always learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth" ([2Ti. 3:6-7](#)) . It is so simple that *even a child can grasp it* ([Mark 10:15](#)) . It is within our reach if we will but reach out and grasp God's free gift.
4. **Equally Available to All** - All people have equal access to the salvation of God. All that is required is agreeing with what God has said by placing faith in Jesus Christ. "All who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Romans 10:14-21 - Has Israel Not Heard?

10:14-15 - How Shall They Believe?

- **"As it is written"**
Paul quotes [Isa. 52:7](#) where Isaiah describes messengers who carry God's message and proclaim peace (between God and man) and salvation.
- **"How beautiful are the feet"**
The *feet* are the first link in the chain of salvation:
 1. sent,

2. preach,
 3. hear,
 4. believe,
 5. call on Him (a specific *person* -- Jesus).
- **"those who bring glad tidings"**
"Glad tidings" is *euangelizoMENōn*, the *evangelizing ones* -- evangelists!
 - **The message is good news because it concerns *eternal life*.**
The purpose of missions is not so that people can have a more fulfilling life. It is because they are **eternally lost** without the knowledge of faith in Christ. Even people with great knowledge of God (e.g., orthodox Jews) are lost without faith in Jesus Christ. Men are responsible to respond to God's progressive revelation.

10:16 - Who Has Believed?

- **"they have not all obeyed the gospel"**
"Obeyed" is *huPEkousan*, "to listen to." They *heard* the message, but did not embrace its contents.
- **"Who has believed our report?"**
"Report" is *akoE*, "account," "preaching." Paul cites **Isaiah 53:1** which introduces an extremely detailed prophecy of the redemptive work of Jesus. This clear passage is avoided or denied by unbelieving Jews. The problem is not *hearing*, but *believing*!

10:17 - Hearing by the Word

- **"hearing by the word"**
"Word" is *hREmatos*, "proclamation," "spoken word," "utterance." This is not just words that are *written*, but which are *proclaimed* and spoken such that they can be audibly *heard*.
- **"the word of God"**
Hearing requires the **word of God** -- the message of the Bible. General revelation is *insufficient to save*!

10:18 - To the Ends of the World

- **"have they not heard?"**
"Have they not" is *mē ouk*, a double-negative which implies a negative response. Paul is saying, "Have they IN NO WAY heard?" to which he answers, "No, they HAVE heard!"
- **"to all the earth"**
The universal accessibility of general revelation is emphasized by appearing first in the sentence: "Into all the earth it went out, the sound of them . . ."
- **"their words to the ends of the world"**
Again, the sentence emphasizes the universal scope of general revelation: "Into the ends of the [inhabited] world the [spoken] words of them . . ." "World" is *oikouMENēs*, meaning "inhabited"

world" or "[the] inhabitants of the world." General revelation speaks to *intelligent* creatures -- mankind.

- **A Universal Message**

Paul quotes **Psalm 19:1-4** showing that, like all other nations, Israel was given general revelation of God in nature. However, *unlike all other nations*, Israel was also given special revelation of God -- the Law of Moses (**Ps. 19:7-11**).

- **General Revelation Points to God**

General revelation points people to God but is insufficient to save. If man rejects God's general revelation, he is lost (**Rom. 1:18-22**).

10:19 - Provoked to Jealousy

- **"I will provoke you to jealousy"**

The Greek emphasizes God's action in initiating the provocation: "I, [even] I will provoke . . ." "Jealousy" is *parazēLōsō*, "to incite a protective reaction," "arouse envy."

- **"those who are not a nation . . . a foolish nation"**

Paul quotes **Deuteronomy 32:21** from the *Song of Moses* which predicts Israel's idolatry. In the Hebrew the phrase is: *be lo-'am be goy*, "by not-a-people, by Gentiles, heathen." "Foolish" is *asuNEtō*, "without perception," "foolish in a moral sense." The Gentiles were generally ignorant of God's law, the Law of Moses which was given to Israel.

10:20-21 - Found by Those Who Did Not Seek

- **"found by those who did not seek me"**

Paul quotes **Isaiah 65:1-2** which predicted that Gentile's would seek and find God even as Israel was disobedient.

- **"made manifest"**

"Made manifest" is *emphaNēs*, "to make visible, to reveal." The Gentiles were in the **dark** not having the Law of Moses. But many passages prophesied that they would come to the **light** of the gospel and faith in God (**Isa. 9:1-2 ; 42:6-7 ; 49:6 ; Luke 2:25-32**).

- **"who did not seek . . . who did not ask"**

Present tense participles: they found God *while not seeking* and *while not asking*. This indicates that the action was entirely initiated by God--it was *He* who provoked Israel by revealing Himself to the Gentiles.

- **"a disobedient and contrary people"**

"Disobedient" is *apeiTHOUNta*, "while disobeying due to disbelief." They refused to believe. "Contrary" is *antiLEgonta*, made up of *anti* and *logos* = "while speaking against," "while contradicting."

Application

1. **The Gospel is Necessary for Salvation** - General revelation points to God, but cannot save. Additional special revelation is necessary to be saved. This comes by way of those who are born again and carry the message of the gospel to the unsaved. This is our job as believers.
2. **Evangelization is Beautiful** - Those who carry the message of the gospel are called "beautiful" by God. Although our message may be rejected and we may face persecution, God considers our task to be one of beauty.
3. **Faith Depends Upon the Word of God** - Faith comes by hearing and believing the simple Word of God. Worldly philosophy and other deep mysteries cannot provide salvation. The Word of God is found in the Bible. Do you know the message of the Bible? Are you equipped to proclaim it?
4. **Gentiles Are to Make the Jews Jealous** - Does your relationship with Jesus -- the *Jewish Messiah* -- exhibit a joy and intimacy that an unbelieving Jew would desire?

Romans 11:1-6 - God Has Not Cast Away the Jews

11:1 - Has God Cast Away His People?

- **"I say then"**
The conjunction *then* indicates that what Paul is about to say next is connected to what was communicated in the previous chapter: God revealed Himself to the Gentiles in response to Israel's disobedience. This might lead one to believe that the nation was irretrievably rejected by God, but Paul is now going to balance the truth of chapter **10** with another important truth--the electing purposes of God for the Jewish nation.
- **"has God cast away His people?"**
Casting away is emphasized by its appearance at the beginning of the Greek: "Not He has cast away, God, the people of Him [has He]?" "Cast away" is *aPŌSato*, meaning "reject," "push aside," "repudiate." To *repudiate* is to divorce or separate from someone or something once held near. The verb is in the middle voice: "Has God [Himself] cast away . . . ?"
- **"His people"**
TAKE NOTE! Paul is writing *after* the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus. Israel has already rejected her king! Yet Paul refers to *Israel -- the Jews as God's people!* The context makes it impossible to take this phrase as denoting Gentile believers.

11:1 - Certainly not!

- **"Certainly not!"**
Paul uses a unique expression of his emphasizing the impossibility of answering "yes." The phrase is *me GENoito*, meaning "You should never conclude such a thing! God forbid that you should think this! No way!"

[Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*]

- **"For I also am an Israelite"**

Paul himself serves as a counter-example to the claim by some that the Jews have been rejected. The Greek emphasizes Paul as an example: "For even I [an] Israelite I am." This is not just about the status of *believing* Jews, but of *unbelieving* Jews ([Rom. 11:28](#)).

- **"of the seed of Abraham"**

Paul traces his ancestry in both directions from Jacob (who was renamed Israel):

1. through Abraham (Jacob's grandfather),
2. through Benjamin (Jacob's son).

Although all believers are *Abraham's* seed by faith ([Gal. 3:29](#)), they are never identified as being *Jacob's* descendants or an Israelite tribe in any sense.

11:2 - God Has *Not* Cast Away

- **"God has not cast away His people"**

The Greek emphasizes the *not casting away* by placing it first: "Not He [Himself] has cast away, God, the people of Him."

- **"whom He foreknew"**

"Foreknew" is from *progiNŌSkō*, meaning more than "known in advance," but "chosen" -- known intimately as His elect from before the dawn of history. This is an *active determination*, not just a passive observation ([Rom. 8:29-30](#) ; [1Pe. 1:20](#)). Election is the central theme of Romans 8-11!

- **"Elijah . . . pleads with God against Israel"**

"Pleads . . . against" is *entunCHANō*, meaning "to appeal to someone against a third party," "to make a complaint against."

11:3-4 - I Have Reserved For Myself

- **"and I alone am left"**

Elijah emphasizes his uniqueness, as if he was the only one that remained true to God: "and I [even] I have been left [surviving the] only one!" It is important to see the full context of the passage Paul is quoting which indicates Elijah is *complaining against His Jewish brethren* ([1K. 19:10](#)).

- **"I have reserved for Myself"**

The corresponding Hebrew verb in [1K. 18:18](#) is *hishhe'aretti*, which is in the *hiphil* form which indicates causative action by the subject of the verb (God). The verb is based on the root *she'ar*, meaning "remnant" and ends with a pronominal suffix indicating "to Me." The phrase could be translated: "I [Myself] caused to remain for Me." It is important to see the sovereignty of God-- those who remain true to Him only do so **by His electing and keeping power**. He "kept them" for Himself!

11:5 - A Remnant

- **"there is a remnant"**
Jews whom God has reserved for faith throughout history. Because of God's electing purposes for the nation Israel, there are *always* Jews who believe everything God has revealed. At the coming of Christ, Jews such as Simeon ([Luke 2:25-34](#)) and Anna ([Luke 2:36-38](#)) were part of the believing remnant. Today, Jews who believe in Christ are known as *Messianic Jews* or *Jewish Christians* and are members of the church, the body of Christ, like all other believers. However, they are physically, nationally, Jews--and represent the stream through which God's promises to the Jewish nation will be eventually fulfilled. The doctrine of the remnant is an extensive teaching throughout Scripture, as can be seen by looking up the word **remnant** in a concordance.
- **"according to the election of grace"**
"Election" is a verb form in the perfect tense indicating the choice was made some time in the past with results which continue into the present. Like all believers, the believing Jewish remnant was elected to belief in God before the foundation of the world ([Eph. 1:4](#)) . Paul's teaching on the elect remnant within Israel dovetails with his earlier teaching ([Rom. 9:11](#)) .

11:6 - Unmerited Favor

- **"Grace versus Works"**
"Grace" is *CHARis*, meaning "favor." A closely-related word, *CHARisma*, means "a free gift." For a gift to truly be a gift, it must be unmerited and unearned. Once you mix one particle of work into the transaction, it is no longer fully grace since merit becomes involved.
- **Israel Does Not Deserve God's Continued Favor**
Like all who have been chosen by God, the nation Israel--as represented by the believing remnant among the Jews--does not deserve God's continued election. Paul emphasizes that it is by God's undeserved, unmerited favor--which overcomes the rejection and crucifixion of Israel's own Messiah. Israel neither earned nor deserves God's favor. He stands by Israel because of His *name's sake* ([Eze. 36:20-24](#)) . Concerning the gospel, unbelieving Jews are enemies, but concerning election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ([Rom. 11:28-32](#)) .

Application

1. **We Are Never "The Only Believer Left"** - No matter how discouraged and isolated we feel, we can know for certain that God has other believers in places we might not expect them.
2. **Sinful Actions Cannot Thwart God's Sovereign Will** - In God's inscrutable sovereignty, every sin works out according to His plan. God's plan for Israel will not be derailed by the unbelief of the majority in the nation.
3. **God Generally Works With a Faithful Remnant** - A frequent pattern in Scripture indicates God often works with a small group of faithful believers within a much larger group.

Don't look at size or popularity to measure a work of God.

4. **Like Israel, Our Standing in God's Favor is Also Undeserved** - If we reject Israel in the plan of God and assert our own superiority in having exercised faith, then we have lost sight of our own dependence upon God's grace. Remember: God revealed Himself to the Gentiles *while the Gentiles were continually not seeking Him!*
5. **The Jews Are Still God's Chosen People** - God's promises to Israel remain today because they are based on His choice of and promises to the nation which will eventually be fulfilled through the believing Jewish remnant. God judges the nations by their treatment of Israel ([Gen. 12:3](#) ; [Num. 24:9](#) ; [Isa. 49:14-26](#) ; [Mtt. 25:40](#)) . A wise nations is careful how it treats Israel!