

The Book of Romans

LESSON NINE

“Israel’s Rejection of God’s Messiah”

Paul has laid out for us in chapters one through eight, man’s need for a Savior and God’s plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. As we move into chapters nine through eleven, Paul will speak about Israel’s rejection of the Messiah and the condition of their hearts. Paul will show in these next chapters how Israel’s rejection worked into God’s plan of redemption for the Gentiles, and God’s future plan for the nation of Israel.

1. Chapter 9 begins with Paul expressing deep grief over Israel. Looking at **verses 1 & 2**, Paul refutes any notion that he has turned his back on his countrymen. Write out Paul’s words in these two verses below.
2. Reading **verses 3-5**, Paul describes the continual grief of his heart. What does he say in **verse 3**?
3. We might think that Paul is being a bit dramatic here in describing his grief, but his statement in **verse 1** assures us that he is being very serious. This love he had for his people was also shared by Moses. Look up the words of Moses in **Exodus 32:31-32** and record those words below.
4. Paul goes on in **verse 4** to list all the ways in which Israel, God’s chosen people, were privileged. Name those special privileges listed in **verse 4**.
5. Looking at each one of these special privileges, record the Scriptures next to them that describe these advantages they were given as God’s chosen people.

The Adoption

Deuteronomy 7:6 -

The Glory

Exodus 24:17 -

Exodus 40:34 -

The Covenants

Genesis 15:18 -

Deuteronomy 4:13 -

Exodus 19:5 -

The Giving of the Law

Deuteronomy 5:1 -

Deuteronomy 5:22 -

The Service of God

Exodus 29:44 -

Exodus 35:21 -

The Promises

Genesis 12:1-3 -

Deuteronomy 26:18 -

Deuteronomy 27:3 -

6. Along with all those special privileges given to Israel, there was one that stood out among all the others. Paul describes that privilege in **verse 5**. What is it?

7. Record these other Scriptures that speak of this.

Psalms 89:3-5 -

Isaiah 9:6-7 -

8. These---- and so many other glorious promises---- have been given to the nation of Israel, which makes their rejection of their Messiah all the more tragic. While feeling the grief of this, Paul wants to make clear that this doesn't mean that God has failed in His promises to Israel. Record his words in **Romans 9:6**.

9. **David Guzik** points out that one of the meanings of the word “Israel” is “**governed by God**” and that Paul is actually saying that not all who are called Israel are “**governed by God.**” Paul goes on to further explain this in **verse 7**. Write down that verse below.
10. Isaac was **only one** of Abraham’s sons. Abraham actually had **eight sons**. Ishmael was his firstborn from Hagar, Sarah’s maid, before Isaac was born. He then fathered six other sons from his wife, Keturah, after Sarah’s death. But **only Isaac** was called the **son of promise**, and God had already determined that it would be through Isaac that His promises in **Genesis 12:1-3** would be fulfilled. How does Paul explain this in **Romans 9:8**? Write down that verse below.
11. In **verse 9**, Paul establishes Isaac as the son of promise, pointing out the circumstances of his birth. To read more on those circumstances, see **Genesis 18:10-14** and **Genesis 21:1-7**. Paul goes on in **Romans 9:10** to give another example of God choosing one son over the other. Write down Paul’s example in **Romans 9:10-12**.
12. God in His sovereignty chose Jacob over Esau. This was a choice God made while they were still in Rebecca’s womb, before they had done any good or evil. This can be a difficult thing for us to understand. As we look at **verse 13**, it becomes even more difficult for us. Paul uses a loose quote from **Malachi 1:2-3**. Look up these verses in Malachi, then write down Paul’s words in **verse 13**. (**Note: I am using the NKJV**).

There are several things we need to take note of from these verses to help us have a little better understanding. First, as stated in **Malachi 1:2**, God speaks of **nations** here, not **individuals**. Esau, himself, never served Jacob, but the nation that came from his descendants did. Second, the words “**loved**” and “**hated**” are better translated as “**approved**” and “**rejected**,” or “**loved**” and “**loved less**.” Again, this is ultimately speaking about “**nations**,” not individuals.

Although God makes clear (as does Paul in these verses) that God’s choice was not based on anything either Jacob or Esau had done, but on God’s sovereign choice, we can certainly see things in Esau’s younger years that show he wasn’t interested in his birthright as the firstborn son: he sold it for a bowl of stew, and he chose to marry women from the heathen nations around him, which God had forbidden, rather than from his own people, as Jacob did. However, we can also see things in Jacob’s young life that were not honorable, as in the way he deceived his father, Isaac, to steal Esau’s birthright and blessing.

As an individual, we read in **Genesis 33** that Esau, like Jacob, had been blessed with much land and cattle and goods.

A woman once said to Charles Spurgeon, “**I cannot understand why God would say that He hated Esau.**” Spurgeon answered her, “**That is not my difficulty. My trouble is to understand how God could love Jacob.**”

David Guzik states, “**We may not be able to fathom 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.**”

13. What question does Paul ask, and answer, in **Romans 9:14**?

14. What further explanation does Paul give for his answer in verses **15 & 16**?

15. What is the definition of **mercy**? It is **not receiving what we deserve**. Paul has already made the case that all of mankind is deservedly under God’s wrath because of their ungodliness and unrighteousness.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says, “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 or effort. No one deserves or can earn His mercy.” Jesus gave an example of this in His parable of the landowner in **Matthew 20:1-16**. Read this parable and then write down verses 14 & 15 below.

16. Looking at **Romans 9:17 & 18**, Paul moves on to another example in his reference to Pharaoh. What does he say?

17. We need to take note that Pharaoh had **already** hardened his own heart, according to **Exodus 7:13 & 22; Exodus 8:15, 19 & 32; and Exodus 9:7 & 34**. David Guzik states that, “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.” Paul asks another series of questions in **Romans 9:19-21**. Record those questions below.

18. When we come to passages like the ones we’re reading here in chapter nine of Romans, we need to refer back to **what we know to be true about the character of God**. Our finite minds may not be able to fully comprehend all that Paul is saying in these verses, but one thing we do know about God’s character is that **He is just**. Look up the following Scriptures that speak of **God’s justice**.

Deuteronomy 32:3-4 -

Job 37:23 -

Psalm 33:4-5 -

Psalm 89:14 -

Psalm 111:7 -

Zephaniah 3:5 -

19. Record Paul's questions in **Romans 9:22-24** below.

David Guzik comments, "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? As well, if God desires to be *more* than fair with others, showing them His mercy, who can oppose Him? 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?"

Concerning vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, **Guzik** states: "Paul does not say that *God* has prepared them for destruction. Those vessels do an adequate job on their own."

20. In verses **25 & 26**, Paul points out that God's plan of salvation for the Gentiles was spoken of throughout the Old Testament. Paul quotes this in **Hosea 2:23** and **Hosea 1:10**. Record Paul's words in **Romans 9:25-26**.

21. Paul continues in verses **27 & 28**, turning his attention towards Israel. Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah in these three verses. Record those quotes below.

Adam Clarke makes these comments on these verses: "The phrase, **will finish the work**, means "he will bring the thing to an end," or will accomplish it. It is an expression applicable to a firm purpose to accomplish an object. It refers here to his threat of cutting off the people; and means that he will fulfill it. **Cut it short** - This word here means to 'execute it speedily.' The destruction shall not be delayed."

22. In **Romans 9:29**, Paul quotes **Isaiah 1:9**. Write that quote down below.

David Guzik notes, "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."

23. In the remaining verses of this chapter, Paul compares the state of the believing Gentiles to the Jews, who rejected their Messiah. Looking at **verse 30**, Paul states that the Gentiles, who had not pursued righteousness, attained it. How does Paul say that they attained it?

24. In verse 31, Paul states that Israel, who had pursued the **law of righteousness**, didn't attain righteousness. What reason does he give according to verse 32?

25. In verse 33, Paul quotes **Isaiah 28:16**. Write down Paul's quote of Isaiah from verse 33 below.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary states: "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 over the 'stumbling Stone.' The Lord Jesus Christ, 'the stumbling Stone' did not conform to the Jews' expectations, so they rejected Him instead of responding to Him by faith."

26. What does **1 Peter 2:7 & 8** say concerning this?

27. What is most significant that you are taking away from this chapter?

"For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Corinthians 1:21-24)

This study was written and prepared by Shawn Van Hook, 2026