

ROMANS 9:1-11:36 | GOD'S WORK FULFILLED THROUGH ISRAEL

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 38

ROMANS 9:1-10:21 | PAUL'S PRAYER & GOD'S PLAN FOR ISRAEL IN THE DISPENSATIONAL CHANGE & BEYOND

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ROMANS 9:6-29 | GOD'S SOVEREIGN SELECTION OF ISRAEL

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Note: verses 6-16, see Session 24. Verses 17-24, see session 25.

VERSES 25-26 – BLACK

Paul brings up, as evidence that God has not abandoned the Jews, a quote from the prophet Hosea. In the King James Version of the Bible, Hosea is referred to as "Osee." This is because the KJV translators chose to transliterate the Greek instead of use the more familiar Hebrew transliteration. This is the only time the name comes up in the Greek Scriptures, though the same reference is given by Peter without mention of the name of the prophet.

From Hosea 2:23 Paul reminded his audience that those "**not my people**" would become "**my people**" and those "**not beloved**" would become "**beloved**." He then uses a shortened version of Hosea 1:9-10 to help solidify his argument.

This quotation by Paul is often used to "prove" that the Gentiles are those who were once "**not my people**." This is "interpretation by my own experience" rather than exegesis. The book of Hosea is about God temporarily placing His nation into judgment and bringing them back again, using Hosea, Gomer, and their children as allegory. Hosea's prophecy was a message to the Israelites about their spiritual unfaithfulness and God's promises of future restoration, rather than a prediction about Gentiles. Hosea 1:10, in the context of verses 6-9 which give the names of the children ("not my people" and "not beloved"), confirms that the allegory is about "**the children of Israel**."

The fact that Gentiles have been grafted in to God's plan (Rom. 11:17) is separate and incidental, unrelated to the Hosea account. An added measure of support for this view comes in the fact that Peter, writing to Jews, also quotes the Hosea 2:23 passage in 1 Peter 2:10 in a discussion about the Jewish identity.

VERSES 27-28 - BLACK

Paul references Isaiah 10:22-23, where the prophet predicts that despite the trials faced by the kingdom of Israel in the form of an impending Assyrian invasion, only a remnant shall be saved. While Isaiah's message was primarily for Israel in that day, Paul's use of the passage gives weight to the idea of a dual-fulfillment of the Isaiah passage, with a yet-future application of the prophecy. Instead of giving a direct quote, Paul summarizes the passage, but clearly refers to "Esaias," using the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew Isaiah. In verse 27, Paul goes out of his way to stress that the words of Isaiah are "**concerning Israel**". The emphasis of the text is that "**a remnant shall be saved**" (v. 27), not the whole. This is the same argument he has been making since verse 5. Paul assures Israel that God will "**finish the work**" (v. 28) and that they have no need to fear that God has abandoned them. In addition, God will "**cut IT short**" (v. 28, referring to "**the work**"). This peculiar phrase "**cut IT short**" comes from the Greek συντέμνω [suntemno], used twice in this verse and nowhere else in the New Testament, which indicates **how** God will "**finish the work**" quickly and decisively, as if with a chop. To use a modern idiom, we might say, "it won't be long."

The fact that Paul summarizes the Scriptures is a reminder to those who, like me, believe in "verbal plenary" inspiration, that "verbal identity" is not required to fulfill the demands of the "verbal plenary" doctrine.

VERSE 29 - BLACK

Paul now paraphrases from Isaiah 1:9, also a prophecy about Israel's destruction by the Assyrians, in which God would leave "**a very small remnant**" (Is. 1:9), unlike the total destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Once again, Paul is giving evidence of

his case, that God is not going to save the totality of Israel (every Jew of every generation) but that He is going to save a portion.

Verse 29 uses the unique phrase “**Lord of Sabaoth**” to refer to the Lord. He uses the Hebrew word צָבָה [TSABA], bringing it into Greek as Σαβαώθ, which was then transliterated to English as **Sabaoth**. The KJV translators chose to keep the transliteration, as did several of the modern translations, emphasizing the Hebrew nature of the phrase. This stands as yet-another piece of evidence that Paul is writing to an audience very familiar with the Hebrew language. Since the Hebrew means “war,” an accurate translation would be “Lord of Warriors,” but the word is also used in connection with celestial objects, so “Lord of Hosts” would also be accurate.

ROMANS 9:30-33 | THE CURRENT DISPENSATIONAL POSITION OF ISRAEL

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VERSE 30 - BLUE

In our “right division” color-coding I have used black exclusively in chapter 9, indicating my belief that the text does not directly relate to those of us in this dispensation. However, in verse 30 alone Paul makes an introductory comment that is about our dispensation and thus is directly related to the body of Christ, therefore I have color-coded in blue (see introductory notes for more on the right-division color-coding).

In verse 30 Paul comes to a preliminary conclusion, of sorts. His dispensational revelation would cause some to say that “**the word of God hath taken none effect**” (Rom. 9:6). This caused Paul to spend verses 6-29 arguing that the Word of God would totally be fulfilled, even with the dispensational change, but that God did not have to save every Jew of every dispensation to fulfill His word. Now Paul comes with a conclusion, beginning with the words, “**What shall we say then?**” This is a rhetorical question Paul uses in Romans 4:1, 6:1, 7:7, 8:31, 9:14, and 9:30, and appears to be a bridge from one part of the discussion to another, moving forward yet retaining the context.

So moving forward, he speaks of “**That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness.**” In verse 24 I argued that the reference to **Gentiles** was to scattered Jews coming “out of the nations.” Here, however, the word ἔθνος [ethnos] is used to refer to a people themselves, specified as those **which followed not after righteousness**, in contrast to the Jews (v. 31 confirms the contrast between Gentiles and Israel).

Paul notes that these Gentiles have “**attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.**” He is clearly referencing believing Gentiles (those **of faith**). This is, indeed, the position of the believer in the dispensation of the grace of God (compare 2 Cor. 5:21).

VERSE 31 - BLACK

In verse 31, Paul contrasts the Gentiles, who have attained righteousness by faith, with Israel, which, despite earnestly striving for it, has not yet achieved righteousness through the law. The word “followed after” is translated from the Greek διώκω [dioko], a strong verb that suggests diligent pursuit rather than a casual chase. Paul does not undermine Israel's commitment to the law; instead, he acknowledges their diligent and sincere pursuit.

The righteousness in question here is a state of acceptance with God, of being in right relationship with Him. The Gentiles have attained this state through faith, while Israel sought it through strict observance of the Mosaic law. However, as Paul makes clear, Israel's inability to achieve this righteousness was not a failing of the law, nor due to their lack of commitment or ability to observe it.

Despite Israel's intense commitment, reflected in the usage of διώκω [dioko], a term also used to describe earnest pursuits in other parts of the New Testament, their striving did not lead to the desired righteousness. Paul indicates in the following verses that the fundamental issue underpinning Israel's struggle was not the law itself, but their rejection of the Messiah.

VERSE 32 - BLACK

The verse begins with the inherently interrogative word "διὰτι" [diati]. While every Bible translation I could find made the word a one-word sentence, "why?", I suggest that doing so is an unusual practice in the New Testament and should be reconsidered here. The placement of the question mark can influence the interpretation, which, in many cases, could potentially be swayed by eisegesis. Of the 27 times the word is used, only in this instance and in 2 Corinthians 11:11 does the KJV make use of the "one-word question" punctuation. In that passage, the question is followed by the remainder of the question (rather than the answer), so replacing the question mark with a comma wouldn't significantly affect the interpretation. Here, however, the question mark implies that the answer follows immediately, possibly leading to eisegesis.

I propose this reading: "Why? Because they followed it not by faith but by works of the law?" With this structure, the rhetorical question implies a negative response—"No, not because they followed it not by faith but by works of the law." Paul then provides the actual answer, "**For they stumbled at that stumblingstone.**" With this reading, Israel's failure to attain righteousness wasn't due to a lack of diligence in observing the law (as already established in the previous verse), nor was it because the law itself was incapable of leading to righteousness (an assertion that would question God's character). Instead, it was due to their rejection of the Messiah—despite their adherence to the law, they stumbled when the Messiah came. In the next verse, Paul will provide biblical support for this assertion.

VERSE 33 - BLACK

Paul brings Biblical support to his argument, as I understand it, that Israel's rejection of the Messiah is the sole reason why she did not attain to the righteousness of the Law. He does so by quoting from Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14. In both passages Isaiah speaks prophetically of temporal judgment from Israel's enemies, but provides Messianic hope. In 28:16 the hope is for "**a foundation stone**" that would be a sure foundation for the future. Yet Paul juxtaposes 8:14 together with that foundation stone with "**a stone of stumbling and ...a rock of offence.**" In using these passages, he shows that the Hebrew Scriptures prophesied the national rejection of their ultimate Messiah, which was an important argument for a Jewish audience, many of whom were rejecting Jesus as Messiah precisely because He had been rejected.

Paul concludes his paraphrase of scriptures by saying, "**and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.**" This echoes back to the first passage quoted above, Isaiah 26:16, which actually uses a figure of speech, "**he that believeth shall not make haste.**" The one who would "**make haste**" is the one running for shame, and thus Paul gives interpretation, not simply translation to Greek. Since Paul is under the leadership of the Spirit in writing Scripture, we can accept his interpretation as definitive.

In combining these two passages of Scripture, Paul has declared that the Jewish problem was not her works of the law, but rather her stumbling over the Messiah, which he now presents as a prophetic event fulfilled.

In verses 30-33, Paul argues that the Gentiles have found righteousness by faith apart from the law. Although Israel did not attain righteousness through the Law, Paul does not want the reader to believe that this was due to a lack of faith, diligence, or ability on the part of the Jews or the Law. Instead, Israel failed to achieve the righteousness of the Law because she stumbled at the critical point of belief that Jesus was the Messiah. In chapter 10, Paul will elaborate on this topic and use prophetic passages to explain what will happen in the future.