

Lesson Title: God's Word Has Not Failed
November 12, 2018
Romans 9:1-29 (Background Passage)
Romans 9:1-29 (Lesson Passage)

Theological Principle: God is consistent and utterly faithful to His promises.

Introduction:

- When have you felt that you were judged unfairly in a contest?

- How do you react when someone brags that God is on his or her side?

By Paul's day it has become clear that most Jews have not responded to the good news. Again and again Paul preached to Jews, only to see minimal response. When he turned to the Gentiles, however, the response was much greater. So he now confronts a church that is largely Gentile. How does such a situation fit with God's promises in the Old Testament? Did not he promise to send his Messiah to *Israel*, to glorify his people *Israel*, and to bless *Israel* in the kingdom that was coming? How can that promise be fulfilled in a church that is largely Gentile? God seems to have promised "A" and then done "B." Can "B" then really be tied to "A" as the fulfillment of what was promised?

These are the issues Paul is trying to answer in [chapters 9–11](#) (he hinted at them in [3:1–8](#)). He wants his readers to understand how, indeed, God's work in the gospel of Christ is perfectly in accord with what he promised in the Old Testament. Jews, of course, needed this message. If they are to embrace the gospel, they must see how it is truly the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Jewish-Christians also need to be assured that their faith in Christ does not mean they have ceased to believe in the God of the Old Testament and of their Jewish heritage. But Gentile-Christians must also see a connection between Old and New Testaments in the plan of salvation. They must see that their own faith has its roots sunk deeply into Old Testament soil.

Understanding the Text (Paul's Anguish Over Israel)

¹ I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—
² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, ⁴ the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵ Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

Romans 9:1-5 (NIV2011)

- What strong emotion was Paul feeling? Have you ever felt like Paul? ([9:2](#))

- How far was Paul willing to go for his fellow Jews? ([9:3](#))

- What gifts and opportunities had God given to the Jewish people? ([9:4-5](#))

Verse 3: The Greek word for “cursed” is *anathema*, a word transliterated into English that describes someone who is excommunicated. In the New Testament, it refers to a person excluded from God’s people and under sentence of damnation (see [1 Cor. 12:3](#); [16:22](#); [Gal. 1:8–9](#)).

Which other Old Testament figure made a similar statement as that of Paul? _____

Understanding the Text (God’s Sovereign Choice – God Never Fails)

⁶ It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.

Romans 9:6 (NIV2011)

In biblical studies, **inclusio** is a literary device based on a concentric principle, also known as bracketing or an envelope structure, which consists of creating a frame by placing similar material at the beginning and end of a section, although whether this material should consist of a word or a phrase, or whether.

sperma

Greek Pronunciation [SPUHR mah]

HCSB Translation descendant, seed

Uses in Romans 9

Uses in the NT 43

Focus passage [Romans 9:7-8](#)

The English word *sperm* comes directly from the Greek noun *sperma*, meaning *seed*. The term was often used for the *seeds* of plants ([Mt 13:24-38](#); [Mk 4:31](#)) and sometimes even of animals (referring to reproduction as in humans). The term *sperma* could refer figuratively to origin but refers more often to *descendants* or *offspring*.

Understanding the Text (God’s Sovereign Choice)

Romans 9:6-13 (NIV2011)

⁶ It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.

⁷ Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ⁸ In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring. ⁹ For this was how the promise was stated: “At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.” ¹⁰ Not only that, but Rebekah’s children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. ¹¹ Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: ¹² not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” ¹³ Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

How many sons did Abraham have? Circle the correct # 1 2 6 8

- How did Paul explain the difference between Jews who believe and Jews who do not believe? ([9:6-8](#))
- Whom did God bless as the parents of the nation of Israel? ([9:7-9](#))
- What did Paul say to people who claim to be children of God merely because they are descendants of Abraham? ([9:8-9](#))
- Who were the children of Isaac and Rebekah? ([9:10-13](#))
- What decision did God make about Jacob and Esau before they were born? ([9:12-13](#))

Understanding the Text (God’s Sovereign Choice)

Romans 9:24-29 (NIV2011)

²⁴ even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵ As he says in Hosea: “I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,” ²⁶ and, “In the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’ ” ²⁷ Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. ²⁸ For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.” ²⁹ It is just as Isaiah said previously: “Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.”

- Why does God show great patience with us even though we deserve His wrath? ([9:22-24](#))
- What did the prophets Isaiah and Hosea tell us about God’s patience and justice? ([9:25-29](#))

Understanding the Text (God’s Sovereign Choice – His Fairness)

Romans 9:14-23 (NIV2011)

¹⁴ What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶ It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. ¹⁷ For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” ¹⁸ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. ¹⁹ One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?” ²⁰ But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’ ” ²¹ Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use? ²² What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? ²³ What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory—

- How did Paul defend the accusation that God is unjust in His treatment of people? ([9:14-15](#))

- What determines how God bestows favor on people? ([9:16](#))
- What examples from history did Paul use to demonstrate God's choice of blessing? ([9:17-18](#))
- What right do we have to question God? ([9:19-21](#))

Apply It

- What sacrifices or efforts can you make this week to help a friend come to faith in Christ?
- When can you take time this week to thank God for His acts of mercy and love to you?