

## **Romans 9:6-8 – Proof of a True Christian**

Handfuls, HebrewLexicon, Steele, GreekLexicon, TSK, Reinecker, Gill, Geneva, Clarke, Henry, Koning, JFB, Newell, Poole, Robertson, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus: How do you know you are a Christian? There are some who say they are Christians because they go to church and are **part of the covenant community**. Others say they are saved because they are **part of a covenant family**. They say: "My grandfather was a preacher so I am a Christian!" This is common in the American south. There are many "Christians" there by family ties. But these are 2 old errors even the Jews made. So **Apostle Paul unambiguously corrected these 2 significant errors!**

Our headings are:

**Covenant Community Doesn't Save You**

**Covenant Family Doesn't Save You**

**Covenant Christ Saves You**

Our goals are: **That you and your children will learn not to rest in the fact you are part of a covenant community or from a good family, but you will rest in the work of Jesus Christ alone for your salvation.**

### **Covenant Community Doesn't Save You**

6 But **it is not** that the **word of God** has taken no effect. For they are **not all Israel who are of Israel,**

**1. The Israelites thought they received salvation simply because they were part of the Jewish covenant community.**

They **felt they had God's law and they believed and obeyed it.** They had **experienced God's miracles and blessings in the past.** God had rescued them from Egypt, drowning Pharaoh's army, and made them into a great nation. God **promised them more expansion.** Solomon spoke about this in Psalm. 72. So in their eyes, they were saved from their sins.

**2. Moreover, being in the covenant community led the Jews to think they were superior to all other nations.**

**They saw non-Jews as untouchables.** So they would **take off their shoes** when they crossed the border of Israel and shake the dust off their sandals so as not to take any "evil foreign dust" into Israel.

**3. But not all Jews in the covenant were part of the true communion of Israel; they were not true believers.**

There was nothing automatic in salvation. Circumcision, which marked inclusion into the covenant community, did not save.

**Galatians 6:15** For in Christ Jesus **neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything,** but a new creation.

**The Jews ignored the fact that when God promised to bless Abraham and all his children, God meant all "spiritual children," not all "biological children."**

These non-spiritual branches that were part of the covenantal **olive tree** were cut off. **Romans 11.**

They **were orchids...they looked good,** but they were pests...parasites.

**4. Jesus pointed out the difference between being in the covenant community and being a true Christian in the life Nathaniel.**

**John 1:47** Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

Jesus used sarcasm. Nathaniel was a Jew – of the covenant community, but not a Christian!

**Romans 10:12** For **there is no distinction between Jew and Greek,** for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For **"whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."**

This was a dagger in the heart of the Jews. **It destroyed their hope in salvation by covenant.**

### **5. Lessons:**

**a. Being part of the covenant community does not mean that you are saved, it does not mean that you will be saved, and it does not mean that God is obligated to save you.** Being part of a so-called **Christian country** won't save either!

**b. Baptism doesn't save you. So the water on your baby's head doesn't save him and it doesn't wash away his sins.)**

**c. Why does God save you and your children? Learn the answer from Moses.**

**Deuteronomy 7:7 - The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people,** for you were the least of all peoples; 8 "but **because the LORD loves you,** and because He would **keep the oath which He swore to your fathers...**

**d. And yet, don't dare keep your children away from worship...or you will regret it. Here is where God's Word impregnates the hearts of your children.** And indeed, you hate them if you refuse to bring them to church regularly.

### **Covenant Family Doesn't Save You**

7 nor are they all children (of God) **because they are the seed of Abraham**

**1. Other Jews argued they were saved because they were related by blood to Abraham; he was their forefather.**

## 2. But both sons, Ishmael and Isaac were from Abraham, both were circumcised.

Ishmael was not a Christian, he was a "wild donkey of a man," - a rebel against God - a rebel whom God then rejected. Isaac was a Christian, saved him by grace - grace he received through faith - a repentant man whom God then accepted.

Abraham even pleaded with God to work through Ishmael the rebel!

Genesis 17:18 And Abraham said to God, "**Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!**" 19 Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.

But Ishmael rejected God.

Both Ishmael and Isaac had Abraham's blood in their veins, but one was saved and one not. Bloodlines did not save!

John 8:39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "**If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.**

Jesus made it clear in Matthew 3:9, that many of the Jews had no right to call themselves children of Abraham because they didn't believe as he did. Jesus told them that their father was the Devil.

## 3. Further, there were many who did not have Abraham's blood in their veins but were saved...people of great faith.

Jethro - a priest of Midian, Rahab - known even after her death as a prostitute, Ruth - pagan wicked Moabites, Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, the mixed multitude that left Egypt!

## 4. Lessons:

a. Be clear: No one is lost because he wasn't chosen. He is lost because he rejects God's salvation and rebels against him.

b. Being part of a Christian family, even a Reformed family, learning the catechism, having been taken to church all your life, singing the Psalms, memorizing Scripture passages, and praying before every meal does not make you a Christian. Grace does not run in human blood! BLOOD RELATIONS DON'T SAVE YOU. How they are you saved?

## Covenant Christ Saves You

7...but, "**In Isaac your seed shall be called.**" 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.

### 1. Out of love God predestined to redeem the Jews through Jesus - and Jesus Christ alone.

God then called them, justified them, sanctified, and glorified them in Jesus.

### 2. And what else?

God gave them the faith to receive the work of Jesus - his work of living for them and his work of dying for them.

So anyone who had faith in the Seed of promise, Isaac's Son, was saved. Hebrews 11...

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "**And to your Seed,**" who is Christ.

So it wasn't being in the covenant or have family relations that saved, but the Redeemer, who saved!

John 8:56 "Your father Abraham **rejoiced to see My day**, and he saw it and was glad."

Apostle Paul gave the confirmation.

Galatians 3:29 And **if you are Christ's**, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

And his Word and Spirit continue to work in you and prepare you for eternity in heaven.

## 3. Lessons:

a. Bring that Word of Faith daily to your children and cover that Word with prayer. This is the challenge and duty of every parent! Let your children hear the Gospel often and be saved! **Faithful proclamation of the Word is what will keep them in the church!** And after they trust in Christ, lead them in Christ. **(Pregnancy and delivery are the easy parts or raising kids!)** You have to feed, clothes, and care.

b. Sing and praise God for your salvation.

c. Humble yourself more before God. God not only elected you, but he assured you that you are elected. He did for you what you could not do for yourself! The helpless must never be arrogant.

1John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.

And remember, salvation was not your birthright.

Ephesians 2:3...and **were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.** 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been

saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

**d. Cleanse yourself of your sins daily...** Your sins hurt your loving Savior.

1John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in **Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**

**e. Fight to convince yourself of your salvation.**

2Peter 1:5 ... add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 Therefore, brethren, be **even more diligent to make your call and election sure**, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

There is much work here. Keep **practicing living as a Christian.**

**f. Evangelize the lost. Tell others of your salvation and bring praise to God.** This is why Jews had to make crosses on their door posts...pointing to the work of Jesus. Who doesn't want to tell the world when he loves someone and someone loves him back? Who turns a diamond ring inwardly when she is engaged? Who doesn't want to tell the world that there is one who loves all nations? Let them hear the good news.

Romans 10:15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "**How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace**, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

**g. God saves at a time he chooses.** It does not matter how hard the heart of the sinner is, as long as he is elected, **God is able, and indeed does soften him.** Sometimes he may soften the heart of a sinner quickly, sometimes he takes longer. Sometimes he does so when the sinner is old, or when he is young. Sometimes he does so when the sinner is sick or when he is well. Sometimes he does so just before the sinner dies. **So be patient when you take the Gospel to someone who does not immediately believe.** It is God's work...not communal or family relations that saves him.

## **Conclusion:**

No one can be saved by **relying on his covenant position and taking the covenant sign**, and no one can be saved **by relying on the fact that his parents or near relations are Christians.** These **errors might be common and even popular, but God warns against them.** A man is only saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. Rely on Jesus' life and death for your salvation** – his active and passive suffering – his obedience and his death. You don't need anything more! There is nothing more! Let this humble you.

**2. Guard your own hearts and the hearts of your children against relying on baptism...or blood relations...as if those things could save.**

**3. Make your calling and election sure.** Do good works. Practice self-control, persevere in the faith, show brother kindness, and study God's Word. Nourish yourself with God's Word and Sacraments.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, you could be in church regularly, you could be baptized, you could sing all the songs, or you could even have close relatives who are Christians, **but without truly believing with all your heart Jesus died on the cross for your sins...you will be lost forever in hell.** But there is hope in Jesus. Ask him. He can save you from hell and give you heaven as your home.