

Why God Saved Gentiles

Romans 9:25-33

Introduction: Did God abandon Israel because of their stubborn and unrepentant heart? Was it because they rejected their Messiah? Why are Paul and the other Apostles unwelcome in Israel and are now preaching mainly to Gentiles throughout the Roman world? Why did the leadership of Israel not recognize and embrace their Messiah? Has Israel committed sins which God will not forgive? These and many questions like them were being asked as Paul, the former Jewish Pharisee, went about preaching Jesus to be the promised Messiah of Scripture. All these questions have a common connection: They focus on what men have done or will do and cast God in the role of responding to His creatures. But Paul argues from Scripture [The OT] that God is carrying out His will and always knew how men would respond to Him.

Chapters 9-11 form a parenthetical explanation and response to many of the questions being asked about Israel and God. In the first 13 verses of chapter nine Paul explains that God has chosen the path He desired for His Son's entrance into the world. It would not be overruled by anything human and no appeal to custom, culture, birth order or standing would change what God determined to do. He would not let Sarah or Abraham choose the son who would inherit the promise. Neither would Isaac choose Esau or Jesse choose Eliab.

Some complain even today that it is unjust for God to choose one person over another, but God is showing mercy and compassion when He chooses, because even the chosen are entirely unworthy also. The absolutely just thing would be to leave all unchosen and unredeemed. This is how Paul can say...

Romans 9:14-16 ¹⁴ What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! 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 So then it *does* not *depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

Thankfully then....God is absolutely free to do whatever He determines. He is not limited by mankind's ideas about who is deserving and who is not. God has mercy on anyone He wants to. Mercy and grace are given as God chooses and never as man wills.

Scripture here deals with the question that should be asked. Not "why has God rejected Israel," but "why has God shown grace and mercy to Gentiles." It is not unjust when He chooses one unworthy sinner over another....It is merciful! Satan and unbelieving humanity both call it unjust, but God is unapologetic. The church should stop apologizing for God's sovereignty and proclaim His compassion, mercy and grace to sinners. He has acted this way....Paul explains.....

Romans 9:23-24 ²³ to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ *even* us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

Being a Bible preacher, Paul opens The Old Testament Scriptures to explain why God saved gentiles, who have never had any connection or standing with God.

Romans 9:25-33 ²⁵ As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'" ²⁶ "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD." ²⁷ Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; ²⁸ FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY." ²⁹ And just as Isaiah foretold, "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH." ³⁰ What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; ³¹ but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. ³² Why? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³ just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Man is not driving human History....God is! God is not reacting to mankind. It is the other way around! Man is not determining the means of salvation...God is doing and has already done that. The Salvation of the Gentiles does not require the rejection of Israel. Israel has always stubbornly rejected God in favor of her own pride and self-righteousness and Paul will prove that from Scripture. He does so using four main arguments.

- It is not men who find God, but God who finds men. [25-26]
- Heritage and Standing never take the place of God [27-29]
- God gives righteousness to men. Men do not give righteousness to God. [30-31]
- It is not the works of men that save, but the works of God [32-33]

It is not men who find God, but God who finds men. [25-26]

As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"
[25]: God is the writer of all Scripture. Jesus was the greatest preacher of the Old Testament Scripture and stated that it spoke of Him.

John 5:39 ³⁹ "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

Jesus and the Apostles preached the fulfillment of the gospel from the Old Testament. The word "fulfill" means to "fill" the Scripture "full" of meaning. The Bible is a unity. It's context is crucial to our understanding. The OT Scripture is not completely in context until the New Testament explains it to us. When an Old Testament prophet

speaks of certain events that come to pass, that same prophecy may have a fulfillment in Christ and often does. It is filled full of its meaning in Christ.

God has commanded the prophet Hosea to marry a prostitute. This normally unthinkable decision is explained to Hosea. God is about to speak to Israel through Hosea and Gomer will vividly represent Israel's unfaithfulness to God.

Hosea 1:2 ² When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and *have* children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the LORD."

By this time in history Israel was the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom. They had never had a godly or faithful king. They were founded in unfaithfulness in 945 BC, when Jeroboam....

1 Kings 12:28-29 ²⁸ made two golden calves, and he said to *Israel*, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt." ²⁹ He set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.

About 200 years later Hosea is sent to speak to a spiritually adulterous and unfaithful people. Israel does not even know who cares for her or has protected her all these centuries. Like an adulteress she receives all her husband's provisions but does not love him. God says that

Hosea 2:8-9 ⁸ ".... she does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine and the oil, And lavished on her silver and gold, *Which* they used for Baal. ⁹ "Therefore, I will take back My grain at harvest time And My new wine in its season. I will also take away My wool and My flax *Given* to cover her nakedness.

Gomer is a prostitute, but Hosea marries her knowing this and they have three children. Their God given names mean: "God Scatters," "not pitied," and "not my people." Israel was about to be scattered, unpitied and forsaken by God. Now remember....One of the questions Paul is answering in this chapter is this...."Has God's Word failed toward Israel?"

Israel is unfaithful to God, but God remains faithful to His promise. He reveals His faithfulness when he sends Hosea to purchase Gomer who by now has left him and sold herself into bondage.

Hosea 3:1-2 Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman *who* is loved by *her* husband, yet an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes." ² So I bought her for myself for fifteen *shekels* of silver and a homer and a half of barley.

Christ the Creator, has known your every sin yet purchased you with His own life and blood to be His eternal bride. Israel did everything to push God away but He had set His affection on her. Her unfaithfulness turned her into a pagan nation of idol worshipers. But God still loved her and after a time of removing His affection from her He will woo her again. He will cause her to love Him and return to Him as a faithful loving wife.

Hosea 2:14-23 ¹⁴ "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Bring her into the wilderness And speak kindly to her. ¹⁵ "Then I will give her, her vineyards from there, And the valley of Achor as a door of hope. And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt..... ¹⁸ "In that day I will also make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, The birds of the sky And the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land, And will make them lie down in safety. ¹⁹ "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion, ²⁰ And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD..... ²³ "I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, And I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they will say, '*You are my God!*'"

"AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD." [26]: God has said to national Israel...you are not my people," because according to Hosea, "He was not their God." In other words, being a descendent of Abraham does not make you the people of God. As Hosea's third child was born

Hosea 1:9-10 ⁹ the LORD said, "Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God." ¹⁰ Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And in the place Where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "*You are the sons of the living God.*"

This was an emphatic rejection of Israel and a dramatic reversal. It takes place in their homeland... but in that same place [The land of Israel] they will one day be called "sons of the living God."

Far from failing, Israel's unbelief is well documented and anticipated by the Prophets of God. If any Jews are going to be saved it will be because God will seek them and bring their hearts to Christ their Messiah. If this is the case for the "chosen people of God," how much more will it be for the Gentiles God chooses to save. It is His doing! It is His willing! It is of God and not of mankind.

Leon Morris believes the point is...."If there was hope for people who had been put there as a punishment, then much more was there hope for people who were there naturally. Apostate Israel, God says, was not my people, they had lived as heathens and now they had become as heathens. But that was not God's last word. Rather, I will call them my people. Those whom God wills to restore will be restored. Further I will call my love one, who is not my loved one."

Heritage and Standing never take the place of God [27-29]

Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT

WILL BE SAVED; [27]: To reinforce this theme Paul quotes Isaiah who lived at the same time as Hosea, but preached to the two southern tribes of Judah for 48 years.

“Cries out,” describes an emotional outburst of grief. “All these children of Abraham...millions, like sand on a seashore and only a small remnant will be saved.” Why, because heritage and standing cannot take the place of God.

FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY.” [28]: This is how God is. He is patient. He is merciful. He calls to his people. He sends the prophets to warn them. Isaiah preached for 48 years...Have you ever read Isaiah? Is there anything vague or unclear about how God felt about the sin of His people in Judah? No! But they did not repent. They did not believe God. When God finally acts in judgment it was swift and definitive. Amos described it like this...

Amos 3:11-12 ¹¹ Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "An enemy, even one surrounding the land, Will pull down your strength from you And your citadels will be looted." ¹² Thus says the LORD, "Just as the shepherd snatches from the lion's mouth a couple of legs or a piece of an ear, So will the sons of Israel dwelling in Samaria be snatched away--

And just as Isaiah foretold, "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH." [29]: Lord of Sabaoth is the “Lord of Hosts.” Luther spoke of him saying...”Lord Sabaoth His name...from age to age the same...and He must win the battle.” He is the Supreme ruler and Lord of Creation. He is the only one who can keep Israel from becoming like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Do you know much about Sodom and Gomorrah? What about its civilization and architecture and customs and people? NO! We know almost nothing...and that is exactly the point. They are synonyms for complete and total annihilation. What other nation ever lost it’s worship, its land, its culture, its king and his lineage, its religion, its priesthood and even for a while...its language and survived. Its continuation is the sole doing of the Lord of Hosts!

Let’s review for a moment. Men say that God’s Word has failed because Israel has not believed in their Messiah. Others accuse God of being unfair for having mercy on some but not all. God’s answer is that humanity rejects God and He has a Sovereign right to rule His creation. Salvation God’s Word concludes ...

Romans 9:16 ¹⁶ *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

God gives righteousness to men. Men do not give righteousness to God. [30-31]

What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; [30]: “What shall we say then” means what should we conclude based on what we have just said?

The Gentiles are the ones who did not descend from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. They did not receive the Law of God or hear the preaching of the prophets of God or receive a visitation from the Son of God. As a result they pursued the world. They were pagans and lived as idol worshipers. They did not pursue righteousness and yet they attained it. BUT....Paul is not saying that all Gentiles are saved. He is not saying that all gentiles pursued righteousness.

He is explaining how a people with no connection to God by heritage, standing, or privilege ended up attaining righteousness. They obtained it by faith! And this is, a stunning rebuke to the Jews. They believed themselves already saved, by virtue of their connection to Abraham. They had no need of, or use for, faith.

“Paul is not saying, of course, that the pagan Gentiles naturally sought God’s righteousness through faith. Whether Jew or Gentile, the natural man never seeks God by his own independent choice.

Romans 8:7-8 ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Despite their being called as God’s chosen people and their having received His divine revelation through Moses, the psalmist, the prophets and other inspired men of God, the Jews were no more naturally inclined to seek or to obey God than was the most pagan Gentile.

In fact, when the gospel came through Christ, far more Gentiles than Jews believed. The greatest obstacle to salvation is self-righteousness. The person who thinks he is already righteous and pleases God will see no need for salvation.because most Jews thought they had satisfied God by their Jewishness or their works righteousness, they felt no need for the gospel of grace through faith.” *John MacArthur*

But Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. [31]: AGAIN...God’s righteousness cannot be obtained by man’s effort. You cannot live a moral, religious life of good works and human kindness and then present that to God as righteousness. This was the tragedy of unbelieving Israel. She offered her righteousness to God and would not take His offer of righteousness to her. She considered....like almost all humans in our world today....good or at least good enough.

The law can never make any one righteous. It only reveals our unrighteousness. A law against stealing cannot make a thief honest. It can only condemn his dishonesty. So it is with the law of God.

Romans 3:19-20 ¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become

accountable to God; ²⁰ because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

But in the same breath...God reveals how men become righteous. It is through trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. There...The Sinless Son of God bore your sins and gave you His righteousness. It is a gift totally apart from ourselves. **It can never be achieved only received.** Had Israel listened to her prophets she would have known. They spoke of it, but she preferred her own prideful righteousness.

Romans 3:21-24 ²¹ But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

It is not the works of men that save, but the works of Christ [32-33]

Why? Because *they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works* [32a]: The lesson here is to get low before God. Whatever you think worthy or good about yourself is the greatest danger to your soul. Paul had been there and done that. He pursued righteousness found in the law until he came face to face with Jesus on that desert road leading to Syria. To the Philippians he testified that....

Philippians 3:7-9 ⁷whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,

They stumbled over the stumbling stone, [32b]: It is hard to describe how offended Israel was by Jesus Christ. The vicious crucifixion is probably about the only thing that comes close. They broke almost every law they had and perjured themselves to have Him killed. They ignored every healing and miracle....even the raising of the dead. After Lazarus was raised, John records that...

John 11:53 ⁵³ from that day on they planned together to kill Him.

Just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, [33a]: But God always knew how this would play out. He knew of Israel's stubborn unbelief and almost complete lack of love for Him. God told Isaiah of their unbelief centuries before. He also said how He intended to judge it. IT would be by sending His own Son.....The vineyard owner's own Son to them in their unbelief.

Isaiah 28:14-18 ¹⁴ Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, O scoffers, Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, ¹⁵ Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with

death, And with Sheol we have made a pact. The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by, For we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception." ¹⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone *for* the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes *in it* will not be disturbed. ¹⁷ "I will make justice the measuring line And righteousness the level; Then hail will sweep away the refuge of lies And the waters will overflow the secret place. ¹⁸ "Your covenant with death will be canceled, And your pact with Sheol will not stand; When the overwhelming scourge passes through, Then you become its trampling *place*.

AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." [33b]: But as surely as men are offended to the point of murder by Jesus Christ there are those who put their trust in Him. How would you feel if every thought and sin of your life became public knowledge? Humiliated? Ashamed? Disgraced? Hopeless? These are all meanings for the word translated "disappoint" here. How can we escape this sure destiny? Only one way! In Christ your disgrace is swallowed up by His righteousness.

Colossians 3:3-4 ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Oh blessed trusting faith in Christ alone. To just come to the Cross as the sinner that you are and receive all forgiveness and purity and righteousness from the Holy Son of the Living God. Why did God save the Gentiles? Because the glory of saving Israel alone was too small a thing. The Glory of God's Saving Grace is too grand to be confined to tiny Israel alone! Habakkuk says....

Habakkuk 2:14 ¹⁴ "... the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

Christ is speaking about and to His Father as Isaiah records this conversation....

Isaiah 49:5-13 ⁵ And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honored in the sight of the LORD, And My God is My strength), ⁶ He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." ⁷ Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel *and* its Holy One, To the despised One, To the One abhorred by the nation, To the Servant of rulers, "Kings will see and arise, Princes will also bow down, Because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You.

Faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone, revealed through the Scripture alone and for the Glory of GodALONE!