

The Children of the Promise

Lesson 7

November 24

Romans 9; Galatians 3:7-14

In **Romans 9-11**, Paul begins to focus in on what the gospel of Jesus Christ now means for the descendants of Abraham.

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great _____ and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my _____, my kinsmen according to the flesh. (9:1-3)

Paul goes on to describe the Jewish people in a variety of ways that are very significant:

They are _____, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the _____, the giving of the _____, the worship, and the _____. To them belong the _____, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the _____, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. (9:4-5)

So if God used this race of people in such amazing ways to bring such incredible things into the world, is there a breakdown? Is there something missing? And if there is, where's the problem?

But it is not as though the _____ of God has failed. For not all who are descended _____ Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his _____, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." (9:6-7)

The selection of Isaac as the branch of Abraham's family tree through whom great blessings would flow was God's choice, not Abraham's or Sarah's. Just because a Jew could trace his or her physical heritage directly back to Abraham didn't automatically align him or her with the promises of God.

This means that it is not the children of the _____ who are the children of God, but the children of the _____ are counted as offspring. (9:8)

God had the right to choose Isaac over Ishmael as the family line through whom the Messiah would come (9:9). God had the right to choose Jacob over Esau, not on the basis of works or law-keeping, the children had not yet even been born! The basis was God's choice, plain and simple (9:10-13). God had the right to raise up Pharaoh in the days of Moses to demonstrate his power (9:14-18). And in the same way, God has the right to include Gentiles right along with Jews in his kingdom. Remember, God is the potter, we are the clay. Through the gospel he is calling not just Jews, but Gentiles also (9:19-29).

A spectacular mystery has finally been unveiled (16:25-27). The Gentiles can be fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. It is those of faith who are the children of the promises God first made to Abraham (Gal 3:7-14). Abraham's physical descendants can most certainly be a part of God's kingdom, if they are willing to submit to God on God's terms. The question is, who is willing to yield to God? Who is willing to be shaped by God? Whether Jew or Gentile, who is willing to respond with the obedience of faith (Rom 9:30-33)? Let's talk about it...

For Class & Family Discussion:

- How would you summarize the way many unbelieving Jews in the first century felt towards Paul? Why did they feel the way that they did?

- So why would Paul say what he said about his fellow Jews in **Romans 9:1-3**?

- Let's think about the ways Paul describes the Jewish people in **9:4-5**. What does he mean by...
 - They are Israelites?

 - To them belong the adoption?

 - To them belong the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship?

 - To them belong the promises, the patriarchs?

 - And from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever?

- Paul goes on to make a very important point in **Romans 9:6-7**, but what does he mean? What's the difference between being "children of the flesh" and "children of the promise"?

- Let's make sure we hear and understand Paul's summary statement beginning in **Romans 9:30**. What big idea is he getting at with...
 - Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith?

 - Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works (**9:31-32**)?

 - In what way is Jesus and the gospel "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense" (**9:33**)?

 - But according to that ancient quote that **Romans 9** ends with from **Isaiah 28:16**, what do all need to do in order to avoid stumbling and instead build their lives on this rock?