

**Gentiles, Jews, and Righteousness**  
**Romans 9:25-33**  
May 12, 2021

**Review and Context**

*Theme of Romans:* The gospel of God (1:16-17)

Chs 9-11 The gospel and Israel

- In 9:1-5, the apostle in a very personal way introduced the problem (from the human standpoint) of Israel's unbelief (rejection of the Messiah)
  
- *Thesis:* 9:6a "But it is not as though the word of God has failed."
  - The OT's numerous promises to the nation of Israel, of spiritual salvation through the Messiah
  - Examples include Deut 30:6; Eze 36:24-28; Jer 31:31-36; Zech 12:10-13:1
  
- The apostle proves that the word of God has not failed, using five arguments.
  - The first argument centers on God's sovereign election of some individuals and not others (9:6b-29)
  - The second argument centers on Israel's reliance on works rather than faith (9:30-10:21).

**God has called individuals not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles (25-29)**

The apostle brings up what God is doing in saving Gentiles

Quotes from Hosea (25-26)

*Key term:* "to call"

1. Associated with sovereign election in verses 10-12
2. Called effectually into saving relationship with God
3. verses 24, 25 (2x), 26

In quoting Hosea, the apostle is drawing an analogy between God calling Gentiles to Himself, and this prophecy that God will call to Himself Israelites whom He has been treating as Gentiles.

Hosea 1-2

- *Context:* 1:6, 8-9
- 1:10
- 2:19-23

The Gentiles have not been God's people. It was Israel who received the privileges listed in 9:4-5.

As Hosea teaches, God's sovereign calling is able to make people who are not His people to be His people.

In this way, God is sovereignly calling people from among the Gentiles.

Some scholars say Paul is redefining the concept of Israel and identifying the church as Israel

- This idea is contrary to Paul's use of the term Israel, including in the very next verse

### Quotes from Isaiah (27-29)

verses 27-28

1. Isaiah 10:22-23 (context is 10:20-23)
2. Brings us back to the idea that began this subsection in Romans 9:6b, and the Jewish unbelief that grieves the apostle (9:2-3).

verse 29

1. Isaiah 1:9 (context is 1:2-9)
2. Israel would have been totally destroyed
3. But again, we see the Lord saved a remnant

In view of Hosea and Isaiah, it should not surprise us when we see the majority of Jews perishing in unbelief, and God calling some individuals from the Jews, and some (even many more) from the Gentiles.

Remember verses 15-16

This wraps up Paul's first argument to support the thesis that God's word has not failed.

### **Israel failed to pursue righteousness by faith (30-33)**

*Question:* Verse 30 speaks of "a righteousness that is by faith." What was taught earlier in Romans about this? What were some of the key verses on this?

**31** "...Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law"

- Elaborated upon in 10:2-8
- Israel sought in various degrees to obey the law, but none truly succeeded

**32** "Why?..."

1. Paul's previous answer for the question of Israel's unbelief was divine sovereignty in election and calling
2. Paul's answer in this new section is Israel's failure
3. This section will focus on human responsibility

4. Both divine sovereignty and human responsibility are clearly taught in Scripture. When one is emphasized to the exclusion of the other, God's word is perverted.

verse 32a

- Israel should have pursued righteousness by faith, following in the footsteps of Abraham, but instead pursued righteousness as if it were based on works

*Question:* What does it mean that Israel has "stumbled over the stumbling stone" (verse 32)?

Paul combines two passages in Isaiah

- Isaiah 8:14 (context is 8:11-15)
- Isaiah 28:16

Romans 9:31-33

1. Christ is a sure foundation for the believer to build his life upon
2. "Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame"
  - The promise of the gospel
3. But the cornerstone is "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense" for others
4. Israel has taken offense at Jesus because they were not pursuing righteousness by faith, "but as if it were based on works"
5. Because of Israel's rejection of Christ, they will be put to shame

These ideas will be further developed in chapter 10

### **Conclusion**

Praise God for His sovereign grace and mercy given to Gentiles, making us whom He has called part of His people!

Understand that as long as a person is pursuing righteousness as if it were based on works, they will stumble over the gospel of Christ.

- To embrace Christ in faith, one must despair of ever attaining a right standing with God by works
- The heart of Christianity is not commandments, but good news to be believed