

Book of Romans



Chapter 9

Theme: Israel defined; Israel identified

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Romans Chapter 9

Missler: This chapter begins one of the most important “trilogies” in the Scripture:

Chapter 9 - Israel Past

Chapter 10 - Israel Present

Chapter 11 - Israel Future

Other “trilogies”:

Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5, 6, 7

Spiritual Gifts: 1 Cor 12, 13, 14

2nd Coming: Zechariah 12, 13, 14

Introduction

This springs out of the closing verses of Romans 8: If God is so faithful to His word (as portrayed in Romans 8) that none can be condemned that He has justified; and that none in Him can be separated; then why have the Israelites, who were sovereignly chosen and given unconditional promises, completely failed and then been rejected?¹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

I'll keep reminding you that even though we are moving today from Romans chapter 8 to chapter 9,

Paul certainly was not thinking in terms of "chapters". The chapters were put there over a millennia after Paul's day as an honest attempt to merely break the Bible up into bite-sized chunks that we could digest a little easier. Chapters and verses give us a way to communicate to one another more precisely which passages in the Holy Scriptures that we are referring to. Chapters and verses are tools, and nothing more.

Thus, keep in mind that when we open chapter 9 in a few moments that Paul is not completely altering his previous line of thought; the subject is not changing, the scene is not changing, and Paul is not ending one message to begin another. Chapter 9 is not only a continuation of chapter 8 in a very real and literal sense, but chapter 9 also re-exams and nuances some of his thoughts from even earlier chapters of Romans. So to open Romans chapter 9, Paul is going to continue along the lines of defending Israel's election as God's chosen people, and he is going to return to the theme of the advantages that Israel enjoys over gentiles that he spoke about back in chapter 3.

Romans 3:1-4 CJB

CJB Romans 3:1 Then what advantage has the Jew? What is the value of being circumcised? 2 Much in every way! In the first place, the Jews were entrusted with the very words of God. 3 If some of them were unfaithful, so what? Does their faithlessness cancel God's faithfulness? 4 Heaven forbid! God would be true even if everyone were a liar!

Even so, since Israel's election as God's people is a critical underlying issue for the letter to the Romans, this brief statement about the problem of Israel's lack of faithfulness to God needs more explanation. Where does Israel's lack of faithfulness leave them in relation to their covenants with God and thus their status before Him, and especially as concerns the Gospel since Paul says that the Gospel is an Old Testament promise? Therefore, we should take the opening of Romans chapter 3 as the background for the opening verses of Romans chapter 9. That is,

¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

according to Paul God gave and continues to give Israel a favored status above all other nations. However, Israel has admittedly failed in their God-given purpose despite their advantages and the majority of Israel has become unfaithful to God....at least unfaithful as Paul measures it. Thus with all of Paul's talk about gentiles being able to partake in Israel's Messiah, the logical question that Jews especially, but also gentiles, might ask is: why, if God is faithful, would He suddenly include some outsiders (gentiles) and exclude some insiders (Jews) in His covenants with Israel? Might this mean that God has abandoned His old people Israel and replaced them with His new people: gentile Believers in Christ? Or to use modern Christianese: has the Church replaced Israel as God's chosen? Unfortunately, a major portion of the institutional Church answers that question with a resounding yes! As we have read in Acts and now Romans, Paul repeatedly answers that question with a "no", or more literally, "Heaven forbid".²

McGee: THEME: Israel defined; Israel identified; the choice of Israel is in the sovereign purpose of God; the choice of Gentiles in the scriptural prophecies.

We now have come to the second major division of this epistle. Romans chapters 1 -- 8 is doctrinal. Romans chapters 9 -- 11 is dispensational. Romans chapters 12 -- 16 is duty. The first eight chapters of Romans emphasize faith. Chapters 9 -- 11 emphasize hope. Chapters 12 -- 16 emphasize love. There is another way to view Romans: The first section deals with salvation; the second section with segregation; and the last section with service.

Paul has concluded the first eight chapters of Romans, and he has put salvation on a broad basis, because the entire human race is lost. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" ([Rom. 3:23](#)). God has made salvation available to everyone on one basis alone -- faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is now ready to discuss the second major division. Some have attempted to dismiss this section by labeling it an appendix. Others minimize its importance by terming it a parenthesis and not actually pertinent. However, it is not only pertinent, it is vital to the logic and doctrine of the epistle.

There is a sense in which chapters 8 and 12 can be joined together as two boxcars. But Paul was not making up a freight train when he wrote Romans. Romans is not a freight train but a flowing stream. Chapters 9 -- 11 can no more be removed than you can take out the middle section of the Mississippi River without causing havoc. Griffith Thomas writes, "The chapters 9-10-11 are an integral part of the epistle and are essential to its true interpretation." There are certain grand particulars which reveal the significance of this section. They are: The psychological factor; the historical factor; the doctrinal factor.

The psychological factor has to do with the personal experience of the apostle Paul. It is not entirely accurate to state that Romans comes from the head of the apostle and Galatians comes from his heart. The heart of Paul is laid bare in the opening of chapter 9 -- and in fact, throughout this section. There is a great gap between chapter 8 and chapter 9. Chapter 8 closes on the high plane of triumph and joy in the prospect of no separation from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Chapter 9 opens on the low plane of despair and sorrow. Obviously, a change of subject matter brought about this heartbreak in the apostle. This we shall observe when we consider the text.

The historical factor takes into account the unique position and problem in Paul's day. Modern interpretation has largely failed to take into consideration this factor. The present-day church is for the most part Gentile, and the Jewish background has been all but forgotten. Men assume that the Old Testament promises are merged and dissolved into the church. The arbitrary

² <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

assumption is that the church is heir to the prophecies of the Old Testament and that God is through with the nation Israel.

Some time ago a Christian organization held a prophetic congress in Jerusalem. It was rather amusing because a meeting that was to be so important ended up as a "tempest in a teapot." Many writers who covered the congress said that the city of Jerusalem did not even know that it was taking place. It is interesting to compare this congress with the Council at Jerusalem in [Acts 15](#) when the whole city was shaken. Half of those present in the congress had no place for the nation Israel in God's plan for the future. They felt that God was through with Israel. If that were true, why did they go to Jerusalem to hold a prophetic congress? They could have gone just as well to Scappoose, Oregon, or Muleshoe, Texas. God is not by any means through with Israel, as we shall see. Stifler states this view:

It has been tacitly assumed in Christian interpretation that Judaism's day is over; that an elect, leveling church built on faith in Christ was the intent of the law and the prophets; and that it was the duty of all Jews to drop their peculiarities and come into the church. Such an assumption the Jews ascribed to Paul. It is strangely forgotten that the mother church in Jerusalem and Judaea never had a Gentile within its fold, that none could have been admitted, and that every member of that primitive body of tens of thousands was zealous of the law ([Acts 21:20](#)). They accepted Jesus as the Messiah but abandoned none of their Old Testament customs and hopes. Christianity has suffered not a little in the continuous attempt to interpret it not from the Jewish, but from the Gentile point of view. The church in Jerusalem, and not the church in Antioch or Ephesus or Rome, furnishes the only sufficient historic outlook (James M. Stifler, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 162).

My friend, it is a very narrow view to assume that God is through with the nation Israel. Paul's answer to, "Hath God cast away his people?" is a sharp negative: "God forbid" ([Rom. 11:1](#)). He is going to show that the promises that God made to the nation Israel are going to be fulfilled to that nation. Also he will show that God has made certain promises to the church, and today He is calling out an elect people, both Jew and Gentile, to form the church. This is exactly the conclusion to which the Council at Jerusalem came ([Acts 15](#)). This is actually the crux of the interpretation of prophecy: "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are his works from the beginning of the world" ([Acts 15:13-18](#)).

James is making it very plain that God is calling out a people to His name. When He concludes this, He will remove the church from the earth and will turn again to Israel. But even at that time, God is not through with Gentiles. We are told that all the saved Gentiles at that time will enter the Kingdom with Israel, and God's Kingdom will be set up on this earth. This historical factor cannot be ignored.

The doctrinal factor concerns the right dispensational interpretation and the sovereign purposes of God. Paul has traced in the first eight chapters the great subjects of sin, salvation, and sanctification -- all the way from grace to glory. In this age, nationality, ritual, and ceremonies have no weight before God. Faith is the only item which God accepts from man. Any person, regardless of race or condition, can find mercy. This does seem to level out the very

distinctions made in the Old Testament. But Paul is going to answer that, and he begins by the rhetorical question: "Hath God cast away his people?" ([Rom. 11:1](#)). The answer, of course, is that He has not. Paul began this epistle, you remember, by saying that the gospel is "to the Jew first" ([Rom. 1:16](#)), which I think means that chronologically it was given to the Jew first. Chapters 9 -- 11 is a very important section. It may not deal with Christian doctrine, but it deals with the eschatological, that is, the prophetic, section of the Bible that reveals God is not through with Israel.

Now as we begin chapter 9, notice that this has to do with God's past dealings with Israel. In chapter 10 we will see God's present dealings with Israel and, in chapter 11, God's future dealings with Israel as a nation. God's reason for dealing with the nation in the past did not derive from their exceptional qualities or superior efforts. On the contrary, all of God's actions are found in His own sovereign will. He functions through mercy in His dealings with Israel and all others -- with you and me. Luther's statement affords a fitting introduction to this chapter. "Who hath not known passion, cross, and travail of death cannot treat of foreknowledge (election of grace) without injury and inward enmity toward God. Wherefore take heed that thou drink not wine while thou art yet a sucking babe." This is strong medicine we are going to look at here.³

BKC: Since God is the self-existent Being who is the Creator of everything that exists outside Himself, He is sovereign and can therefore use and dispose of His Creation as He wishes. This sovereignty reveals not only His personal righteousness but also His provided righteousness.

God's sovereign choice enunciated (9:1-29)

Paul here discussed God's sovereign choice because of a practical problem. The Jews gloried in the fact that as Israelites they were God's Chosen People (Deut. 7:6; cf. Rom. 2:17-20a; 3:1-2). But now in God's program of salvation in the church, Jewish involvement was decreasing while Gentile participation was becoming dominant. Had God, then, abandoned the Jewish people? This is ultimately explained by God's sovereign choice, a principle which has always been in operation even within the Chosen People of Israel and between Israel and other nations. Now this principle operates in God's purposes for Israel and the church and in His dealings with Jews and Gentiles within the church.⁴

Guzik: Chapter 9 brings a slight shift in focus to the Book of Romans.

In Romans chapters one through eight, Paul thoroughly convinced us about man's need and God's glorious provision in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Now, in Romans 9 through Romans 11, Paul deals with the problem associated with the condition of Israel. What does it mean that Israel has missed its Messiah? What does this say about God? What does it say about Israel? What does it say about our present position in God?

The question goes something like this: How can I be secure in God's love and salvation to me when it seems that Israel was once loved and saved, but now seems to be rejected and cursed? Will God also reject and curse me one day?

"If God cannot bring his ancient people into salvation, how do Christians know that he can save them? Paul is not here proceeding to a new and unrelated subject. These three chapters are part of the way he makes plain how God in fact saves people." (Morris)⁵

³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁵ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

¹I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

This issue picked up from Romans 3:1-3:

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

When Paul begins by saying that he is "speaking the truth" it is more of an expression than an important piece of information that he wants to add (after all his readers would have expected Paul to have already been telling the truth). It is an expression of special emphasis on what he is about to say, not unlike the expression "behold" is also a Biblical expression of special emphasis. What he is about to say is also sort of a pause in the action to interject a statement to make sure that anything he has said to this point is not misconstrued. It is very similar to Yeshua's pause in the action during His sermon on the mount, and then His interjection of a special statement about the continuing validity of The Law of Moses, which we find in Matthew 5:17 – 19.

Paul uses kind a judicial motif to draw attention to the importance and sincerity of what he is about to express by invoking the commandment that 'thou shalt not lie'. He frames himself as a witness in a trial and the number one duty of a witness is to tell the truth; in fact there are major penalties for not being truthful. But all trials must have the testimony of two witnesses to verify the truth so the second witness Paul personifies as his own conscience that is under Holy Spirit control. Therefore now that the bonafides of the two witnesses have been established Paul goes on to give his testimony.

I want to pause to frame Paul's concern to make himself as clear as is possible (concerning a very challenging subject, so full of mystery) by putting it this way: if God gave the Jews a "forever" covenant, and through this "forever" covenant brought a Messiah into the world whose job was to deliver the Jewish people from the eternal death penalty that their sinning bought them; then what does God do with the Jewish people when they become unfaithful to Him? Does he throw them back into the pool of common humanity and pluck out a new people for Himself? Because that should not only be terribly concerning to the Jews, but also to the new gentile Believers in Yeshua who have been made a very similar promise. That is, Messiah's sacrifice on the Cross is said to be sufficient to save them from eternal death.....forever. And yet, simple observation says that Israel will stumble and fall at times, and continue to sin occasionally. So does this mean that God could just as easily throw the new gentile Believers back into the pool of common humanity (just as He supposedly did to the Jews) and start all over yet again?

You see, Believers, this is the problem with the terrible and arrogant doctrine that the Jews are stiff necked and a disobedient people who were at one time God's "forever" chosen people, but the Lord grew tired of their sinning and thus cancelled His covenants and revoked His promises to them. And, to our good fortune, He turned instead to the millions of gentiles who came to believe in Yeshua as Savior. But if God would do that to the Jewish people, by what rationale would He not do the same to gentile Christians? Just how assured of our position of eternal security before Him ought we to be if He is a God who promises and then reneges at will? Can we truly rely on God's promise that His actions on our behalf through Jesus Christ are forever when He made a similar promise to Israel but took it back because they continued to sin? So my mindset as a gentile Believer must be that I hope and pray to the high Heavens that God did NOT revoke His promise to Israel; because if He did that, then you and I are at the mercy of an unethical God who makes promises and takes them away at His option. The good news is that God did not cancel His covenants and revoke His promises to Israel; He is always faithful to His

Word. It is merely some anti-Jewish gentile Church leaders who have told the big lie loud enough and often enough that it has been believed. But it is also billions of naïve and disinterested Christians over the past 2000 years who have never thought to ask themselves the simple questions about God's character that I have just set before you. Paul is, of course, unafraid to confront these questions head-on.⁶

McGee: Let me give you my translation of this verse: I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience in the Holy Spirit bearing witness with me.

This seems to be a very formal introduction coming from the apostle Paul, but you must remember that at the time he wrote this he was accused of being an enemy of his own people. We are told in Acts 23:12, "And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul." Now Paul uses an expression that is a favorite with him: "I tell the truth, I do not lie."⁷

BKC: 1-5. By repetition in positive and negative terms (internally attested by the witness of his own conscience [cf. comments on 2:15] in the presence of the Holy Spirit) Paul affirmed his deep anguish of heart over the rejection of the gospel by the vast majority of Jews. His desire for their salvation was so strong that he was at the point of wishing (imperf. tense, I could wish) that he were cursed and cut off from Christ for his kinsmen, the Israelites.

Paul then listed seven spiritual privileges which belonged to the people of Israel as God's chosen nation: the adoption as sons (cf. Ex. 4:22), the divine glory (cf. Ex. 16:10; 24:17; 40:34; 1 Kings 8:11), the covenants (Gen. 15:18; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Jer. 31:31-34), the receiving of the Law (Deut. 5:1-22), the temple worship (latreia, "sacred service," which may also include service in the tabernacle), and the promises (esp. of the coming Messiah). Also the Israelites were in the line of promise from its beginning in the patriarchs (cf. Matt. 1:1-16; Rom. 1:3) to its fulfillment in the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. This is a clear affirmation of the deity of Messiah. Some take these words as a separate sentence (see niv marg.), but the niv text seems preferable.⁸

ESV: 1–3 Paul suffers from great anguish because his Jewish kinsmen are unsaved (see also 10:1). Indeed, if it were possible, Paul might almost choose to be accursed (to suffer God's punishment in hell) so that his fellow Jews would be saved (cf. Moses in Ex. 32:30–32). But he knows this would achieve nothing, for none but Christ could be any person's substitute to bear God's wrath.⁹

⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

²That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

Missler: Chosen to preserve God's very words..¹⁰

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Not as much by Christian scholars, but certainly more so by Christian Pastors and educators, the Book of Romans is regularly characterized as Paul's criticism against His Jewish brethren and his justification for welcoming potential gentile Believers. But such a notion is destroyed time and again by merely believing Paul and taking him at his word rather than applying heaping helpings of allegory to his statements. What Paul says beginning in verse 2 and continuing through verse 5 is such a powerful testimony against Christian anti-Semitism and Replacement Theology that it is hard to overstate it. Here Paul once again identifies Jews as his dear flesh and blood brethren; not as his former brethren or even as his opponents. Appealing to the Messiah as the guarantor of truth, Paul says in all sincerity that if somehow giving up his own personal salvation, and instead being cursed by God and cut off from His identity in and relationship with, Christ would bring his Jewish brothers (who reject Yeshua) into a state of righteousness before God, he would gladly do it. Does this sound like a man who has turned his back on his Hebraic heritage and Jewish people and instead virtually become identified as a gentile?

Paul's statement of grief, devotion and identification towards his fellow Jews echoes back to another Hebrew who, after witnessing a great apostasy by his people, offered the same personal sacrifice on their behalf.

Exodus 32:31-33 CJB 31 Moshe went back to ADONAI and said, "Please! These people have committed a terrible sin: they have made themselves a god out of gold. 32 Now, if you will just forgive their sin! But if you won't, then, I beg you, blot me out of your book which you have written!" 33 ADONAI answered Moshe, "Those who have sinned against me are the ones I will blot out of my book.

Nevertheless Paul, of course, couldn't take his people's sin as his responsibility and suffer the consequences for it anymore than could Moses. But he above most others recognized the eternal danger his people were in while they, themselves, were oblivious to it. So, Paul was willing to suffer whatever slings and arrows from his own people that he might have to endure for their sake. But once more notice: although he was Christ's designated Apostle to the Gentiles, that hardly meant that the gentiles were the only people Paul evangelized or cared about; he regularly dealt directly with the Jewish people. However, because he was assigned to go forth into the gentile world to evangelize then the Jews he encountered were the Diaspora Jews, who were quite different in attitude and customs than the Holy Land Jews that James, Peter, and others of the Apostles mostly dealt with. It was a mixed audience that he dealt with so he had to speak to them in that context.¹¹

McGee: It is impossible for us to appreciate adequately the anguish of this great apostle for his own nation. His patience in the presence of their persistent persecution is an indication of it. He knew how they felt toward Christ and toward Christianity, for he once felt that way himself. He had been a Pharisee, a leader; he longed for them to come to Christ as he had.¹²

¹⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹¹ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

¹² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Guzik: I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart: In Romans 8 Paul left us at the summit of glory, assuring us that nothing can separate us from the loved of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. So why has Paul now become so somber in his tone?

Sorrow and continual grief: Paul feels this because he considers a people who seem to be separated from God's love – unbelieving Israel, who rejected God's Messiah.

I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit: Paul uses every possible assurance to declare his great sorrow over Israel. This is something that really bothered Paul and was on his heart.¹³

2–4 My grief is so great, the pain in my heart so constant. As he considers the rejection of Yeshua by some Jewish people, Sha'ul's anguish shows how he follows in the footsteps of Moshe, the great leader. When Isra'el built the golden calf, Moshe prayed, "This people has sinned a great sin and have made themselves gods of gold. Yet now, if you will forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray, out of your book which you have written" (Exod. 32:32). Thus Moshe, like Sha'ul after him, was willing to be under God's curse if it would help his fellow Jews.¹⁴

³For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Missler: For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

So, there is also the problem of how the Gentiles are to relate to the Jews. If circumcision is of no value without faith, then what advantage has the Jew? What is the benefit of circumcision? (Same question was underlying Acts 15; and will be answered in Chapters 9, 10, and 11).

From Gen 12 to Acts 2: it's all about Israel.....and that God keeps His promises! We need a doctrinal as well as devotional understanding of the Word of God...

1] I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2] That I have great heaviness and continual [unceasing] sorrow in my heart. This is not just an intellectual issue; but a deep pain in his heart; not just academic—he is totally involved with this issue.

3] For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

"I could wish": imperfect tense (continuous action in past time), optative mood (rarely in NT); [The optative mood of a verb that is expressive of a wish that implies a contrary to fact subjunctive; i.e., "Heaven help him."] \ An absolute impossibility. [Thus, an absolute testimony to eternal security!]

This occurs only one other time in the Word of God: Exodus 32:30-32. [Cf. Num 14:11-19. If this argument had validity before the Davidic covenant, and the hundreds of other affirmations throughout the prophets, how "much more" now! Cf. Eze 36:19-(22!)-25. Despite their apostasy... How will they be converted? By the invasion of Magog, etc.]¹⁵

¹³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

¹⁴ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

¹⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

McGee: I'd like to give you a different translation of this: For I was wishing (but it is not possible) that I myself were accursed (devoted to destruction) from the Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

The verse presents a real problem in translation. If you want a free translation, here it is: For I was once myself accursed from Christ as my brethren, my kinsman according to the flesh.

Frankly, I do not understand Paul at all, if our Authorized Version has translated it accurately. Paul has just said in chapter 8 that nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. Now Paul says, "I wish I were accursed." That is idle wishing, Paul. You can't be accursed -- you just told us that. This, then, is just an oratorical gesture; you are not sincere when you say a thing like this.

However, the apostle Paul is always sincere. He didn't use oratorical gestures. So I believe he is saying, "For I was once myself accursed from Christ just like my brethren. I know I cannot be accursed, and I want them to come to know Christ and be in my present position." Professor J. A. Bengel said, "It is not easy to estimate the measure of love in a Moses and a Paul." Moses expressed the same sentiment in Exodus 32:31-32, "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin --; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."¹⁶

Guzik: I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren: This is a dramatic declaration of Paul's great love and sorrow for his brethren. Paul says he himself is willing to be separated from Jesus if that could somehow accomplish the salvation of Israel.

We should not think that Paul merely uses a dramatic metaphor here. The solemn assurances he gave in Romans 9:1 remind us he is being completely truthful.

This great passion for souls gave Paul perspective. Lesser things did not trouble him because he was troubled by a great thing – the souls of men. "Get love for the souls of men – then you will not be whining about a dead dog, or a sick cat, or about the crotchets of a family, and the little disturbances that John and Mary may make by their idle talk. You will be delivered from petty worries (I need not further describe them) if you are concerned about the souls of men... Get your soul full of a great grief, and your little griefs will be driven out." (Spurgeon)

I could wish that I myself were accursed: Paul reflects the same heart Moses had in Exodus 32:31-32: Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin; but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."

Of course Paul also shows the heart of Jesus, who was cursed on behalf of others that they might be saved (Galatians 3:13).

We should remember that when it came to ministry, the Jews were Paul's worst enemies. They harassed and persecuted him from town to town, stirring up lies and violence against him. Yet he still loved them this passionately.

"It is not easy to estimate the measure of love in a Moses and a Paul. For our limited reason does not grasp it, as the child cannot comprehend the courage of warriors!" (Bengel)¹⁷

¹⁶ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁷ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁴Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Starting in verse 4 is a list of advantages and favor that God showed to Israel. First, the people of Israel were made God's children. This once again opens up the issue of election so Paul begins his list by declaring Israel's election as God's own people (His children). Remember; a child of God, sometimes being synonymous with a son of God, means that this child's father is Yehoveh, God of Israel. And if one is a child, one can expect an inheritance from their father. Notice that they were "made" as God's children; this means that they were not God's natural born children but rather were adopted. Adopted means they were chosen out of a bigger group (so in the negative, all the other people were NOT chosen). So Paul once again confirms (using Jewish cultural terminology) the concept election; Israel was specially chosen by God from all other people on earth. A great honor indeed.

The next advantage for Israel is that God's Sh'khinah (glory) has been with them. We must grasp that in the context of defining the substance of God that the Sh'khinah is one of God's attributes. In rather standard Trinity Doctrine terminology the Sh'khinah is one of the "persons" of God. Although there is no single, universally agreed to Trinity Doctrine, they all say that there are 3 persons of God and only 3. I won't take the time to go deeply into it but I don't find the Bible supporting that notion. I certainly subscribe to the concept of the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit of God as legitimate attributes or persons or elements or components (whatever inadequate term we might choose) that together make up the Godhead. However the Bible is all too clear that the Sh'khinah speaks as God and bears God's authority, as does another and different manifestation of God called the Angel of the Lord. It is the custom in Christianity, however, to simply roll the attributes of the Sh'khinah and the Angel of the Lord into the person of The Son. There is absolutely no Biblical hint of such a thing; however if one is going to unflinchingly uphold the manmade Doctrine of the Trinity in its most rigid definition (that allows only 3 persons or 3 attributes of God to exist), then what choice does a theologian have but to roll other named manifestations of God in the Bible into one or the other of the Father, The Son, or the Holy Spirit? If not, then of course we wind up with more than 3.

To remind you: the Sh'khinah took on the form of the fire-cloud that led Israel in the wilderness for 40 years. It is also said that God's Sh'khinah is what filled the Temple when it was completed by Solomon and ordained into service. There is no biblical record of the Sh'khinah having been with any other people than Israel and it was a sign of Israel's election as God's children. It served to lead Israel and to confirm God's ongoing presence with them.

The next advantage the Jews enjoy and Paul lists is that the covenants are theirs. This is the one that ought to grab our attention the most. Folks, God ONLY made covenants with the Hebrews; no one else. The covenants are theirs. And the covenants, while meaning all the covenants, mostly points towards Abraham's and Mosses' covenants from Paul's perspective. Even the so-called New Covenant of Jeremiah 31 that is commonly said to have established the Church did no such thing; it, too, was a purely Hebrew covenant because a gentile covenant with the God of Israel does not, and has never, existed. I realize that may sound like heresy to much of Christianity, so I'll prove my point.

Jeremiah 31:30-32 CJB 30 "Here, the days are coming," says ADONAI,
"when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra'el and with the house
of Y'hudah. 31 It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the

day I took them by their hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, violated my covenant, even though I, for my part, was a husband to them," says ADONAI. 32 "For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra'el after those days," says ADONAI: "I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

First: who did God say He would make the "new" covenant with? The House of Israel and the House of Judah. Anyone else? Any gentiles mentioned here? No.

Second: After Israel has broken the earlier covenant God had with Israel, made when He brought them out of the land of Egypt, who did God say He was going to make this "new" covenant with that Jeremiah speaks about? The house of Israel. Anyone else mentioned? No.

And third: upon whom will the effect of this "new" covenant be? It will be that the "new" covenant will be written on their hearts and they will be God's people. Who are "they"? Israel. Anyone else? Some other nations listed? No.

Paul has waxed eloquently in the Book of Romans that it is the Covenant of Abraham (a Hebrew covenant) that established the promises for future "seed of Abraham". And that it is the seed of Abraham who will be the inheritors of God's Kingdom. So, Believing gentiles, if you trust Christ then you are seed of Abraham and you are an inheritor of God's Kingdom; that's the promise. But what specific group of people held that promise in the form of a covenant given to them by God? The Hebrews. So how did gentiles get into a position to be seed of Abraham? We were grafted into the Hebrew's covenants by our trust in Messiah Yeshua (Paul will discuss that at length in Romans 11). That is, if we trust in the perfect faithfulness of Jesus Christ then we will be included in the promises and terms of the Covenants of Abraham and Moses even though we are not physical Hebrews.

The next advantage is the Jews' possession of the Law of Moses, which Paul calls the giving of the Torah; another covenant with the Hebrews. It is the Torah and nothing else that defines sin according to the Apostle John in 1John3:4. The Law of Moses was given to Israel at Mt. Sinai to God's elect AFTER God had redeemed Israel from Egypt by means of the 10 plagues. According to Yeshua in Matthew 5, all who follow Him are to obey the Law of Moses; and this is because the Law of Moses is ONLY for the already redeemed (the Law is not a means of redemption). Are you a gentile following Yeshua? Then obey His command to obey the Law of Moses; Yeshua says it is your duty and that your status in the Kingdom of God will be determined by how well or poorly you obeyed The Law.

Gentile Believers: we indeed have a covenant relationship with God. But the covenants are not ours; they were given to, and they belong to, Israel. This is why we are called "grafted-in". We can only be grafted into something that already exists, and it must be into something alive and well. It does no good to be grafted into a dead stump because a graft gets its nourishment from the roots of the tree it has been grafted into. And since the stump is strictly Israel's stump, it is another advantage for Israel.

Paul next lists the Temple services. What is so important about the Temple services for Israel? It represents the true worship of the only true God. The Temple services included the altar sacrifices that atoned for Israel's sins. The Temple services included the daily burnt offering that honored the God of Israel. The Temple sacrificial services were what the sacrifice of Yeshua was patterned after. The Temple was the only place on earth where God put His holy name. The Temple services were given ONLY to the Hebrews, through the Hebrew tribe of Levi that would be God's authorized priests. The Temple services were to be where the people gathered to

observe several of God's especially holy appointed times; and the Temple services were where the Law was to be taught to the people of Israel.¹⁸

McGee: Paul raises the question: Who are Israelites? There are eight things that identify Israelites:

1. The Adoption. The adoption was national and pertained to the national entity, not to separate individuals. The only nation that God ever called His "son" is the nation Israel: "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (Exod. 4:22). Again in Deuteronomy 7:6. "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Either God meant this or He did not mean it. And if He didn't mean it, then I don't know why you believe in John 3:16 -- both promises are in the same Book. I believe John 3:16, and I believe Deuteronomy 7:6. He said "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hos. 11:1). God speaks of the nation -- not just an individual -- the nation of Israel as being His son. He never said that of any other people. The adoption belongs to Israel.

2. The Glory. This was the physical presence of God with them as manifested in the tabernacle and later in the temple. Exodus 40:35 reveals, "And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." The children of Israel are the only people who have ever had the visible presence of God. There is no visible presence of God today. We need to remember that fact.

Many years ago there was an evangelist who put up a tent in Southern California. He bragged that you could see angels walking on top of the tent and that you could see angels inside the tent. The minute he made a statement like that I knew there was something radically wrong. I also knew there was an explanation, and there was -- the man died an alcoholic. I imagine that, after two or three drinks, you could see angels walking on tents, and he probably did. But only Israel truly had the visible presence of God. The church does not have it. Why? Because the Spirit of God indwells every believer, making real the living Christ who is at God's right hand.

3. The Covenants. God has made certain covenants with the nation Israel that He intends to carry out. Many of them He has already carried out. He said He would make them a blessing to all people. He said to David that this One would come in his line. All of this has been fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. God made many covenants with Israel -- with Abraham, with David, with the nation -- which He has not made with any other people. To Israel belong the covenants.

4. The Law. The Mosaic Law was given to the nation Israel. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine" (Exod. 19:5). Then God says in Exodus 31:13, "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." This is for the nation Israel, you see.

I have been asked, "Why don't you keep the Sabbath Day?" I do not keep it because I am not a member of the nation Israel. Others have asked me, "Did God ever change the Sabbath Day?" God has not changed the Sabbath, but He has sure changed us. We are in Christ, and that is a new relationship. He gave the Mosaic Law to Israel.

5. The Service of God. This had to do with the worship of the tabernacle and temple. They were to be a kingdom of priests. "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy

¹⁸ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Exod. 19:6). The nation failed God, but God did not give up His purpose that they should be priests. God took the tribe of Levi and gave them the responsibility of serving and caring for the tabernacle and, later on, the temple. In the future, in the millennial Kingdom the nation Israel will once again be God's priests upon the earth.

6. The Promises. The Old Testament abounds with promises made to these people. God told Joshua, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel" (Josh. 1:2). The children of Israel were to possess the land. I was over there some time ago, but I didn't cross the Jordan because it wasn't safe -- probably someone would have shot at me. Several years ago I did cross the Jordan River, but not because God gave a command to Joshua and the people of Israel. I have never felt that any of the land of Palestine belonged to me. The land is beginning to bloom like a rose, but much of that land is still barren. It will be a beautiful land again when the Lord Jesus comes to rule. It has never been my land, and it never will be. The land of Palestine was given strictly to the Jews.

7. The Fathers. This refers primarily to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

8. Christ the Messiah. He came according to the flesh. When He came to this earth, He was a Jew. The woman at the well called Him a Jew (see John 4:9). Paul is careful to say that we know Him no longer after the flesh: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2Cor. 5:16). Paul identifies Jesus as God, and to Paul He is the God-Man. John 1:14 tells us, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Christ came as a human babe to the nation Israel. The woman at the well identified Him as a Jew, and I think she was in a better position to say who He was than some scholar in New York City sitting in a swivel chair in a musty library. Perhaps "Christ the Messiah" should be separated from the other seven features because it is greater than all the others. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16).¹⁹

Guzik: The adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the services of God, and the promises: The pain Paul feels for his lost brethren is all the more severe when he considers how God has blessed them with all the privileges of being His own special people.

The glory speaks of God's Shekinah glory, the visible "cloud of glory" showing God's presence among His people.²⁰

ESV: In vv. 4–5 the great privileges of Israel are listed. The six blessings here can be divided into two parallel lists of three:

Adoption	Law
Glory	Worship
Covenants	Promises

The Israelites became God's adopted people when God saved them from Egypt. Glory here probably refers to the glory of God in the tabernacle and temple. Israel received the covenants in

¹⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

²⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

which the Lord promised to save them. God gave his people his law at Mount Sinai, prescribed their worship in the Mosaic law, and gave them his saving promises.²¹

⁵Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Missler: 10 Blessings/Advantages of the Jew

1. Received the Words of God: Rom 3:1-2.
2. Called “Israelites” = “Princes of God” Gen 32:28.
Why chosen? As a witness of His reality. All nations had excluded all knowledge of God;
Called an Assyrian named
Abram; Rom 1:18-26.
3. “Adoption” as sons: Deut 7:6-9.
4. “Glory”: Shekinah: Exodus 24:16-17; 29:43; 40:34-38; Num 7:89. Departs: Eze 9:3..10:4..18f.
Yet, a Temple Covenant (!) Hag 2:2-9. Will return thru the East Gate: Eze 44:1ff. Cf. John 1:14.
5. “Covenants”: “to whom belongs” — present tense, continually.
Critical issue: “amillennialism,” although unscriptural is still the dominant eschatological view in most denominations; and the heresy of post-millennialism led to the Holocaust; (and will again...)
6. “Giving the Law”: Gal 3:17-18.
7. “Service of God:” Temple Services and Priesthood. The Temple Covenant (Missed by many commentators!) Hag 2:2-9. These rituals were for Israel, not the Church. We warned against them in unmistakable terms in Colossians 2:16ff.
8. Special Promises. Future kingdom; ruling the world...
9. “Fathers” of the Faith, the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And, climactically,
10. The Messiah would come from their physical race; Rom 9:5.²²

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Next on Paul' list are The Patriarchs of Israel who belong to Israel. Abraham is the first person to be called a Hebrew in the Bible. Genesis 14:13 CJB 13 Someone who had escaped came and told Avram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Emori, brother of Eshkol and brother of 'Aner; all of them allies of Avram. Hebrews are defined as those people who are part of the line of covenant promises made by God to Abraham.

Isaac was the next person to be called Hebrew, and after him his son Jacob. These 3 are the Biblical Patriarchs and they are all Hebrews....as apart from gentiles. But even more important Paul finalizes his list of advantages for the Jews by stating that it is from the lineage of the Hebrew Patriarchs that Yeshua the Messiah came. Yeshua was not a generic human being; He was not the universal man; He was specifically a Jew just as the ancient prophecies said the Messiah must be. Jesus Christ was not a gentile.²³

²¹ ESV Study Bible Notes

²² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

²³ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

Guzik: Of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came: Paul also considers the human legacy of being God's chosen people. Israel not only gave us the great fathers of the Old Testament, but Jesus Himself came from Israel. This entire spiritual legacy makes Israel's unbelief all the more problematic.

Christ... who is over all, the eternally blessed God, Amen: This is one of Paul's clear statements that Jesus is God. Those who prefer a punctuation that says otherwise impose their preconceived views on the text. "The grammatical arguments almost all favor the first position [that it says that Christ is God], but most recent scholars accept the second [that God here refers to the Father] on the grounds that Paul nowhere else says explicitly that Christ is God." (Morris)

Wuest, quoting Robertson: "[This is a] clear statement of the deity of Christ following the remark about His humanity. This is the natural and obvious way of punctuating the sentence. To make a full stop after flesh and start a new sentence for the doxology is very abrupt and awkward."²⁴

6Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Missler: Who is an "Israelite"? (A key question in Israel today!)

Physical descendant of Abraham? What of a convert to Judaism? What of a Jew who has received Jesus as Messiah? (The majority of Israel are agnostic humanists.)

Has God failed to keep His word to them? Israel = all 12 tribes; [Jews (denotatively, by some) = Judah, Benjamin, & Levi. Biblically, the terms are interchangeable: Cf. The Twelve Tribes, an appendix to our Expository Commentary on Joshua, Koinonia House.]

"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:" Not all—it doesn't say "any"—are Israel... 1 Cor 1:26-29. [Recognize the context: Israel, not the "church."]²⁵

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Paul has set the record straight. He said that this is the truth, and has made it clear that while a way has been made for gentiles to join into the covenants that the Hebrews have enjoyed with God, all the advantages and privileges as God's elect belong to the Hebrews (the Jews). Case closed.

Now that Paul has balanced the ledger so that no one thinks he has thrown the Jews under the bus when it comes to holding their place in redemption history, and he has emphatically shown that Israel continues in their special position as God's elect, he throws out one of the most difficult statements that Christianity has ever had to deal with. He says this: 6 But the present condition of Isra'el does not mean that the Word of God has failed. For not everyone from Isra'el is truly part of Isra'el.

By the present condition of Israel he is referring to the fact that the bulk of Jews have refused to accept Yeshua as their Messiah. But, says Paul, by no means does that indicate that what God has ordained for Israel has failed. Let's stop here for a second. If you asked almost any Christian if God's Word can ever fail I think I can safely say that all Christians, with but the rarest exceptions, would say "Of course not!" And yet, when asked if The Law of Moses is still relevant, and if not why not, they would first say that it is no longer relevant, and second is that it

²⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

²⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

had to be replaced because it was a covenant that failed and thus had to be replaced with the New Covenant. The Covenant of Moses was, and is, the Word of God. So we can't have it both ways; either God's Word never fails or it does sometimes fail. If it never fails then the Covenant of Moses did not fail either; it remains alive and well. Paul says that it did not fail and then explains why it might appear to some, on the surface, of having failed.

Paul is referring again back to what he had to say in Romans 3:3, 4: 3 If some of them were unfaithful, so what? Does their faithlessness cancel God's faithfulness? 4 Heaven forbid! God would be true even if everyone were a liar! As we talked about earlier, Paul is well aware that some Jews and gentiles could question Paul's doctrines about gentile inclusion into the faith because for them it seems like in order for Paul's theology to work God would have to be unethical in His actions by not fulfilling his promises to His covenant people. But Paul insists that it is not a conflict to say that on the one hand Israel has failed God, but on the other that even so God has remained steadfast in His faithfulness to Israel. It would seem that this violates the foundational principle of a covenant; that is, if one party violates the covenant then the covenant can be terminated. But even more, if not every Israelite has been redeemed by the Gospel of Christ that Paul preaches, then how can that not be construed as a failure of the Gospel? How is that not a failure of the Word of God that promises to redeem Israel?

Part of the reason that this is even coming up is this: Judaism in Paul's day (and to this day for the most part) saw redemption quite differently than Christianity sees it. Judaism saw redemption (salvation) as a national matter. Christianity sees redemption as an individual matter. Judaism believed that God dealt with the Jews as a collective of people (a group) when it came to redemption. Christianity believes that God deals with people on a one by one, case by case, basis and what nation we belong to has no bearing on the process. And in a sense, both are right and both are wrong because God deals with humanity on two levels: one regarding the issue of personal sin and thus personal salvation and the second level on the basis of His wrath being poured out upon nations for their collective rebellion against God. All members of a nation can suffer calamity for the actions of a nation's governmental leaders since the leaders represent the nation.

So as an answer to this problem regarding Israel's failures Paul says: "For not every one from Israel is truly part of Israel". Some translations will say: "For not all who are descended from Israel are of Israel". Christians have stumbled over this passage since Romans was first included as part of our Bibles. Here is what Paul is doing: he's making a play on words. Recall that Jacob, the founder of the tribes of Israel, was given a personal name change by God: Jacob became known as Israel. But a very long time later Israel also became the formal name of the nation of Hebrews. So in this verse the first use of the word Israel is referring to Jacob the person; the founder of the 12 tribes. The second use of the word Israel is referring to Israel nationally; it is the name of the nation of Israel (but even then only in a certain sense). So a better translation that begins to help us sort out this verse is: "For not every one from Jacob is truly part of Israel". Trust me: Paul has not really helped the situation very much. This must have caused great confusion among most who read this letter. But what he has actually done is to describe Israel as consisting of two levels. He is saying that essentially there is an Israel within Israel. There is a true Israel within a nation of descendants of Jacob. Paul now goes on to explain who this true Israel is.

In order to explain his confounding statement Paul reconnects his argument to Abraham and his seed as he discussed by in chapter 4. He uses Abraham as a historical illustration of what he is getting at when he says that not all from Israel are truly part of Israel, by saying that not all

descendants of Abraham are seed of Abraham; rather, those who can be called "seed" must come through Isaac. Let's review this. Abraham's first child, a son, was Ishmael. Ishmael was the child of Abraham's wife's servant girl, Hagar. But God rebuked Abraham for thinking that Ishmael would be the heir to the covenant that God had made with Abraham because God had told him that it was Sarah, his wife, who would provide Abraham with an heir. Abraham didn't believe God because Sarah was far past child bearing age. But in time Sarah did get pregnant and have a child: Isaac. Sarah quickly grew jealous of Hagar and her son and ordered her to leave the clan and take Ishmael with her. Abraham was devastated as he thought of Ishmael as his beloved firstborn. But the Lord told Abraham that it would be Isaac who was to be considered as Abraham's firstborn and heir to the covenant, so it was right for Ishmael to be banished. Ishmael went on to found the Arab tribes.

The gist of the matter is that it was God's will that Isaac was considered to be Hebrew, while Ishmael was NOT to be considered Hebrew even though they had the same biological father. Thus, as Paul points out, while Ishmael and Isaac can both claim legitimate blood relationship to Abraham and both can call him father, only one can be considered seed of Abraham: Isaac. Thus, says Paul, as it concerns the promises contained in the Abrahamic Covenant, it is not that simply being a physical descendant (flesh and blood descendant) of Abraham that makes one a seed of Abraham. It is only those flesh and blood descendants of Abraham who also come down through his son Isaac who can be considered as seed.

So, after drawing this illustration of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael to help explain how only some of Israel can be considered as true Israel, Paul takes it one step further and uses the illustration of Isaac and his wife Rivka (Rebecca). In this illustration Isaac fathered a set of twin boys with Rivka. So here we not only have a case of the same father and mother, but both boys are the product of the same pregnancy. The two boys shared every possible common biological ancestry. Yet, God was going to divide, elect, and separate them. One would be elected to the line of promise of Abraham's Covenant and thus be called Hebrew. The other twin would not and he would be considered an outsider: a gentile. So how did God choose? Even more, when did God choose? Paul points out that the "how" couldn't have been by merit, or that one was sinful and the other not, because the decision as to who would be elected to the line of promise (which one of the twins would be a Hebrew?) was made in the womb before either were born and had an opportunity to be either good or bad.

God had elected the second twin to come out of the birth canal (Jacob) as the inheritor of the covenant's promises; but even more, the first to be born, Esau, would serve his younger twin.

Perhaps the most important point being made by Paul (but there are others that we'll get to) is that God is completely sovereign in the most absolute sense possible. That is, His decisions are completely independent from what human beings think or do. God does not make His choices according to human social conventions, or human philosophies of fairness, or human governmental standards of right and wrong. By human social convention Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn son and had every right to inheritance. By human social convention Esau was the firstborn of Isaac and had every right to inheritance. By the human philosophy of fairness, how could God possibly judge Jacob as the righteous one and Esau as the "hated" one, when they were still in the womb?

So while Paul tells us through his historical reminders of the story of the Patriarchs' births that God can do anything He wants to in His sovereign will that still leaves us with no firm answer,

yet, to the riddle of why God would judge only some of Israel as truly Israel and the remainder as not. And we'll address that subject next time.²⁶

McGee: This is a strange expression. In other words, not all the offspring, the natural offspring of Israel, are the real Israel. The Jew in Paul's day raised the question as to why the Jew had not wholeheartedly accepted Christ since theirs was an elect nation. Is not this failure on God's part? Paul partially dealt with this problem at the beginning of Romans 3. Now Paul is going to make a distinction between the natural offspring of Jacob and the spiritual offspring. Always there has been a remnant, and that remnant, whether natural or not natural, has been a spiritual offspring. This is a distinction within the nation Israel, and he is not including Gentiles here at all. The failure was not God's; but the people had failed. God's promises were unconditional.²⁷

BKC 6-9: The failure of the Jews to respond to the gospel of Christ did not mean God's Word had failed. Instead this rejection was simply the current example of the principle of God's sovereign choice established in the Old Testament. Paul reminded his readers of a truth he had presented earlier: For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel, that is, spiritual Israel (cf. 2:28-29).

Then Paul gave three Old Testament illustrations of God's sovereignty (Isaac and Ishmael, 9:7b-9; Jacob and Esau, vv. 10-13; and Pharaoh, vv. 14-18). The first two show that God made a sovereign choice among the physical descendants of Abraham in establishing the spiritual line of promise. Ishmael, born to Hagar (Gen. 16)—and the six sons of Keturah as well (Gen. 25:1-4)—were Abraham's descendants (sperma), but they were not counted as Abraham's children (tekna, "born ones") in the line of promise. Instead, as God told Abraham (Gen. 21:12), It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned (lit., "in Isaac seed [sperma] will be called to you"). Paul repeated the principle for emphasis in different words: It is not the natural children (lit., "the born ones of the flesh") who are God's children (tekna, "born ones of God"), but it is the children (tekna) of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring (sperma). To be a physical descendant of Abraham is not enough; one must be chosen by God (cf. "chosen" in Rom. 8:33) and must believe in Him (4:3, 22-24). God's assurance that the promise would come through Isaac, not Ishmael, was given to Abraham: At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son (a somewhat free quotation of Gen. 18:10 from the lxx).²⁸

Guzik: It is not that the word of God has taken no effect: Paul thinks of someone looking at Israel and saying, "God's word didn't come through for them. He didn't fulfill His promise for them because they missed their Messiah and now seem cursed. How do I know that He will come through for me?" Paul answers the question by asserting that it is not that the word of God has taken no effect.

For they are not all Israel who are of Israel: One meaning of the name Israel is "governed by God." Paul says here that not all Israel is really "governed by God." Did God's word fail? No; instead, they are not all governed by God who are of Israel.

²⁶ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

²⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

²⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

“Paul tells us that no one is truly Israel unless he is governed by God. We have a parallel situation with the word ‘Christian.’ Not everyone who is called a Christian is truly a follower of Christ.” (Smith)²⁹

ESV: 6–7 Even though many Jews have failed to believe, God's promise to them has not failed, for there was never a promise that every Jewish person would be saved. It was never the case that all the physical children of Abraham were truly part of the people of God, for Gen. 21:12 teaches that the line of promise is traced through Isaac, not Ishmael.³⁰

⁷Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Missler: Case #1: Isaac

Isaac was the intentional product of a miracle. Gen 17:15-21. So was Israel. And so was the Church...“Isaac” = yitzak, laughter.³¹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

One of the great theological questions within Christianity is: why did God judge only some of Israel, and not all, as being part of His "true" Israel? Or even more basic: what is "true" Israel (to use Paul's terminology) as contrasted to the common or ancestral Israel that most of the Old Testament is about? Today, we will work towards attempting to answer those questions. Along the way the Apostle Paul is really going to meddle with your minds. Some tough issues and the obvious questions they raise among reasonable, thinking people are going to confront us head-on. Some of these questions are things that serious God-seekers (those who are not yet Believers) might ask, and if not given a proper answer they could just fold up their Bibles and walk away. So, let's focus today and learn how to understand and respond to these tough issues so that we can be the good and effective ambassadors for Messiah that we're supposed to be.

Paul has spent a good portion of his time in penning this letter to the Roman congregations, addressing the issue of Israel's election as God's chosen people because clearly, as he explains salvation and the place of gentiles and why Jews must accept Yeshua, he didn't want anyone to get the idea that somehow God had rejected all of Israel for the disobedience of some of them. He also didn't want a false conclusion drawn that even though some of Israel (in fairness, probably most of Israel) refused to accept the Messiah that God had sent them, which opened the door to gentiles being offered the salvation of Yeshua that gentile Believers had (as a religious group) therefore replaced Israel (as a religious group) as God's chosen people; His new elect versus His old elect, if you would.

So, Paul uses the well-known Jewish history of the Patriarchs to show a pattern for how God operates in His sovereign election of individuals and also groups of people to be His own, and as an illustration of what "true" Israel is as opposed to merely common or ancestral Israel. I want to pause, here, to say that the proofs and illustrations he uses once again make it self-evident that while Paul is certainly not excluding Roman gentiles, he has been for some time much more addressing himself to the Jewish Romans. I say self-evident because for one reason Paul referred

²⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

³⁰ ESV Study Bible Notes

³¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

to the Patriarchs as belonging to the Hebrews, and he referred to Isaac as "our" father (clearly a reference to his own Jewish heritage). For another reason Jewish history would not have been common knowledge or seem terribly relevant for gentiles. Although for Believing gentiles who studied the Torah they certainly would have at least heard of these Hebrew Patriarchs, the Patriarchs were in no wise part of their gentile cultural heritage. And, by Paul's day, since it was the Synagogue where Jews met and where gentile Believers attended, then it was far more Jewish traditions and regulations (Halakhah) that were taught and discussed there rather than the Scriptural Torah. I think it is also an invaluable lesson for the modern Church to take Paul to heart and actually hear him in Romans 9 because Paul is using his own family history (the history of the Jewish people) as taken from the Torah to explain how salvation works and through whom God created the pathway to redemption. And redemption certainly did not come through chosen gentiles.³²

McGee: This verse is a devastating blow to the argument of those who were attempting to stand against Paul. If the "seed" were reckoned on natural birth alone, then the Ishmaelites, Midianites, and Edomites would be included. A fine Arab man in Jericho said to me several years ago, "I want you to know that I am a son of Abraham." I could not argue against that. He was a son of Abraham. These others were all the physical offspring of Abraham. To be the natural offspring of Abraham was no assurance that a person was a child of promise.

You will recall what the Jews said to the Lord Jesus on one occasion, "...Abraham is our father. Jesus said unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." Then the Lord continued saying, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:39, 44).³³

⁸That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Missler: Neither Ishmael, nor the sons of Hagar nor Keturah, did inherit; only Isaac, the son of the promise, did. Physical descendancy from Abraham was not enough.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3:6

Spiritual Israel has never included all of physical Israel. Cf. Matt 3:9; John 3:3-6. [This is another staggering blow to the pretensions of those who adhere to the "universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man." Jesus clarified the "fatherhood" of the Pharisees in John 8:44!]³⁴

McGee: The apostle Paul makes a clear distinction between the elect and the nonelect in the nation Israel. "The children of the flesh" are not the children of God. "The children of the promise" are the ones counted for the seed. In Acts 21:20 Dr. Luke tells us, "And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law." There were in Israel thousands of Jews who turned to Christ after His death and resurrection. They were the elect, and Paul

³² <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

³³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

always called them "Israel." When we come to the Book of the Revelation where our Lord was speaking to the churches (the turn of the first century), He says to them in effect, "They do not even belong to a synagogue that worships Me any longer; it is a synagogue that worships Satan" (see Rev. 2:9; Rev. 3:9).³⁵

Guzik: The children of the promise are counted as the seed: God's word didn't fail, because God still reaches His children of the promise, which may or may not be the same as physical Israel.

Paul shows that merely being the descendant of Abraham saves no one. For example, Ishmael was just as much a son of Abraham as Isaac was; but Ishmael was a son according to the flesh, and Isaac was a son according to the promise (At this time I will come and Sarah will have a son). One was the heir of God's covenant of salvation, and one was not. Isaac stands for the children of the promise and Ishmael stands for the children of the flesh.³⁶

⁹For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

Missler: Gen 17:21; 18:10, 14; 21:2. Announced when she and Abram received their new names: the heh, an abbreviation of the Holy³⁷

McGee: The children of the promise are not those who believed something -- Isaac did not believe before he was born! Isaac was the promised seed. God promised, and God made good. Now we are coming to some strong statements.³⁸

ESV: 9–10 The promise (Gen. 18:10, 14) was not given to Hagar (Genesis 16) but was specifically given to Sarah and her offspring. The birth of Esau and Jacob is further evidence that God did not promise that every person of Jewish descent would be saved, for they had the same father and mother and were even twins, and yet God chose Jacob and not Esau.³⁹

¹⁰And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

Missler: Same conception, diverse destinies...⁴⁰

McGee: Isaac and Rebecca are likewise given as an illustration of this principle of the divine election.⁴¹

BKC: 10-13 The second Old Testament illustration of God's sovereign choice is drawn from the second generation of Jewish ancestry. Apparently, God purposed to establish this principle

³⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

³⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

³⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁴⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁴¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

clearly at the beginning of His relationship with His Chosen People. This illustration emphasizes God's sovereignty even more than the first since it involves God's choice of one twin over another. (In the case of Abraham's sons, God chose the child of one woman over the child of another woman.) In addition, in the case of Rebecca's children God's choice was indicated before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad. This demonstrated that God's sovereign choice was not by works, even foreseen works, but by Him who calls (cf. "called" in 1:6; 8:28, 30). God's plan (8:28; 9:11), and not man's works (4:2-6), is the basis of His election. Rebecca was informed, The older will serve the younger (cf. Gen. 25:23), a divine choice confirmed by God's declaration, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated (cf. Mal. 1:2-3). Esau, the older, did not actually serve Jacob, his younger twin; but Esau's descendants, the Edomites, did (cf. 1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Sam. 8:14; 1 Kings 11:15-16; 22:47; 2 Kings 14:7). God's "love" for Jacob was revealed in His choice of Jacob and God's "hatred" for Esau was seen in His rejecting Esau for the line of promise. Hatred in this sense is not absolute but relative to a higher choice (cf. Matt. 6:24; Luke 14:26; John 12:25).⁴²

Guzik: Our father Isaac: God's choice between Ishmael and Isaac seems somewhat logical to us. It's a lot harder to understand why God chose Jacob to be the heir of God's covenant of salvation instead of Esau. We might not understand it as easily, but God's choice is just as valid.⁴³

10–13 “Ya‘akov I loved, but Esav I hated.” In the same way that sin entered the world through one man (cf. 5:12), Sha’ul uses this theme surrounding Ya‘akov (Jacob) and ‘Esav (Esau) to show that through the messianic hope, “the gracious gift of one man, Yeshua the Messiah, overflowed to many!” (5:15). In vv. 11–13, Sha’ul reveals the distinction between “wages” and “imputation” in relation to the assertion of God’s election of Ya‘akov over Esav. In the expression “Ya‘akov I loved, but Esav I hated,” “hated” is a relative term here, meaning “loved less,” in that one (Ya‘akov) was selected as the line of promise.⁴⁴

¹¹(For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

Missler: Case #2: Rebecca's twins

Gen 25:20-26 Isaac was 60 years old; married 20 years. [I suspect that Isaac was 33 when he was “offered” in Gen 22; he was 40 in Gen 24.]

The Doctrine of Election

The paradox dissolves when one recognizes that God is outside this physical dimension called time: “God alone knows the end from the beginning.” Isa 46:10. See also The Sovereignty of Man.⁴⁵

⁴² The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁴³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁴⁴ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

⁴⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

McGee: Although this verse is in parentheses, its truth is of supreme importance. Some explanation may be offered for God's rejection of Ishmael, but that is not possible in the case of Isaac and Rebecca's children -- those boys were twins! God rejected the line of primogeniture, that is, of the first born, and chose the younger son. At that time Jacob had done no good, and Esau had done no evil. It does not rest upon birth -- that was identical -- and it does not rest upon their character or their works. Paul makes the entire choice rest upon "the purpose of God according to election." He further qualifies his statement that it is not of works, but rests upon God who calls. However, the calling in this verse is not to salvation.⁴⁶

Guzik: Not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil: Paul points out that God's choice was not based on the performance of Jacob or Esau. The choice was made before they were born.

That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls: So we do not think that God chose Jacob over Esau because He knew their works in advance, Paul points out that it was not of works. Instead, the reason for choosing was found in Him who calls.⁴⁷

¹²It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

Missler: The prophecy in Gen 25:23.

Esau = "hairy." The circumstances connected with his birth foreshadowed the enmity which afterwards subsisted between the twin brothers and the nations they founded (Gen 25:22, 23, 26). This prophecy also looked to the future, as Balaam was forced against his will to prophesy: Num 24:17, 18. Cf Isa 11:14.

In process of time Jacob, following his natural bent, became a shepherd; while Esau, a "son of the desert," devoted himself to the perilous and toilsome life of a huntsman. On a certain occasion, on returning from the chase, urged by the cravings of hunger, Esau sold his birthright to his brother, Jacob, who thereby obtained the covenant blessing (Gen 27:28, 29, 36; Heb 12:16, 17)

He afterwards tried to regain what he had recklessly parted with, but was defeated in his attempts through the stealth of his brother (Gen 27:4, 34, 38).

At the age of forty years, to the great grief of his parents, he married (Gen 26:34, 35) two Canaanitish maidens, Judith, the daughter of Beerli, and Bashemath, the daughter of Elon. When Jacob was sent away to Padan-aram, Esau tried to conciliate his parents (Gen 28:8, 9) by marrying his cousin Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael. This led him to cast in his lot with the Ishmaelite tribes; and driving the Horites out of Mount Seir, he settled in that region.

After some thirty years' sojourn in Padan-aram, Jacob returned to Canaan, and was reconciled to Esau, who went forth to meet him (Gen 33:4).

20 years after this, Isaac their father died, when the two brothers met, probably for the last time, beside his grave (Gen 35:29) Esau now permanently left Canaan, and established himself as a powerful and wealthy chief in the land of Edom (= "Red).

Edom

Idumea (Isa 34:5, 6; Ezek 35:15) "The field of Edom" (Gen 32:3) "the land of Edom" (Gen 36:16) was mountainous (Ob 1:8, 9, 19, 21). It was called the land, or "the mountain of Seir," the

⁴⁶ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴⁷ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

rough hills on the east side of the Arabah. It extended from the head of the Gulf of Akabah, the Elanitic gulf, to the foot of the Dead Sea (1Kgs 9:26) and contained, among other cities, the rock-hewn Sela, generally known by the Greek name Petra (2Kgs 14:7). It is a wild and rugged region, traversed by fruitful valleys. Its old capital was Bozrah (Isa 63:1). The early inhabitants of the land were Horites, destroyed by the Edomites (Deut 2:12) between whom and the kings of Israel and Judah there was frequent war (2Kgs 8:20; 2Chr 28:17).

At the time of the Exodus they churlishly refused permission to the Israelites to pass through their land (Num 20:14-21) and ever afterwards maintained an attitude of hostility toward them. They were conquered by David (2Sam 8:14; cf. 1Kgs 9:26) and afterwards by Amaziah (2Chr 25:11, 12). But they regained again their independence, and in later years, during the decline of the Jewish kingdom, made war against Israel (2Kgs 16:6). They took part with the Chaldeans when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem, and afterwards they invaded and held possession of the south of Palestine as far as Hebron. At length, however, Edom fell under the growing Chaldean power (Jer 27:3, 6) Herod was Idumean, not a Jew. (Cf. the Magi's slur in Matt 2:2.)

There are many prophecies concerning Edom (Isa 34:5,6; Jer 49:7-18; Ezek 25:13; 35:1-15; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11; Obad Mal 1:3,4) which have been remarkably fulfilled. The present desolate condition of that land is a standing testimony to the inspiration of these prophecies.

After an existence as a people for above seventeen hundred years, they have utterly disappeared, and their language even is forgotten for ever.

In Petra, "where kings kept their court, and where nobles assembled, there no man dwells; it is given by lot to birds, and beasts, and reptiles."⁴⁸

McGee: This is a quotation from Genesis 25:23, which was given before the two boys were born. "And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger."⁴⁹

Guzik: The older shall serve the younger: God announced these intentions to Rebecca before the children were born, and He repeated His verdict long after Jacob and Esau had both passed from the earth (Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated).

We should regard the love and the hate as regarding His purpose in choosing one to become the heir of the covenant of Abraham. In that regard, God's preference could rightly be regarded as a display of love towards Jacob and hate towards Esau.

Morris cites examples where hate clearly seems to mean something like "loved less" (Genesis 29:31, 33; Deuteronomy 21:15; Matthew 6:24; Luke 14:26; John 12:25). Yet he agrees with Calvin's idea that the real thought here is much more like "accepted" and "rejected" more than our understanding of the terms "loved" and "hated."

All in all, we see that Esau was a blessed man (Genesis 33:8-16, Genesis 36). God hated Esau in regard to inheriting the covenant, not in regard to blessing in this life or the next.

iv. "A woman once said to Mr. Spurgeon, 'I cannot understand why God should say that He hated Esau.' 'That,' Spurgeon replied, 'is not my difficulty, madam. My trouble is to understand how God could love Jacob.'" (Newell)

Our greatest error in considering the choices of God is to think that God chooses for arbitrary reasons, as if He chooses in an "eeny-meeny-miny-moe" way. We may not be able to fathom

⁴⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁴⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

God's reasons for choosing, and they are reasons He alone knows and answers to, but God's choices are not capricious. He has a plan and a reason.⁵⁰

¹³As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Missler: Quoted from Mal 1:2, 3. Gen 25:27-34. Esau disparaged the birthright, as the spiritual father of a subsequent progeny...

It is interesting to note that the alternative sons:

Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau

... portray, consistently, typologically, the tension and conflict between

...faith and works;

...grace vs. the law.

John 1:11-13. John 8:36-44. Two fatherhoods...

To be true Israel, one needs to hold to the faith of Abraham⁵¹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Since the main issue for the moment remains election, then the core question about election becomes: how, exactly, does God choose? How did God choose Isaac but not Ishmael? That's not too terribly hard for us to grasp because Abraham's two sons were born at different times to different mothers (one a slave girl, the other Abraham's legal wife). But how about Jacob and Esau? How did God choose Jacob over Esau, especially since they had the same mother; they even shared the same womb because they were twins. And, by all cultural custom, Esau was the firstborn since he emerged from the birth canal first. So how did God choose Jacob over his twin brother? After all; such a choice was not only irrevocable but also it would have far reaching and permanent effects on the lives of those children and their descendants. It gets even more dicey because, as Paul rightly points out, the choice was made while the children were still in the womb before either had a chance to sin or to prove their merit.

Then, using Jewish cultural terms, Paul says that in the case of Jacob and Esau, the older (Esau) will serve the younger (Jacob). It is hard for Westerners to understand in the ancient culture of Paul's day (and well before) just how upside-down and shocking the notion was of an older brother being given less authority and status than his younger brother. It simply is not something that is done; it is against all custom and tradition, and it is offensive and demeaning just to contemplate it. But Paul takes it even a step further by invoking the prophet Malachi to show that God made the decision to "love Jacob" but to "hate Esau". I want to point out a couple of things about this passage. First: it was common rabbinic methodology to invoke a short Scripture passage to backup what they were saying. Or better, what they were saying is but a midrash, an interpretive discussion, of the quoted Scripture passage. At first blush we might say that this sort of sounds like how modern day Pastors tend to give sermons: they issue forth a verse or two of Scripture and then apply it to their subject. But that is not at all the same thing as we find the Rabbis, like Paul, doing. In modern Church sermons short portions of Scripture passages are regularly lifted from the Bible and used regardless of the actual Biblical context. It is only that the words chosen seem to somehow back-up what the Pastor wants to communicate. However the rabbinic method was that rather than spend the time and ink to write down the

⁵⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁵¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

several OT verses to form the entire passage they are associating to their argument, they quote only a short portion of it that is familiar enough for a listener to recognize. The idea is that everything that is said about that passage (that is, the entire context) is supposed to come to mind. It is a rabbinical short cut as a means of identifying a section of Scripture. Why do that? Because in Paul's day and before, there were no chapter and verse divisions or markers. They couldn't say: "As it says in Malachi chapter 1 verses 1 through 5....." Rather, their only real choice was to quote a short passage as a reference point and expect the listener to know the rest of the passage. But my second point is about what, exactly, Paul was communicating with his quote of: "Ya'akov I loved, but Esav I hated".

Malachi 1:1-5 CJB 1:1 A prophecy, the word of ADONAI to Isra'el through Mal'akhi: 2 "I love you," says ADONAI. But you ask, "How do you show us your love?" ADONAI answers, "'Esav was Ya'akov's brother. Yet I loved Ya'akov 3 but hated 'Esav. I made his mountains desolate and gave his territory to desert jackals." 4 Edom says, "We are beaten down now, but we will come back and rebuild the ruins." ADONAI-Tzva'ot answers, "They can build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Land of Wickedness, the people with whom ADONAI is permanently angry. 5 You will see it and say, 'ADONAI is great, even beyond the borders of Isra'el.'"

In Bible-speak, in this context to "love" means to accept and embrace; to "hate" means to reject and separate. So the issue of the twins in Rivka's womb was not that God had decided upon a beautiful fondness for unborn Jacob, but an intense dislike for the unborn Esau. Rather, Esau would be separated from his twin Jacob (as far as concerns his destiny and inheritance to the line of covenant promise that his father, Isaac, was given from his father, Abraham). Jacob was given the inheritance of the line of promise; Esau was separated from the line of promise. But as we see what happened historically, Esau became embittered because he felt insulted since he was the older brother, the firstborn, and by every human custom he and not Jacob should have inherited the line of covenant promise from his father. Esau fought God's decision by bedeviling Jacob's descendants thus bringing God's anger and wrath upon himself. This is a big lesson for us when someone else gets what we think we had every right to (and by human standards it may, indeed, have been unfair).

Paul, in typical rabbinic fashion, anticipates the response from his straw man for God's election of Isaac and then Jacob. "So", says the straw man, "It is unjust for God to do this". That is, it is not fair for God to choose Isaac over Ishmael since by human custom Ishmael is the legitimate firstborn. It is not fair for God to choose to accept Jacob as the heir to the promise but to reject Esau as the heir while they are still in their mother's womb. None of those who were rejected had done anything wrong to deserve such a rejection, and none who were accepted had done anything right to earn such an acceptance. What is Paul's response to this accusation from the straw man? "Heaven forbid!" Folks, I sure hope you see the implications for us and for all humans when we begin to see where Paul is going with this line of thought. God makes sovereign decisions about us based on some criteria known only to Him. Often, no matter how positively or negatively it might affect us, what we have done or what we think has nothing at all to do with God's decision as concerns us.⁵²

⁵² <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

McGee: This is a quotation from the last book in the Old Testament (see Mal. 1:2-3). This statement was not made until the two boys had lived their lives and two nations had come from them, which was about two thousand years later, and much history had been made. A student once said to Dr. Griffith Thomas that he was having trouble with this passage because he could not understand why God hated Esau. Dr. Thomas answered, "I am having a problem with that passage too, but mine is different. I do not understand why God loved Jacob." That is the big problem. It is easy to see why God rejected Esau, friend. He was a rascal; he was a godless fellow, filled with pride, and from him came a nation that wanted to live without God and turned their backs upon Him. I can understand why God rejected Esau, but not why He chose Jacob. The Bible tells us that He made His choice according to His sovereign will.⁵³

¹⁴What shall we say then? *Is there unrighteousness with God?* God forbid.

Missler: [Let us remember: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. Isaiah 55:8]⁵⁴

McGee: What will we say to this? Is there injustice with God? Perish the thought! Let is not be. The answer is a resounding no!

The natural man rebels against the sovereignty of God. If anything is left to God to make the choice, man immediately concludes that there is injustice. Why is that?

There are people today who have applauded some of the presidents we have had during the 1960s and 1970s. Apparently -- I don't know if we will ever get the truth -- there have been bad judgments made during their terms in office, and as a result thousands of our boys have died. Yet one of those men received more votes than any man who has run for president. The remarkable thing is that we often do not question the judgments of men, but we do question the judgments of God.

My friend, although we cannot intrude into the mysterious dealings of God, we can trust Him to act in justice. We cannot avoid the doctrine of election, nor can we reconcile God's sovereign election with man's free will. Both are true. Let's keep in mind that this is His universe. He is sovereign. I am but a little creature on earth, and He could take away the breath from me in the next moment. Do I have the audacity to stand on my two feet, look Him in the face, and question what He does? That would be rebellion of the worst sort. I bow to my Creator and my Redeemer, knowing that whatever choice He makes is right. By the way, if you do not like what He does, perhaps you should move out of His universe and start one of your own so you can make your own rules. But as long as you live in God's universe, you will have to play according to His rules. Little man needs to bow his stiff neck and stubborn knees before Almighty God and say, "There is no unrighteousness with Thee" (see John 7:18).⁵⁵

BKC 14-18: With the words, What then shall we say? (cf. 4:1; 6:1; 8:31) Paul introduced the question undoubtedly in his readers' minds, Is God unjust in choosing Isaac over Ishmael, and Jacob over Esau? The Greek negative particle (*mē*) with a question implies a negative response. Paul responded in his usual emphatic way, Not at all! (*mē genoito*; cf. comments on 3:4) The

⁵³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁵⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

issue in such matters is not justice but sovereign decision, as God's word to Moses (Ex. 33:19) quoted by Paul indicates. As the sovereign God, He has the right to show mercy to whomever He chooses. In fact, He is not under obligation to extend mercy to anyone. Therefore experiencing His mercy does not... depend on man's desire (lit., "the one willing") or effort (lit., "the one running"). No one deserves or can earn His mercy.

The Apostle Paul then presented his third illustration, the Egyptian Pharaoh of the Exodus. To him God said through Moses, I raised you up (i.e., brought you onto the scene of history) to display My power in you and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth (cf. Ex. 9:16). God's power (cf. Rom. 9:22) was demonstrated as He freed the Israelites from under Pharaoh's hand. And other nations heard about it and were awed (Ex. 15:14-16; Josh. 2:10-11; 9:9; 1 Sam. 4:8). It is significant that Paul introduced this quotation with the words, For the Scripture says, for he equated the words of God with the words of Scripture. Paul concluded, God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy (cf. Rom. 9:15) and He hardens whom He wants to harden ("make stubborn"; cf. Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:27; 14:4, 8; cf. 14:17). Because of God's choice, Pharaoh then hardened his own heart (Ex. 7:13-14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34-35). All this shows that God chooses and works sovereignly, but not arbitrarily. Yet Pharaoh was responsible for his actions.⁵⁶

Guzik: Is there unrighteousness with God? Paul answers this question strongly: Certainly not! God clearly explains His right to give mercy to whomever He pleases in Exodus 33:19.⁵⁷

ESV: 14–15 Since God chose Jacob instead of Esau before they were born, without regard to how good or bad either of them would be, the question naturally arises: Is God just in choosing one over the other? God is just because no one deserves to be saved (cf. 3:23), and the salvation of anyone at all is due to God's mercy alone, as the citation of Ex. 33:19 affirms.⁵⁸

15For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Missler: What were the circumstances when God declared that? Exodus 33:19 was in response to Moses' intercession. (He even offered to die in their stead, Ex 32:32.) God took refuge in His own inherent right to suspend judgment, if it pleased Him. [Study carefully Exodus 33 & 34; esp 33:12-17; 34:1, 27, 28, 32.] There was no resource left in man!

All have forfeited title to life through sin. Let's flee to the ultimate authority: Jesus Himself. John 3:18-20. Let's make it personal: why did you believe in God? It was God's initiative. For His own purposes...

Greatest Authority: Jesus. John 6:40-47: 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Mixture: God's initiative and human responsibility.

God's perspective. In Eden: perfect relationship with God. Nothing necessitated rebellion. Tree was a test: to continue in relationship...Father of lies... lied about the character of God.

⁵⁶ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁵⁷ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁵⁸ ESV Study Bible Notes

Motivation for choice to rebel...Man instantly died spiritually; in the place of that spiritual life, came the nature of rebellion. We, their children, are like them: born spiritually dead, with a nature of rebellion against God. (Do you have to teach your children to be bad? It comes naturally.)

God is under no obligation to do anything to bridge that chasm.⁵⁹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

To continue his response to the straw man's accusation that God is unjust and unfair for choosing in the manner He does, Paul quotes a passage from Exodus. There God says to Moses: "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will pity whom I pity". So, to better understand what Moses is getting at, let's do what Rav Sha'ul expects his readers to do: recall the Scriptural context for the passage he has just cited.

Exodus 33:14-20 CJB 14 He answered, "Set your mind at rest- my presence will go with you, after all." 15 Moshe replied, "If your presence doesn't go with us, don't make us go on from here. 16 For how else is it to be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, other than by your going with us? That is what distinguishes us, me and your people, from all the other peoples on earth." 17 ADONAI said to Moshe, "I will also do what you have asked me to do, because you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." 18 But Moshe said, "I beg you to show me your glory!" 19 He replied, "I will cause all my goodness to pass before you, and in your presence I will pronounce the name of ADONAI. Moreover, I show favor to whomever I will, and I display mercy to whomever I will. 20 But my face," he continued, "you cannot see, because a human being cannot look at me and remain alive.

This entire passage is so interesting to go over, but I'll resist the temptation. What is pertinent to our subject is this: in verse 16 Moses says, "I have found favor in your sight". And, since Moses figures he has found favor in God's sight, he decides to ask something from God that he knows God has not granted to others. He asks God to show him His glory; and sure enough God does not grant that to Moses. However as a compromise God says He will show Moses His "goodness". Even more, God will show Moses how to pronounce His holy name, YHWH (I know the CJB says "Adonai", and other Bibles say "Lord"; but the original Hebrew says YHWH.....Yehoveh). Then God addresses Moses' statement that he has found favor in God's sight by saying: "I show favor to whomever I will, and I display mercy to whomever I will". In other words: Moses', don't get a big head over this. You say you have My favor, but you haven't done anything to deserve it. I simply choose whom I do and show mercy to whom I do for reasons that have little to nothing to do with the person involved. Paul's point is this: even Moses, the father of the Torah and The Law...God's Mediator....was elected due to God's mercy and sovereign will; it had nothing to do with any outstanding quality of Moses or anything Moses merited.⁶⁰

McGee: Moses, you recall, wanted to see the glory of God. God said in effect, "I'll show it to you, Moses, but I'll not show it to you because you are Moses." Now, Moses was a very important person. He was leading the children of Israel through the wilderness. God says, "I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. I will do this for you, not because you are

⁵⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁶⁰ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

Moses, but because I am God!" Do you know why God saved me? It was not because I am Vernon McGee, but because He is God. He made the choice, and I bow before Him.⁶¹

Guzik: I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy: Remember what mercy is. Mercy is not getting what we do deserve. God is never less than fair with anyone, but fully reserves the right to be more than fair with individuals as He chooses.

Jesus spoke of this right of God in the parable of the landowner in Matthew 20:1-16.

We are in a dangerous place when we regard God's mercy towards us as our right. If God is obliged to show mercy, then it is not mercy – it is obligation. No one is ever unfair for not giving mercy.⁶²

16So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

Missler: The often-overlooked Greek kai, "and," includes, but distinguishes, the "Israel of God." Israel is mentioned 75 times in 73 verses in the NT, always referring to the Nation; never the Church. It is important to carefully study Scripture and discern the difference—in fact, the "mutual exclusiveness"—of Israel and the Church.

Resolving Power

There is a relevant analogy from the field of optics: it is called "resolving power." If one looks through an inexpensive telescope, one can view a particular star. As one replaces that telescope with a finer one, he may discover that the star is, in fact, a double star.

The ability of a set of optics to "resolve," or distinguish, a closely aligned, but separate, entity is a primary figure of merit in optics. So, too, is one's discernment in "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Tim 2:15).

(In 1893, we discovered that Tsemeh, "the Branch," in the constellation Virgo, is a double star. Could this suggest the double nature of the Coming-yet-Despised One?

Key Issue: The Doctrine of Divine Election Who chooses who? Why does one person believe and another doesn't?

Fate vs Free Will? Predestination vs Free Will? Was Judas predestined to betray Christ?

Righteousness is not of works, but of divine grace—uncaused by us!

Inheritance: *kleronomeo* = A reward for a life of faithfulness. Verb: 4X in Hebrews: 1:4; 1:14; 6:12; 12:17. Jesus achieved this inheritance by perseverance in suffering (Heb 2:10; Phil 2:9-11). His companions (Heb 1:9, Greek *metachoi*) will inherit the same way (Heb 1:14). "Partakers": *metachoi*

The inheritance can be forfeited because of disobedience (as in the case of Esau (Heb 12:17); and it is only obtained by persevering—"faith and patience" (Heb 6:12)).

Rights of the firstborn: p84ff. Romans 8:16-17 p.86... The saved can lose their firstborn inheritance rights.

Sovereign Election

Why does one person believe and another doesn't? Rom 3: No man seeks after God....the choice of God...v.12: before they were born...v.13. Quoted from Malachi 1:1-4... Sovereign choice: not on a basis of merit. He elected Jacob; rejected Esau. And their descendants.

⁶¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

All have Free will. And our first choice is to reject God. John 3:18-20. We are sons of Adam. Yet, John 1:11-12. B'nai HaElohim...

Why doesn't He choose everybody? The real question is why chooses anybody!
Let us not disregard or forget: Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Rom 10:13).⁶³

McGee: God's mercy is not extended as a recognition of human will, nor is it a reward of human work. Human-willing and human-working are not motivating causes of God's actions. Man thinks that his decision and his effort cause God to look with favor upon him. Stifler states it succinctly when he says, "Willing and running may indicate the possession of grace, but they are not the originating cause" (The Epistle to the Romans, p. 172). God extends mercy, and He does it because he is God, my friend. Who are we to question Him? I bow before Him today.⁶⁴

Guzik: So, then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy: God's mercy is not given to us because of what we wish to do (him who wills), or because of what we actually do (him who runs), but simply out of His desire to show mercy.⁶⁵

¹⁷For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Missler: Case #3: Moses and Pharaoh

The Greeks used to say, "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad." History is littered with the bones of examples.

It is customary to note Pharaoh's own choice, Ex 5:2. However, it was also in God's purpose to leave it to its natural state: heavy, stubborn, increasingly hardened. (Ex 4:21; 7:3, 4, 13, 14, et al). We all would have remained in a similar state apart for Divine sovereign mercy.⁶⁶

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

OK. Moses was a good guy; a righteous man. In fact from an election standpoint only Yeshua stood above Moses among all humans ever born. But what about the other end of the scale? What about for the bad guys; the unrighteous? So Paul addresses that matter beginning in verse 17. This illustration that Paul uses is about God's confrontation, through Moses (the biblical epitome of a good guy), with Pharaoh (the biblical epitome of a bad guy). And God says to Pharaoh, the bad guy: "It is for this very reason that I raised you up, so that in connection with you I might demonstrate my power, so that my name might be known throughout the world". But it is not until we do what the good Rabbi Paul expects us to do (look at the passage in its fuller context) that we more deeply understand what he's getting at. Let me pause for just a moment. I hope you Bible students, American and international, see that you need a good study Bible that has similar attributes to the CJB in that the many New Testament texts, which are actually Old Testament quotes, are highlighted for you and you are given book, chapter and verse. Each time

⁶³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁶⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶⁵ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁶⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

you come to an OT quote in the New Testament, you should turn your Bibles to that passage in the OT and read it in full; you should read all around that brief portion given in the New Testament to get the entire context. That was the expectation of the NT author because that was the norm for those days. Reading what little bit has been put down in our New Testaments and moving right along is not proper study. You must stop, look up the OT passage, and read it. Therefore, let's look at this passage in its larger context.

Exodus 9:10-18 CJB 10 So they took ashes from a kiln, stood in front of Pharaoh and threw them in the air; and they became infected sores on men and animals. 11 The magicians couldn't even stand in Moshe's presence because of the sores, which were on them as well as on the other Egyptians. 12 But ADONAI made Pharaoh hardhearted, so that he didn't listen to them- just as ADONAI had said to Moshe. 13 ADONAI said to Moshe, "Get up early in the morning, stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Here is what ADONAI says: "Let my people go, so that they can worship me. 14 For this time, I will inflict my plagues on you, yourself, and on your officials and your people; so that you will realize that I am without equal in all the earth. 15 By now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with such severe plagues that you would have been wiped off the earth. 16 But it is for this very reason that I have kept you alive- to show you my power, and so that my name may resound throughout the whole earth. 17 Since you are still setting yourself up against my people and not letting them go, 18 tomorrow, about this time, I will cause a hailstorm so heavy that Egypt has had nothing like it from the day it was founded until now."⁶⁷

Guzik: For this very purpose I have raised you up: God allowed Pharaoh in the days of Moses to rise to power so that God could show the strength of His judgment against Pharaoh, and thereby glorify Himself.⁶⁸

ESV: For this very purpose. Paul quotes Ex. 9:16 to show that God is sovereign over evil as well. Even the wrath of man praises God (Ps. 76:10), for God installed Pharaoh as ruler and hardened his heart so that his own saving power and glorious name would be spread throughout the whole world.⁶⁹

17–18 “It is for this very reason that I raised you up.” Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 14:4 speak of God hardening Pharaoh’s heart. Sha’ul sees history repeating itself. Pharaoh’s rejection of Moshe provides the circumstances for God to demonstrate his power to deliver Isra’el from “Egypt,” serving as a metaphor for deliverance from the “bondage” of sin and death.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁶⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁶⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁷⁰ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

18Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Missler: God's choice is His, free of any obligation. If God did not elect, none would be saved. "There are none that seeketh after God (Rom 3:11).

Men are not lost because they are hardened; they are hardened because they are lost; they are lost because they are sinners.⁷¹

McGee: God says that He used Pharaoh. "But," you may say, "he was not elected." No, he sure wasn't. Just think of the opportunities God gave him. Pharaoh would have said, "I am Pharaoh. I make the decisions around here. I reject the request to let the people of Israel go." God says, "You may think you won't, but you are going to let them go." God's will prevails. When the Scriptures say that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, it means that God forced Pharaoh to make the decision that was in his heart. God forced him to do the thing he wanted to do. There never will be a person in hell who did not choose to be there, my friend. You are the one who makes your own decision.⁷²

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Paul, in verse 18, goes on to say that this passage in Exodus demonstrates that not only will God have mercy upon whom He will, but He will also harden whom He will (both ends of the scale). Wow. That's not how we like to think of God, is it? Want to know how God chooses? He's not telling. He just decides. So I'm just standing around, minding my own business, and God suddenly decides to harden my heart? Before we address that difficult matter, notice something else. Look at the OT passage that Paul quoted as it appears in your New Testaments (that is, verse 17). Where does that passage say one word about God hardening anyone (it doesn't)? And yet in verse 18 Paul acts as though he HAS said something about God hardening people and so Paul responds with: "God hardens whom He wants". See; this only works if we go to this passage in the Old Testament and read it more fully because indeed the brief Scripture passage Paul uses is Exodus 9:16. But when we take the time to go look up the entire chapter, we see that in direct relation to the passage Paul quoted, in Exodus 9:12, we read: "And Adonai made Pharaoh hard hearted". So THERE is the hardening that Paul was getting at (and expects his readers to understand), and this is a fine example of why we are to look up the entire passage.

Now to address the obvious question that, if you're paying attention, ought to have invaded your mind. God could just as easily harden my heart as He does show me mercy? And either way it seems often to have little to nothing to do with my actions. What does God do: flip a cosmic coin? So, Paul's straw man asks that very question (only a little more cleverly than I just did). The straw man asks: "Then why does he (God) find fault with us? After all, who resists His will?" Excellent question! If it is God who hardens us so that we have little choice but to let our evil inclinations be our Masters, and then the end result is that invariably we do wrong in God's sight (we sin), how can this be reasonably seen as OUR fault? After all; if God has the power to harden our hearts against our will (or at least without our knowledge), then we are utterly powerless to do anything about it. So why do we bear responsibility?⁷³

⁷¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁷² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁷³ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

Guzik: Therefore, He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens: Sometimes God will glorify Himself through showing mercy; sometimes God will glorify Himself through a man's hardness.

We should not think that God persuaded an unwilling, kind-hearted Pharaoh to be hard towards God and Israel. In hardening the heart of Pharaoh, God simply allowed Pharaoh's heart to pursue its natural inclination.

He hardens: We know that Pharaoh did harden his own heart, according to Exodus 7:13, 7:22, 8:15, 8:19, 8:32, 9:7, and 9:34. But "He does not so much as bother to indicate that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, an evidence of unbelief and rebellion, because he is emphasizing the freedom of God's action in all cases." (Harrison)⁷⁴

19Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

McGee: This is the reasoning of the natural man: If God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, why should he find fault with Pharaoh? Wasn't he accomplishing God's purpose?⁷⁵

Guzik: You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" Paul imagines someone asking, "If it is all a matter of God's choice, then how can God find fault with me? How can anyone go against God's choice?"⁷⁶

ESV: who can resist his will? If salvation ultimately depends upon God, and he has mercy and hardens whomever he pleases, then how can he find anyone guilty? How can he charge anyone with guilt since his will is irresistible?⁷⁷

20Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Missler: Cf. Isa 45:9; 29:16. Those who meet God fall into the dust: Abraham, Gen 18:27; Job, Job 30:19; 42:6.⁷⁸

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

And in an answer to that question that hardly reassures us, Paul says this in verse 20: "Who are you, mere human being, to talk back to God?" Those are Paul's words and they sound pretty arrogant. His response to his straw man is to not actually answer the question but to shame him: how dare you even ask the question? And just to make it clear that there is no misunderstanding in just how strong Paul is in his reply, he quotes Isaiah: "Will what is formed say to him who formed it, why did you make me this way?" Let us again go to the fuller text of Isaiah to understand Paul's reason for using this passage.

⁷⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁷⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁷⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁷⁷ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁷⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Isaiah 45:1-13 CJB 1 Thus says ADONAI to Koresh, his anointed, whose right hand he has grasped, so that he subdues nations before him and strips kings of their robes, so that doors open in front of him, and no gates are barred: 2 "I will go ahead of you, leveling the hills, shattering the bronze gates, smashing the iron bars. 3 I will give you treasures hoarded in the dark, secret riches hidden away, so that you will know that I, ADONAI, calling you by your name, am the God of Isra'el. 4 It is for the sake of Ya'akov my servant, yes, for Isra'el my elect, that I call you by your name and give you a title, although you don't know me. 5 I am ADONAI; there is no other; besides me there is no God. I am arming you, although you don't know me, 6 so that those from the east and those from the west will know that there is none besides me- I am ADONAI; there is no other. 7 I form light, I create darkness; I make well-being, I create woe; I, ADONAI, do all these things. 8 "Heavens above, rain down justice; let the clouds pour it down. Let the earth open, so that salvation springs up, and justice sprouts with it. I, ADONAI, have created it." 9 Woe to anyone who argues with his maker, like potsherd lying on the ground! Does the clay ask the potter, "What are you doing?" or, "What's this you're making, that has no hands?" 10 Woe to him who asks a father, "Of what are you the father?" or who asks a woman, "To what are you giving birth?" 11 Thus says ADONAI, the Holy One of Isra'el, his Maker: "You ask for signs concerning my children? You give orders concerning the work of my hands? 12 I am the one who made the earth! I created human beings on it! I- my hands- stretched out the heavens, and directed all their number. 13 I am stirring up Koresh to righteousness, I am smoothing out all his paths. He will rebuild my city; and he will free my exiles, taking neither ransom nor bribe," says ADONAI-Tzva'ot.

The person this passage is about is King Koresh; we know him better as Cyrus, the Persian king who defeated Babylon thus ending the exile of the Jews. Here is a King who has no knowledge of, or relationship with, the God of Israel, and yet God is using Koresh and giving him great power. But.....notice that this entire passage in Isaiah centers around the continuing election of Israel as God's people: 4 It is for the sake of Ya'akov my servant, yes, for Isra'el my elect, that I call you by your name and give you a title, although you don't know me.

But even more, woe to anyone (Jew or gentile) who would dare to ask God why he is showing such favor to Cyrus (a gentile pagan), and why He is showing such mercy to Israel since they have been so unfaithful to Him that God finally exiled them to a foreign nation (Babylon) for their rebellion. The Lord makes it about as clear as it can get that He is sovereign over everyone and everything because He made everyone and everything that exists. We have no right; we are in no position, as His created to question any of the Creator's decisions. Why do bad things happen to good people; why do good things happen to bad people? None of our business; the Father of all things has decided and that's that. In Isaiah, do we hear the tone of a patient daddy lovingly answering His children's naïve questions? Or do we hear the tone of a powerful God who is in no mood to have His choices and decisions questioned by mere humans, who are little more than lumps of clay that God, in His mercy, has chosen to give the gift of animation?

And, we continually read that there is very little God won't do to other nations for the sake of Israel. Don't like that? Doesn't sound fair? Too bad; you don't get a vote. God's Kingdom is not a democracy.

And by the way: what we are hearing is exactly how Judaism in Paul's day saw it. Even in the

Synagogue prayer book that is called the Siddur, in the regular weekday morning prayer we find this: "Who is there among all the works of your hands, among those above or among those below, who could say to you: What are you doing?"

I suppose it might be time to remind us all of something I taught about a long time ago: to love God is to obey God. All of our nice warm fuzzy feelings about God; all the nice things we say about Him; the way we defend Him when we talk to non-Believers; our prayers; walking through the doors of our congregation every time they are opened; that is all well and good. But God does not count any of those things as loving Him. Loving Him is when we are actively obeying Him. The second thing we haven't talked about in a while is asking God "why" concerning His decisions. "Why" is Greek thought, not Hebrew thought. "Why" says that we have a mindset that we have the right to know. "Why" is fundamentally arguing with God. As we just heard from Isaiah: 9 Woe to anyone who argues with his maker, like potsherd lying on the ground! Does the clay ask the potter, "What are you doing?" or, "What's this you're making, that has no hands?" 10 Woe to him who asks a father, "Of what are you the father?" or who asks a woman, "To what are you giving birth?"

So what Paul is saying is that we must acknowledge God as fully free and sovereign to assign to various humans different functions as He sees fit for the on-going fulfillment of the redemption of humanity and the world that is His purpose. Every function we're assigned will not be ones that we seek or ones that give us benefit in this life. Every function won't make sense to us. Every function won't be lovely, and many will be painful; some will feel most unfair.⁷⁹

McGee: Human reasoning is not the answer to the problem. The answer is found only in the mystery and majesty of God's sovereignty. Faith leaves it there and accepts it in humble obedience. Unbelief rebels against it and continues on under the very wrath and judgment of the God it questions.

John Peter Lange has well stated it: "When man goes the length of making himself a god whom he affects to bind by his own rights, God then puts on His majesty, and appears in all His reality as a free God, before whom man is nothing, like the clay in the hand of the potter. Such was Paul's attitude when acting as God's advocate in his suit with Jewish Pharisaism. This is the reason why he expresses only one side of the truth."

You cannot put one little star in motion; You cannot shape one single forest leaf, Nor fling a mountain up, nor sink an ocean Presumptuous pigmy, large with unbelief! You cannot bring one down of regal splendor, Nor bid the day to shadowy twilight fall, Nor send the pale moon forth with radiance tender; And dare you doubt the One who has done it all? -- Sherman A. Nagel, Sr.

The important thing is that God is God, and little man won't change that.

In the next few verses Paul uses the illustration of the potter and the clay. God is the Potter and we are clay. God took man out of the dust of the earth and formed him. He didn't start with a monkey -- man made a monkey of himself, but God didn't make him like that. God took man from the dust of the ground. The psalmist says, "...he remembereth that we are dust" (Ps. 103:14). We forget this sometimes. As some wag has said, when dust gets stuck on itself, it is mud. Abraham took his correct position before God when he said, "...Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes" (Gen. 18:27).⁸⁰

⁷⁹ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁸⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

BKC 19-21: Once again Paul anticipated the questioning response of his readers: Then why does God still blame us? (The Gr. word trans. "then" probably goes with the preceding statement rather than this question, though this also makes good sense.) For who resists (perf. tense, "has taken and continues to take a stand against") His will? (boulēmati, "deliberate purpose") These questions are still raised by those who reject the biblical doctrine of God's sovereignty. If God makes the choices, how can He hold man responsible? Who can go against what He does?

In response Paul reaffirmed the reality of God's sovereignty and the effrontery of such questions. But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? (cf. Isa. 45:9) Man, the created one, has no right to question God, the Creator. Paul then quoted a clause from Isaiah 29:16: Shall what is formed say to Him who formed it, Why did You make me like this? Drawing an analogy between the sovereign Creator and a potter, Paul asked, Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes (lit., "one vessel [pot or vase] unto honor") and some for common use? (lit., "unto dishonor") Obviously a potter from the same pile takes some clay to form a finely shaped and decorated vase and takes other clay to make a cooking pot (cf. Jer. 18:4-6). And the clay has no right to complain! The sovereign Creator has the same authority over His creatures, especially in light of man's origin from dust (Gen. 2:7).⁸¹

Guzik: Indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Paul replies by showing how disrespectful such a question is. If God says He chooses, and if God also says that we are responsible before Him, who are we to question Him?⁸²

ESV: 20–21 Some of Paul's readers might expect him to appeal to human free will to resolve the problem posed in v. 19. Instead, he insists that finite human beings may not rebelliously question God's ways, that God as a potter (cf. Jer. 18:1–6) has the right to do what he wishes with his creation. The honorable and dishonorable vessels in this context represent those who are saved and unsaved. Paul affirms that humans are guilty for their sin, and he offers no philosophical resolution as to how this fits with divine sovereignty. He does insist that God ordains all that happens (cf. Eph. 1:11), even though God himself does not sin and is not morally responsible for sin.⁸³

²¹Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Missler: Let's go with Jeremiah to the potter's house: Jer 18:3-6. We are as dust (Gen 2:7; 3:19); The nations are as nothing (Isa 40:15, 17).⁸⁴

McGee: God reaches into the same lump of humanity and takes out some clay to form Moses. Again, He reaches in and takes out of the same lump the clay to make Pharaoh. It was all ugly, unlovely, sightless, and sinful clay at the beginning. His mercy makes a vessel "unto honour";

⁸¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁸² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁸³ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁸⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

that is, a vessel for honorable use. It is the Potter's right to make another vessel for "dishonour" or common use.⁸⁵

Guzik: Does not the potter have power over the clay: Does not God have the same right that any Creator has over his creation? Therefore, if God declares that we have an eternal responsibility before Him, then it is so.⁸⁶

22 What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

Missler: Verb "fitted": is in a form that can mean middle voice or passive voice. Most translators assume passive; the subject receives the action. This should be middle voice: "vessels of wrath who prepared themselves for destruction." Indeed, He "endured with much longsuffering..."

Let's not confuse God's actions with man's responsibility:

The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. (Ps 58:3)

The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. (Prov 16:4)

And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. (1 Pet 2:8)

When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall . . . he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered ... (Ezek 3:20)

Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes . . . Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; (Ezek 20:24, 25) Yet,

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.(John 3:18...)⁸⁷

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

But Paul is never very far away from the issue of validating God's ongoing election of Israel has His set-apart people. So in verse 22 he asks the rhetorical question: what if God, although He was quite willing to show His wrath to Israel so that they and their enemies both saw God's limitless power, nonetheless the Lord pulled His punches and with love and patience didn't destroy Israel when they deserved nothing less? Implied in this rhetorical question is: whose business is it other than God's why He is doing what He is doing?⁸⁸

McGee: 22-24 Paul has already established the fact that God is free to act in the mystery and majesty of His sovereignty. Now Paul shows that God deals in patience and mercy even with the vessels of wrath. God did not fit them for destruction; the rebellion and sin of the clay made them ripe for judgment. God would have been right in exercising immediate judgment, but He

⁸⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁸⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁸⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁸⁸ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

dealt with these vessels, not as lifeless clay, but as creatures with a free will. He gave them ample opportunity to reveal any inclination they might have of obeying God. Although God hates sin and must judge it in a most final manner, His mercy is constantly going out to the creatures involved.

God suggests that the "vessels of wrath" are the Jewish nation, which was destroyed in A.D. 70. Jesus, you recall, announced this destruction, but He wept over the city, and he prayed, "...Father, forgive them..." (Luke 23:34). When the final judgment came in A.D. 70, God saved a remnant. These were "vessels of mercy."⁸⁹

Guzik: What if God: Again, the same principle from God's dealing with Pharaoh is repeated. If God chooses to glorify Himself through letting people go their own way and letting them righteously receive His wrath so as to make His power known, who can oppose Him?⁹⁰

BKC 22-26: Having stated that God is like a potter, Paul now applied this illustration to God's sovereign purpose for different people. He stated the two alternatives as conditional clauses (What if...?) and left unstated the obvious common conclusion: Does not God have that right? The one alternative is that God... bore with great patience (cf. 2 Peter 3:9) the objects (lit., "vessels"; cf. Rom. 9:21) of His wrath—prepared for destruction (*apōleian*, "ruin"). The perfect participle "prepared" describes past action with a continuing result or state. "Prepared" may be reflexive ("prepared themselves"), but it seems preferable to take it as passive ("were prepared"). The thought is that they have been and are in a state of readiness or ripeness to receive God's wrath. The objects of God's wrath are the unsaved (1:18), who will suffer eternal judgment (John 3:36). God has patiently endured their antagonism to Him (cf. Acts 14:16; Rom. 3:25), but their judgment is coming. Those who oppose Him and refuse to turn to Him (Matt. 23:37) are then "prepared" by Him for condemnation. They are "storing up [God's] wrath" against themselves (Rom. 2:5). In hell they will experience His wrath, and His power will be made known (cf. 9:17). God does not delight in wrath, and He did not choose some people to go to hell. Choosing (v. 22) should be rendered "willing." Some are prepared by God for eternal judgment not because He delights to do so, but because of their sin. In view of their sin, which makes them "ripe" for destruction, God is willing to exhibit His wrath, and He will do so at the proper time.

The other alternative relates to God's dealings with the objects (lit., "vessels"; cf. v. 21) of His mercy. God chose them as such in order to make the riches of His glory known and He prepared them in advance for glory (cf. 8:29-31; Col. 1:27; 3:4). The verb "He prepared in advance" (Rom. 9:23) is *proētoimasen*, "He made ready beforehand," which God does by bestowing salvation. (The word "prepared" in v. 22 is *katērtismena*, "are made or prepared or ripened.") Up to this point Paul had been speaking conditionally and objectively, but in verse 24 he was more direct—even us—because he and his readers were some of the vessels of mercy sovereignly chosen by God. God not only chose them but He also called them, including Jews and Gentiles. The point is that God's sovereign choice was manifested not only in the Jews' ancestry (in Isaac and Jacob, vv. 6-13), but also in Paul's generation and today. To back up his conclusion and particularly the part about Gentiles, Paul quoted two verses from Hosea (2:23; 1:10). God directed Hosea to give his children symbolic names—one son Lo-Ammi (not my people) and the daughter *Lo-Ruhamah* (not... loved). These represented God's abandonment of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to the Assyrian Captivity and Exile (Hosea 1:2-9).

⁸⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁹⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

God was not permanently casting away the people of Israel, however. In the verses quoted by Paul God promised to restore them as His beloved and as His people. By ethnic heritage the Gentiles were not God's people, so Paul was led by the Spirit of God to apply these verses to Gentiles—and Jews also—who were sovereignly chosen by God and called to be His people in Christ. The quotation of Hosea 2:23 is rather free with the order of the clauses reversed to fit the application to Gentiles. Paul was applying these verses from Hosea to the Gentiles, not reinterpreting them. He was not saying that Israel of the Old Testament is part of the church.⁹¹

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

Missler: Eph 1:4. He alone knows the end from the beginning: Isa 46:10.

[Cf. in Decision Theory, the Savage Principle: minimax of regret. It is easy to select the optimum alternative when one knows (in advance) the outcome.]

Yet, 1 John 2:1-2 rebuts “limited atonement”:⁹²

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

But then Paul shifts course in verse 23. Now Paul asks the question: So what if God showed Israel both His wrath and His loving-patience in order to show the people who were outside of His elect (outside of Israel) what they could have if somehow they could become His people? And what could they obtain by becoming part of His people? His great mercy. And what if those people to whom He wanted to show His glory were a mix of both Jews and gentiles? Again, implied is: who has the right to say He should or He shouldn't purpose to do this even if the humans involved weren't particularly comfortable with it?

As the proof text of God's intentions, and that His calling out of common Israel and out of common

gentiles a hybrid group, a remnant, that represents what Paul calls "true" Israel, a purified Israel that operates upon the ideals that God had always intended for those who worship Him, Paul uses

the Book of Hosea. However he doesn't use this OT passage as he has with the other passages he has chosen. Rather, he uses it more allegorically since the entire subject of Hosea chapter 2 is Israel. That is, here Paul uses a passage that is purely about the Jewish people but reframes it to demonstrate that at some point God's people will not only consist of the physical descendants of Jacob (Israel) but will also include some number of gentiles. Hosea chapter 2 is so powerful that we would not be wise to pass it by.

READ HOSEA CHAPTER 2 all

Clearly these verses from Hosea serve a dual purpose for Paul. One: they continue validating his underlying theme in Romans of the ongoing election of Israel as God's people. And that despite God's wrath upon them, and His at times turning His back on Israel, He never abandons or rejects them completely. And two: that what is happening to and for Israel can also be applied to gentiles. Gentiles who were always *lo-ammi* (not my people) become, thanks to God's mercy, part of "my people". Without doubt the build up in Romans 9 that Paul has made to this point, making it clear that no one has a leg to stand on to question God's purpose and plans, is to bring

⁹¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁹² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

us to the point of Hosea's prophecy whereby Paul is applying it both to the whole House of Israel and to gentiles. God's mercy is available to every human being on planet earth. Yet; who among Israel and who among the gentiles are elected to be "true" Israel is another question. The bottom line is that not all will be elected. There is some mysterious divine paradox at work because at one time there is an element of predetermination operating, and yet there is also another element of human freedom of choice involved. There is a redeemed Israel that consists of the descendants of Jacob on the one hand, and yet there is also another level of redemption for Israel that is Jewish Believers in Yeshua on the other hand. Then there are the gentiles who remain gentiles and have decided to worship the God of Israel through Messiah Yeshua, and yet God elects them as part of a purified "true" Israel even though they (we) are not Jews.

So Paul's message to us is this: at the end of the day, when all is said and done, it is God's sovereign will and God's unmerited mercy that are the twin drivers of human history, human destiny, and the divine plan of redemption and restoration of the world.⁹³

Guzik: He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy: As well, if God desires to be more than fair with others, showing them His mercy, who can oppose Him?⁹⁴

24Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Jews were not the only ones called!

Guzik: But also of the Gentiles: And if God wants to show mercy to the Gentiles as well as the Jews (of course, never being less than fair to either), who can oppose Him?

“The Jews were inclined to think that God could not make them anything other than vessels of honor. Paul rejects this view and points out that God does what he wills.” (Morris)

Vessels of wrath prepared for destruction: Paul does not say that God has prepared them for destruction. Those vessels do an adequate job on their own.⁹⁵

25As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

Missler: [Hos 2:23: And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.]

Peter also quotes this in a similar manner (1 Pet 2:9).⁹⁶

McGee: 25-26 The Choice Of Gentiles In The Scriptural Prophecies (9:25-33)

This is the final division of the chapter. Paul has made it very clear that the nation Israel was chosen by the sovereign will of God, not because of their merit. God not only chose a nation and

⁹³ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁹⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁹⁵ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

⁹⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

not only saved those in that nation who turned to Him -- and it's a remnant always -- but among the Gentiles He is calling out a people today to His name.

"Osee" is the Greek name of the prophet Hosea. This is a quotation from Hosea 2:23, and it refers to the nation Israel. Peter refers this prophecy to the believing remnant in his day which perpetuated the nation. To his people who had turned to Christ, he says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1Pet. 2:9-10).

The second prophecy (v. 26) is from Hosea 1:10 and refers to Gentiles anyplace on the earth who turn to Christ now and in the future. As James put it: "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:17).

And so, God reached into Europe. He did not send the gospel into Europe because the people there were superior. Some members of the white race seem to think that they are superior people. They are not. The Chinese were way ahead of my ancestors in Paul's day. My ancestors -- and perhaps yours -- were there in the forests of Europe. A branch of my family was over in Scotland. I am told they were the dirtiest, filthiest savages who have ever been on this earth. Do you think God carried the gospel to them because they were superior? They were anything but that. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (v. 16). I thank Him for that -- how wonderful it is!⁹⁷

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Last week we concluded by reading Hosea chapter 2, which is the proof text that Paul used in Romans 9:25 and 26 to help to explain how it is that on the one hand Israel is (and remains) God's elect, and yet on the other hand God's plan was always to show mercy to the gentiles and offer them the same redemption He offered Israel. Yet as we read Hosea 2 it is clear that the chapter was explicitly referring to Israel and Judah (together forming the whole House of Israel) and not gentiles. It was about Israel becoming unfaithful to her spiritual husband, Yehoveh, and as a result Yehoveh removing Israel from His presence by means of exile; even going so far as to label Israel *lo-ammi* meaning "not My people". There was also a second label that the Lord gave to faithless Israel and it was *lo-ruchamah* meaning no pity. However, God said a time would come when the people of Israel would recognize their unfaithfulness and sincerely repent. God would in turn show pity to Israel and shower them with His mercy. From being a people who, because of their rebellion, God viewed as "not My people" God would take them back and they would again be His set-apart and favored people. So, the question for us is: what right does Paul have to apply these Hosea passages to gentiles when clearly this is all about Israel?

In order to answer that important question we need to take a little detour. In modern Christian Bible study there are several approved ways to approach studying, interpreting and applying Holy Scripture; this is known among academics and Church government as hermeneutics. I won't go into the several ways to interpret and apply God's Word except to say that allegory is one of the approved hermeneutical methods. Allegory is, in modern Church settings, hands down the most widely employed method of Bible interpretation and study because in the hands of a trained or naturally skilled orator it can be used to lead his or her audience to wherever the orator wants to take them. Allegorical interpretation and presentation means that a story is told about

⁹⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

some Bible passages that expresses a hidden or underlying meaning of those passages, but which also doesn't reflect the plain meaning of those same words. There is nothing wrong with allegory in principle; the problem comes when Scripture is taken completely out of context and/or the plain meaning of the passage is said to have been replaced or overridden by the teacher's take on an underlying, hidden meaning. That, for instance, is how Christianity is able to interpret many direct mentions of Israel in the Bible as actually meaning "the Church".

Jews, too, employ hermeneutics when studying the Bible and so it is nothing new; Christians didn't invent it. When Paul went to the Academy of Gamaliel for his religious training he would have been taught in depth what I'm about to teach you in brief. Jewish Bible interpreters have numerous wellthought-out and long established ways to dissect Bible passages in order to extract meaning. I'm going to give you the 4 best known ways, but be aware that there are a number of other Jewish study and interpretation principles that I won't be sharing with you today. These 4 methods of study and interpretation are known as Peshat, Remez, Derash, and Sod. Peshat means to interpret and teach in the plainest most straightforward sense of the Scripture text as taken within its context. The passage says what it means and means what it says. Remez means that the Scriptures hint at something more, something deeper than the plainest sense of the words seem to mean. It goes beyond the elementary level to the philosophical level. Thus Remez most closely resembles the allegorical style of preaching seen in modern Western churches (although it is not precisely the same thing and I'll show you the difference shortly). Derash is more like a discussion or exposition of the pertinent Bible passages that often brings in various external sources like Rabbinical rulings, historical records, long held customs and debate. It more closely resembles what we might call exegetical Bible study, which is what we do here at Seed of Abraham. We are more familiar with this form of Bible interpretation when it is called Midrash. And finally there is Sod; Sod means secret. Sod is the preferred way of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) with its numerology and multilevel spiritual planes. Paul would have been familiar with all of these methods and in his letters he uses different methods at various times in his interpretations of Bible passages.

My point is this: Paul's method of interpretation of Hosea chapter 2, making what in the plain sense is entirely about Israel also apply to gentiles, is easily identifiable as Remez (that is, the Scripture passage hints at something deeper). However much of what we have been reading in the last few chapters of the Book of Romans has been Paul interpreting and teaching in the Derash method of study. Recall how I've shown you that Paul's straw man, and Paul's way of having his straw man state a theological principle (usually a Jewish Tradition) and then Paul refuting it using standard Rabbinical terms like "Heaven Forbid" or "may it never be", is a well-established method used by Rabbis and is comparable to what we find in the Jewish Talmud. But most commonly in Romans Paul seems to use the Peshat method of Bible interpretation (the plain sense meaning) when he quotes and then comments on OT Scripture.

Here's the thing to understand: when reading any of Paul's letters, and especially in Romans, he tends to quote Old Testament Bible passages and then interpret them according to one or the other of the 4 interpretation methods I've just told you about. That is, Paul is all about demonstrating that everything to do with redemption, including the nature and purpose of Messiah, comes from the Old Testament because that is what he had (the OT WAS the Bible for Paul; no NT existed). He is using the Torah and the Prophets as his primary reference sources to prove the validity of Yeshua of Nazareth as the God-sent Messiah, and to explain that now that He has come what it means. But an even bigger challenge for Paul is to prove that gentiles are included in this redemption, and that is how God had always intended it.

One of the several reasons that Paul can be so confusing to Christians (and especially to gentile Christian scholars) is that they are either unaware of, or unfamiliar with, the various Jewish Bible interpretation methods and principles in vogue in Paul's day. One time Paul is interpreting an OT passage in its plainest sense; the next time he is interpreting it more philosophically (even allegorically) and another time he is using other sources of evidence than the Bible (such as Jewish Tradition, Halakhah) and rolling it all together to make and prove his point. Most Jews in his time perfectly well knew the differences and could better understand his intent (although due to Paul's intellectual level it was often very complex and challenging). But gentiles were nearly hopelessly lost and overwhelmed and depended on their Jewish friends to help them with it. We do NOT see this same writing style or biblical interpretation with any other New Testament writer because Paul was the only classically trained Jewish Theologian among the several New Testament Writers; and he was formally trained in the ways of the Pharisees (the Rabbis) at an elite school. Peter was just a common fisherman. Luke was intelligent and educated, but it was as a Physician and writer; not as a Theologian. James, like his brother Yeshua, was a country boy and a blue-collar craftsman (a carpenter's son). John was the son of a family of fishermen and in time he became more of a Jewish holy man (of which there were many in his day).

So if our intent is to actually understand Paul (and not just try to prove a doctrine we believe in) we have to begin by understanding how to READ Paul. These various methods of Bible interpretation that Paul used were like tools in his tool box. He had a wrench, pliers, a screwdriver, a hammer, a paint brush and a few more tools at his disposal. He would choose the right tool at the right moment to help explain his theology. He switched interpretation tools rather naturally just as a skilled craftsman would; it was second nature to him due to his extensive religious training. As Bible students we need to be able to recognize and identify which of the several different Bible interpretation methods Paul is using at any particular moment in his letters because he bases his entire understanding of Christ upon those Old Testament Scriptures. Why is that? Because the Gospel is, itself, an Old Testament Gospel. There is no such thing as a New Testament Gospel; that designation is the invention of a gentile Church system that is partly anti-Semitic and partly ignorant of the New Testament culture, which was 100% Jewish.

So; understanding, now, that in Romans chapter 9 verses 25 & 26 Paul is using the Remez Bible interpretation method to interpret Hosea chapter 2, let's continue with Romans 9:27 and see how he interprets yet another Old Testament Scripture passage; this one is taken from the Prophet Isaiah.⁹⁸

Guzik: You are not My people: These passages from Hosea 2:23 and 1:10 show the mercy of God. God told the prophet Hosea to name one of his children Lo-Ammi, meaning "Not My People." Yet God also promised that this judgment would not last forever. One day Israel will be restored and once again be called sons of the living God.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁹⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

²⁶And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.*

Missler: [Hos 1:10: Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them,

Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.] Now “some better thing” (Heb 11:40) has been provided for us: sons of the living God! Cf. Gal 4:1-7.¹⁰⁰

²⁷Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

Missler: From the beginning, it is only a remnant that shall be saved. (Isa 10:20-22; 11:11 [written even before Babylon! This is after the 2nd, Roman, destruction]; 11:16; 37:32; Jer 23:3; 50:20; Mic 2:12; 4:7; Zeph 2:7) [Study “the remnant”: Gen 45:7; Isa 1:9; 10:21, 22; 11:11, 16; 46:3; Jer 23:3; Eze 6:8; Amos 5:15; Mic 2:12; 5:7, 8; Zeph 2:7, 9; 3:13; Zech 8:6, 12, 12.]¹⁰¹

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Verses 27 and 28 are a passage taken from Isaiah chapter 10, and verse 29 is a passage taken from Isaiah chapter 1. Because I'm spending some time today showing you the importance of learning some techniques about how to read Paul, and also how to identify which of the 4 basic methods of Scripture interpretation Paul has chosen to use, we'll take the time to read more of these chapters from which these short OT Scripture passages were taken. Remember: one of the principles of Bible interpretation and communication as used by Jewish teachers, Rabbis and scholars was that when a person was debating or instructing on a subject and used a Scripture passage as his proof text, he would only use a brief portion of the Scripture passage and expect the reader to know, or to find out, what the rest of the passage said because all of it applied. The entire passage was the intended context; not merely the abbreviated portion that was written for reference. However know that the abbreviated passage we see in Paul's letter was from Isaiah 10:22 & 23.¹⁰²

McGee: 27-28 A literal translation would be: Isaiah also cried in anguish over Israel, if the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant only shall be saved; for He [the Lord] will execute His word upon the earth, finishing and cutting it short in righteousness. The quotation Paul uses is from Isaiah 10:22-23. Only a remnant of Israel will be saved in the Great Tribulation period. If you want to see the percentage, there are approximately fifteen million Jews today. In the Great Tribulation period we know that only 144,000 Jews will be sealed -- that is a small ratio. While I do believe others will be saved during that period, 144,000 will be His witnesses, and a small remnant will be saved. It has always been only a remnant with them, and it is only a remnant with Gentiles. Now don't ask me why -- it is God that shows

¹⁰⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹⁰¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹⁰² <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

mercy. If He saved only one, it would reveal the mercy of God, because none of us deserve His mercy.¹⁰³

BKC 27-29: Here Paul quoted Old Testament verses to support the fact that God in His sovereign choice and calling always includes a Jewish segment, though it is a minority. The passages quoted (Isa. 10:22-23 and 1:9, both from the lxx) make it clear that in God's judgment on rebellious Israel He by sovereign choice preserves and saves a remnant. Those promises were fulfilled in the Captivity and Exile of both Israel and Judah and in the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70 and will also be fulfilled in the national end-time deliverance of Israel (Rom. 11:26-27). Even today the same principle is true. Jews who become members of the church, the body of Christ, are what Paul later called "a remnant chosen by grace" (11:5), which included himself (11:1).¹⁰⁴

Guzik: The remnant will be saved: The passage quoted from Isaiah 10:23 speaks first to God's work in saving a remnant from the coming Assyrian destruction. The suffering of God's people at the hands of the Assyrians and others would make them feel as if they would certainly be destroyed. God assures them that this is not the case. He will always preserve His remnant.

God has always dealt with a remnant. "It was stupid to think that, since the whole nation had not entered the blessing, the promise of God had failed. The promise had not been made to the whole nation and had never been intended to apply to the whole nation." (Morris)¹⁰⁵

28For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

Missler: After a patient forbearing silence, He suddenly executes His eternally-formed purpose. Thus, it was at the Flood; at Sodom and Gommorrah; and against the Canaanites. ...3 ½ years; 42 months... the final half of the 70th week...¹⁰⁶

29And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrhah.

Missler: Isa 1:9. We, too, but for the intervention of His grace, would go into perdition... The only reason Israel has survived is due to God's grace. [And America, too--so far...] Cf. Rom 11:1-6. Why are you in the Kingdom of God? Only because you responded to His initiative!¹⁰⁷

McGee: In this verse Paul is quoting from Isaiah 1:9. This is a startling statement, but it is a fitting climax to the sovereignty of God. Even the elect nation would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah in depravity and rebellion to God if He had not intervened in sovereign mercy and

¹⁰³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁰⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

¹⁰⁵ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

¹⁰⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹⁰⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

recovered a remnant. What an indictment of proud Pharisaism and proud church membership today! Only God's mercy keeps any of us from going to hell, my beloved.¹⁰⁸

Guzik: We would have become like Sodom: Sodom and Gomorrah were completely destroyed in judgment. This quotation from Isaiah 1:9 shows that as bad as Judah's state was because of their sin, it could have been worse. It was only by the mercy of God that they survived at all. Sodom and Gomorrah were both totally destroyed, with not even a very small remnant to carry on. Even in the midst of judgment, God showed His mercy to Judah.

The merciful promise is clear: "But if only a remnant will survive, at least a remnant will survive, and constitute the hope of restoration." (Bruce)¹⁰⁹

³⁰What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

[Abraham was a Gentile when he became a believer; circumcision came later...]

McGee: This is a thrilling statement. Gentiles, without willing or working, found righteousness in Christ because God worked and God willed it. The Old Testament Scriptures had prophesied it. As we have seen, Isaiah had said that Gentiles were to be saved.¹¹⁰

BKC: 30-33. Once again Paul asked his familiar rhetorical question, What then shall we say? (cf. 4:1; 6:1; 8:31; 9:14) preparatory to his summation of this situation. His identification of the Gentiles (lit., "the nations") as the ones who have obtained... a righteousness that is by (ek, "out from") faith is interesting. As Paul stated later, the church included Jewish as well as Gentile believers (11:1-5), but by the time of Paul's third missionary journey the increasing rejection of the gospel by the Jews and the predominance of Gentiles in the church led the apostle to speak of "the Gentiles" as antithetical to Israel. The latter pursued ("kept on pursuing") a Law of righteousness, but has not attained it. "A Law of righteousness" refers to the Mosaic Law (cf. 7:7, 12, 14). To seek to attain righteousness by observing the Law requires that it be kept perfectly (cf. James 2:10). Why did Israel not attain it? Because they pursued it not by (ek, "out from") faith but as if it were by (ek, "out from") works. The Israelites did not admit their inability to keep the Law perfectly and turn by faith to God for forgiveness. Instead a few of them kept trying to keep the Law by their own efforts. Consequently they stumbled (cf. Rom. 11:11) over the "stumbling Stone." The Lord Jesus Christ, "the stumbling Stone" (cf. 1 Peter 2:4-8), did not conform to the Jews' expectations, so they rejected Him instead of responding to Him by faith. To show that God anticipated this, Paul quoted from Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16 (cf. Rom. 10:11), combining the two statements to indicate the two contrasting reactions by men to the Stone that God placed in Zion (cf. "Zion" in 11:26).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁰⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

¹¹⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹¹¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Guzik: Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness: By all appearances the Gentiles found righteousness even though it did not seem that they really looked for it.¹¹²

³¹But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

Missler: James 2:10: For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.¹¹³

McGee: In other words, Israel, pursuing after a law which should give righteousness, did not arrive at such a law. This is a terrifying statement. The Jews tried to produce a righteousness of their own through the Mosaic system. They didn't produce it -- look at the nation today. Religious people are the most difficult people to reach with the gospel -- church members, who think they are good enough to be saved.

You will never be able to reconcile the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. But Paul is making it very clear here that if you are going to be saved it is your responsibility. It is "whosoever will may come" (see Mark 8:34) and "...him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). You can come; don't stand on the sidelines and say, "I'm not elected." But I have never heard of anybody being elected who didn't run for office. If you want to be saved, you are the elect. If you don't, you're not. And that is all I know about it. I cannot reconcile election and free will. I have come to the place in the sunset of my life that I can say that God is sovereign, and He is going to do this according to His will. And His will is right -- there is no unrighteousness with Him. He won't make a mistake. Men make mistakes; men in government make mistakes, yet people believe in them. My friend, why don't you believe in God? He is righteous, He is good, and whatever He does is right.¹¹⁴

Guzik: But Israel... has not attained to the law of righteousness: By all appearances Israel seemed to work for the righteousness of God with everything it had, but did not find it.

Attained to righteousness... not attained: What was the difference? Why did the unlikely Gentiles find righteousness, when the likely Jews did not? Because the Gentiles pursued the righteousness of faith, and the Jews pursued the law of righteousness. The Gentiles who were saved came to God through faith, receiving His righteousness. The Jews who seem to be cast off from God tried to justify themselves before God by performing works according to the law of righteousness.¹¹⁵

¹¹² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

¹¹³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹¹⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹¹⁵ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

³²Wherefore? Because *they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;*

[The redefinition of Judaism today...]

McGee 32-33: The quotation here is from both Isaiah 8:14 and Isaiah 28:16. The Jews stumbled. To the Gentile the Cross is foolishness. The one who believes, either Jew or Gentile, will be saved. The humble mind will come in simple faith. The natural man will still try to produce salvation by some natural process. He will try to reconcile the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man as if the puny mind of man is capable and infallible.¹¹⁶

Guzik: Because they did not seek it by faith: We might expect Paul to answer the question “Why?” again from God’s perspective, and simply throw the matter back on God’s sovereign choice. Instead, he places the responsibility with Israel: Because they did not seek it by faith... they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

Paul has already shown in Romans that the only possible way to be saved is through faith, not the works of the law; and that this salvation comes only through the work of a crucified Savior – which was a stumbling block to Israel (1 Corinthians 1:22-23).¹¹⁷

32–33 They stumbled over the stone that makes people stumble. “The stone that makes people stumble” was proclaimed by Yesha‘yahu (Isa. 7:14; 8:8, 10) to be ‘Immanu El (“God with Us”); i.e., Yeshua the Messiah (cf. Matt. 1:23). Luke quotes Ps. 118:22, “The stone which the builders rejected has become the Rosh Pina, the Chief Cornerstone,” and then adds, “Whoever falls on that stone will be broken in pieces; but if it falls on him, he will be crushed to powder!” (Luke 20:17b–18). Yeshua is as a stumbling stone to these Jews who pursue a relationship with God by “works” rather than by faith (Gen. 49:24; Exod. 17:6; 1 Cor. 1:23; 10:4; 1 Pet. 2:6–8).¹¹⁸

³³As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Isa 28:16.

Guzik: For they stumbled at that stumbling stone: Paul shows that Israel is responsible for their present condition. Has he contradicted everything he has previously said, which emphasized God’s sovereign plan? Of course not, he simply presents the problem from the other side of the coin – the side of human responsibility, instead of the side of God’s sovereign choice.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹¹⁷ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001

¹¹⁸ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

¹¹⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-9.cfm?a=1055001