

Class 4

Romans 9–11: What to Do with Our Ethnicities in Light of the Gospel?

Outline of 9:1–11:36

What to Do with Our Ethnicities in Light of the Gospel?

- 9:1–10:21 A Message for Jews and Gentiles: Did God’s original plan with Israel fail?
 - 9:1–5: Israelites: To Israel according to flesh belongs the original plan
 - 9:6–18: Election: The real elected children are children of promise
 - 9:19–29: Calling: God, the potter, makes know his riches to objects of mercy, Jew and Gentile alike
 - 9:30–10:21 [Main Point]: The Righteousness of God: From faith, not works of law, for all who believe
- 11:1–11:12 A Message for the Jews: Is Israel rejected?
 - 11:1–6 No, God foreknew them and chose a remnant by grace.
 - 11:7–12 No, but they failed to obtain the goal.
- 11:13–32 A Message for the Gentiles: How is the new Israel cultivated together?
 - 11:13–16 Dough toward wholeness: Israel’s impact on Gentiles and Gentiles on Israel
 - 11:17–24 Grafting toward inclusion: Gentiles grafted in, so they should not become arrogant; Israel can be grafted back in.
 - 11:25–32 Hardening toward mercy: Israel hardened in part, gentiles come in— thus all “Israel” receives mercy
 - 11:33–36 Doxology about God, his riches, and his ways

Assignments

- Last week's assignments: 3c and 3d
- This coming week's assignment: 3e **Book Study**: Do a detailed question and observation of your 1–3 verses (Step 3e in “How to Do a Book Study”)

Introduction to the Text

- [Method of teaching: Read sections, verse by verse, stopping at important parts]
- What is this section? Romans 9–11 has been seen as:
 - A theological treatise on predestination, sovereignty, election
 - A theological aside of Paul on an otherwise really good letter
 - Theology all leading up to the point where Paul tells us how conversion will work at the end of time, based on ethnicity, just before Jesus comes back
- I propose this as the main point of Romans 9–11: That Paul is not making any new point but just driving home an important point he's already made about God's righteousness and what puts people in the right. Namely, he is saying that God has fulfilled the covenant through the Messiah, even though Israel failed to, and now, anyone who has faith, Jew or Gentile, can be counted as the children of God who will be saved.

9:1–10:21 A Message for Jews and Gentiles: Did God's original plan with Israel fail?

- Pay attention to the driving questions Paul is asking, the flow, and the logic. This is your safeguard against misinterpretation.
- Romans 9–11 is fraught with peril. So if you're not clear-minded, careful, and humble about your own leanings, you will fall into a pit.

9:1–5: Israelites: To Israel according to flesh belongs the original plan

- Driving question out of the gates: What do we do, then, with ethnic Israel?
- V. 3: “according to the flesh”

9:6–18: Election: The real elected children are children of promise

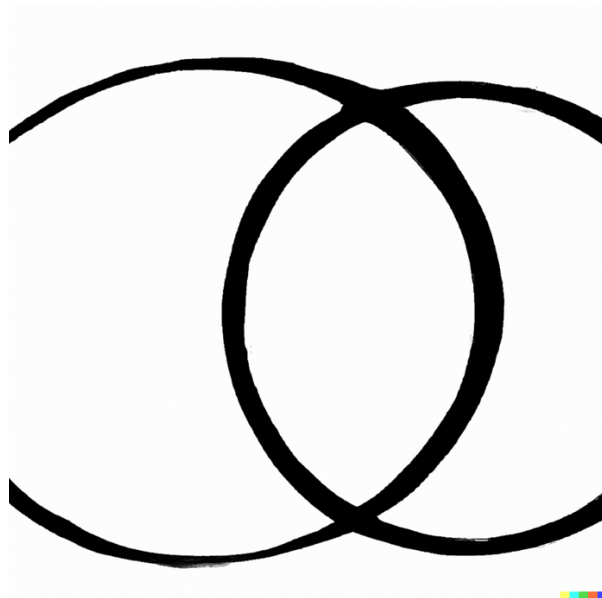
- Here he redefines election and who Israel—the true children of God—really is!
 - v. 11: Election: The newly defined children of God are those who are “elected”
 - “Election” here means simply “selection” or “choice”
 - It's the *purpose of election* that we're talking about here.
 - Good and “evil” could also be good and “ordinary” (*phaulos* in Greek is not the common term for bad or sin). The qualifier for this comes in 12: “works” is differentiators based on action.
- Romans 9:15 quotes Exodus 33:19 “18 Moses said, “Show me your glory, I pray.” 19 And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before

you the name, 'The LORD'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and **will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.**"

- v. 17 Pharaoh was hardened here, like Israel, but only momentarily in order to push forward God's agenda toward expanding his power and name.
- This verse harkens back, through paraphrastic summary, to Exodus 9:15 "For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. 16 But this is why I have let you live: to show you my power, and to make my name resound through all the earth."
- It's covenantal, not making the point that this is how God acts with all sorts of individuals at random
- God's moving his storyline forward.
- Also, the hardening of v. 18 is not just of Pharaoh, but also in reference to Israel: God

9:19–29: Calling: God, the potter, makes know his riches to objects of mercy, Jew and Gentile alike

- The question at hand here is simply: Who are we to know the reasons for the choices of God's plan?
 - v. 23 "objects of mercy," [my translation] "who were *prepared* beforehand [*proetoimazoæ*; like *proorizoæ* (predestined)] by God to be for glory"—this group includes Jew and Gentile
 - v. 24 "Calling": God calls everyone who is counted as the people of God
 - v. 27: This new group of people is a remnant of the larger circle: Paul's drawing a new circle from that which Jews thought was God's plan to include some within and some without. Looks like this:



9:30–10:21 [Main Point]: The Righteousness of God: From faith, not works of law, for all who believe

- v. 30 The conclusion (and question) that frames what comes before and drives what follows is:
 - Conclusion: Gentiles have attained the righteousness of God and Israel has not succeeded in fulfilling the law.
 - Question: Why did they not succeed? It was based on works of law, not faithfulness.
 - They stumbled over Jesus!
- Romans 10: In light of this failure, what then of the ethnic Jews? They can be saved through faith.
- 10:4: Christ is the “end” of the law: *telos*: both climax and turning point (end of one leg of the journey but beginning of a very different one—still with the same driver)
- 10:9–10: This is usually taken out of context. But here we see it’s the ultimate leveling ground. It’s not about evangelism, although it applies to new converts; it applies to what makes Jew and Gentile the children of God—not works of law.
 - v. 9: Saying “Jesus is Lord” is the essence of the Christian faith in the gospel of Jesus.
 - Write in his big Romans commentary: “‘Righteousness’ denotes the status people have on the basis of faith: a present legal status that anticipates the future verdict of the divine law court, a present covenant status that anticipates final affirmation of membership in God’s people. ‘Salvation’ denotes the actual rescue from sin and death effected in the future by the promised resurrection, and likewise anticipated in the present (so, e.g., 8:24). ‘Salvation’ is not a status but an event, and it is promised to those who have ‘righteousness’ as their status” (664).
 - v. 13: The conclusion is that “*everyone* [emphasis here] will be saved who calls on the name of the Lord.”
- v. 15–17: This offers a vital dynamic for how the gospel, obedience, and faith work together.
 - 15. Isaiah quote: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news...”
 - 16. “But now all have obeyed the good news”—The announcement of Jesus’ kingship commands obedience
 - 17. “So faith comes”... I thought he just said obedience? Faith and obedience are tied together as one in “faithfulness”
- Is obedience the basis of salvation? No, but...
- Is obedience required for salvation? Yes, but...
- Faith is the term for a faithful life of obedience that doesn’t imply that you have to be perfect. But it’s steadfast and true and obedient.

11:1–11:12 A Message for the Jews: Is Israel rejected?

- v. 1: The driving question moving forward then: Has God rejected his people? No!
- Elijah's example:
 - Shows that though the Jews thought they were the only ones, the remnant was actually more than he thought—way more! 7k more.
 - Also, their sign of “being in” was *not bowing the knee*—in other words faithfulness to God over other gods.
 - v. 6 That is how God's grace works here: He works through them, not based on works of law
- v. 7: Same line of thought: Israel failed to obtain what they were seeking—except the elect obtained it (through the Messiah).
 - 11. Did Israel stumble so as to fall? No!

11:13–32 A Message for the Gentiles: How is the new Israel cultivated together?

- v. 13 He begins talking to specific subsets in his audience as chapter 11 winds down.
- v. 16 Dough and branches—very domestic of Paul!
- x. 17–24: Olive branch analogy (wild and cultivated olive trees)
- v. 25–27 (+ 28–32): Climactical ending of the section.
 - Part of Israel: hardening
 - “Until” (*achri* in Greek) can mean “as far as” or “up to”—
 - The fullness of gentiles (not an emphasis on the specific number but on fullness)
 - The Message: "Rom 11:25 I want to lay all this out on the table as clearly as I can, friends. This is complicated. It would be easy to misinterpret what's going on and arrogantly assume that you're royalty and they're just rabble, out on their ears for good. But that's not it at all. This hardness on the part of insider Israel toward God is temporary. Its effect is to open things up to all the outsiders so that we end up with a full house. 26 Before it's all over, there will be a complete Israel."
- v. 28: “They” is Israel and “you” is Gentiles
- v. 31 MERCY!
- v. 33–36 Doxology breaks out after theology
 - Psalm 25:4, 12 story dog sitting at the patricks:
 - v. 4 “Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.”
 - v. 12: “Who is the man who fears the LORD? Him cwill he instruct in the way that he should choose.”
 - Theology must turn into praise and obedience
- All of this leads to Romans 12:1: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice...”