

Spiritual Israel (Romans 9)

The children of the promise.
God's election is grace for all.
Jesus is our Righteousness.
Jesus is the only Foundation.

1. Paul stresses that the truth is being revealed.
Truth exposes what is false and what is counterfeit.
The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. (**Jn 15:26**)
The Holy Spirit communicates through the conscience. (**1Ki 19:11-13, Jn 8:3-9, Ro 2:14,15, 2Co 4:1,2**)
As a channel of spiritual communication, the conscience can become severed by lying about God's truth. (**1Ti 4:1,2**)
2. A genuine Christian's joy is shadowed by great sorrow for those who do not know and follow Jesus, and by the sickening consequences of sin. (**Eze 9:4-6, Da 9:3-5, Mk 6:34**)
3. A genuine Christian's eternal salvation is secondary to the salvation of others. (**Ex 32:31,32**)
There is a physical (after the flesh) Israel.
There is also a spiritual (after the Spirit of Christ) Israel. (**Ro 2:28,29**)
4. Heavenly gifts originally focused through the nation of Israel are listed:
The adoption - As children of God (**Jn 1:12,13**)
The glory - The presence of God (**Ex 24:16,17, Ex 40:34,35, 2Co 3:18**)
The covenants - The old and the new covenants (old = works, new = grace) (**Ex 19:7,8, Mt 26:28, Heb 8:6-13, Heb 13:20,21, Rev 13:8**)
The law - The moral law (10 commandments) (**Jn 14:15, 1Jn 2:3,4, 1Jn 3:4-6, 1Jn 5:2,3, Rev 12:17, Rev 14:12**)
Note: The law is listed as separate from the covenants.
The service of God - The priesthood of believers (**Ex 19:6, 1Pe 2:5,9,16, Rev 7:3,4, Rev 22:3,4**)
The promises - (**Jn 3:16, Jn 5:24, Jn 6:40, 2Co 1:19-20, 2Pe 1:2-4**) (**2Co 7:1**)
5. Additional historical highlights of the nation of Israel.
The fathers (the patriarchs) - The physical ancestors of Christ.
The Messiah - Jesus Christ, born in the flesh as a Jew. (note **Jn 1:45-47, 1Jn 4:2,3, 2Jn 1:7**)
Who is over all - Besides His physical nature, as God the Son, Christ also possessed the divine nature. (**Col 2:9**)
6. "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect."
The power of the word of God is not to be judged by the physical nation of Israel's mass rejection of God's Son.
The power of the word of God is demonstrated through the citizens of true (Spiritual) Israel, who internalize and externalize the character of God through His Son. (**Jn 14:6,9**)
Spiritual Israel transcends all ethnic boundaries. (**Rev 14:6, Rev 7:9**)
7. Physical lineage does not equate to spiritual lineage.
Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Issac, are contrasted as flesh and spirit. (compare **Gal 4:28,29**)
- 8-9. Ishmael represents the children of the flesh.
He was conceived without faith, through sinful, human will. (**Ge 16:1,2**)
Issac represents the children of the promise.
He was conceived in faith, through the perfect will of God. (**Ge 21:1,2, Heb 11:11**)

Issac represents all those who receive the sacrificial death of Jesus. (**Ge 22:7-13** compare **Rev 5:6-9**)

Ishmael represents all those who mock the Promise, and are thus separated from the Father. (**Ge 21:9,10,14**)

10-11. Election is not based on physical heritage or past behavior.

Between Issac and Ishmael, there was a difference in physical heritage.

Issac was the son by Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Ishmael was the son by Hagar, Abraham's Egyptian slave.

Between Issac and Ishmael, there were differences in behavior.

Ishmael mocked Issac, who represented the Promise of God (Jesus).

The true nature of the Promise is further clarified with Jacob and Esau before they were born.

Having the same lineage, the Promise is extended independent of physical heritage.

Having not yet done any good or evil, the Promise is extended independent of past behavior.

God's purpose is not based on human works, but upon His own perfect, loving character. (compare **Ro 5:8,10**)

The term "election" is best understood as a vote cast by God for the salvation of every person, with the condition that this free, unmerited gift is individually accepted.

God offers salvation to everyone (without exception) as a free gift. (**Jn 3:16, Jn 6:40, Jn 7:37, Ro 5:18, Ro 10:13, Eph 1:4,5, 2Th 2:13, 1Ti 2:3-6, 1Jn 2:2, Rev 22:17**)

12. As sovereign ruler of the universe, God guides the rise and fall of nations to fulfill His purpose. (compare **Isa 45:1-4, Da 4:17** (note: basest = lowliest)

Jacob and Esau represent two physical nations. (**Ge 25:22,23**)

As physical nations, the elder (Edom) shall serve the younger (Israel). (**Ge 25:30, 2Sa 8:14**)

Jacob and Esau also represent two spiritual nations (note "manner of people" in **Ge 25:23**).

Jacob represents those who, through wrestling with the Spirit of God, submit and become overcomers of their sinful nature. (**Ge 32:24-30**)

Esau represents those who sell their birthright for temporal worldly appetites. (**Ge 25:31-34, Heb 12:15-17**)

The two spiritual streams of "obedience to" and "rebellion against" the will of God did not begin with Jacob and Esau.

War in heaven. (**Rev 12:7-9**)

Children of God vs. children of Satan. (**Ge 3:15, 1Jn 3:9-12**)

Children of God vs. children of the world. (**Ge 6:2,3, Dt 7:1-6, Jas 4:4**)

Jesus or not Jesus. (**Mt 12:30, 1Jn 5:12**)

As sovereign ruler of the universe, God draws all people towards Himself. (**Jn 12:32,33**)

Our opportunity to know God is independent of our physical heritage or past behavior. (**Jn 17:3, Ac 17:26,27, Ro 1:20, Ro 2:9-13**)

13. God is love. (**Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:8**)

God **hates sin**. (**Ps 97:10, Pr 8:13**)

God **hates the choice** of all who are on the path of destruction. (**Eze 18:23,32, Eze 33:11**)

Esau here represents those who choose the wicked path. (**Mal 1:1-4**)

14. Recall that the context is about spiritual Israel being God's true "chosen" people.

Paul has just illustrated that many of the physical descendents of Abraham are not part of true Israel.

At this point, some might object that God is breaking His promises to the physical nation of Israel.

God has not broken any of those promises, because those promises were conditional.

(Dt 28:1,9,15, Dt 29:23-27, Jer 18:7-10)

The only covenant breaking that occurred was by the people of Israel.

The nation of Israel was supposed to serve as God's chosen light-bearer. (Isa 62:1-3)

Instead, by becoming proud, exclusive, and legalistic, Israel became a hindrance to the spread of the everlasting gospel. (Mt 21:33-41,43, Mt 23:37,38, Mt 27:23-25, Jn 19:15)

15. God's abundant mercy and compassion are not restricted to any physical people group.

(Ps 86:15, Ro 5:20, Heb 4:16)

16. God's grace is extended independently of physical heritage or past behavior. (Eph 2:8,9)

17. God demonstrated His mercy through His dealings with Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus.

Through a series of powerful supernatural plagues, Pharaoh was warned 10 different times. (Ex 9:13,14 note "upon thine heart")

The power of God demonstrated through the 10 plagues makes it clear that God could pluck up all evil at any time if He wished. (compare Mt 13:24-30)

Finally, even that hard-hearted, pagan dictator was brought to a point of repentance.

(Ex 9:27)

18. God never violates personal free will.

God's sovereign control is not a robotic control.

Each person chooses and is responsible for his/her choice. (Dt 30:15-19, Jos 24:15)

Therefore, God permits the hardening of hearts.

It is only in this sense that we are to understand expressions like "whom he will he hardeneth".

For Pharaoh's case, the Bible provides direct insight into this meaning. (Ex 8:15,32, Ex 10:3, 1Sa 6:6)

19. Those who imagine that God rules through robotic control have a continuing doubt.

They ask: "Since none can resist His will, how can He find fault with anyone?"

20. The focus is now fixed upon the root cause of these criticisms and doubts.

These critics do not know, appreciate, or trust their own Creator.

Fleeting vapors (Jas 4:14) and withering grass (1Pe 1:24) are in no position to comprehend the ways of the eternal Creator.

God's ways are beyond our comprehension. (Isa 55:8,9, Ro 11:33)

We cannot comprehend how God has no beginning. (1Ti 6:16)

We cannot comprehend how God is simultaneously everywhere. (Pr 15:3)

We cannot comprehend how God can know and guide the future, while simultaneously preserving complete, free-will choice. (Isa 46:9,10)

21. As Creator, God has the authority to allow people to choose eternal life.

As Creator, God has the authority to allow people to choose destruction.

22. God's true power is demonstrated through His long-suffering, self-sacrifice, and unending love.

God's "wrath", in not allowing sin to continue indefinitely in His creation, is a consistent expression of His love. (Ro 2:4-8, Rev 6:14-17)

23. God's mercy, through the sacrificial death of His Son, is the richest expression of His glory. (Jn 17:1-3)

God prepares His people by continuing to mold them into the image of His Son. (Ro 8:29, 2Co 3:18)

24. God is calling everyone, everywhere, to enter one fold, which is spiritual Israel. (Jn 10:15,16, Rev 18:1-4)

Spiritual Israel is the spiritual community made up of all those who accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord. (Da 12:1 compare Rev 21:27, Ro 2:28,29, Ro 4:9-13, Ro 10:12,13, Gal 3:7-9,14,26-29, Gal 6:14-16, Eph 2:11-13,19,20)

- 25-26. God's purposes are continued through spiritual Israel. (**Hos 1:9,10, Hos 2:23, Zec 2:10,11, Ro 10:19-21, Eph 1:10,11, 1Pe 2:9,10**)
As children of God, spiritual Israel inherits all the promises. (**Gal 3:29, Heb 6:12,13,17, Rev 21:7**)
Christians should not take their gracious status for granted. (**Ro 11:19-21,23,24**)
27. Only a small portion of Abraham's innumerable, physical descendants will be saved. (**Isa 10:22,23**)
This remnant is like the original, having righteousness by faith. (**Ro 4:2,3,13, Gal 3:6,7, Heb 11:8,17**)
However, all of Abraham's innumerable, spiritual descendants (Spiritual Israel) will be saved. (**Hos 1:9-11, Ro 11:25,26, Rev 7:9,10**)
This remnant is also like the original, having righteousness by faith. (**Ro 4:3,11-13**)
Prophetic notes on **Hos 1:9-11**:
Gathered together - God's genuine people unite in one fold. (**Jn 10:16**)
One Head - Christ is the Head of the church. (**Eph 5:23**)
Come up out of the land - The righteous are raised and translated at Christ's second coming. (**1Th 4:16,17, Rev 14:14-16**)
Day of Jezreel - The wicked are slain at Christ's second coming. (**Hos 1:3-5, 1Ki 21:23, 2Ki 9:36,37, 2Ki 10:10,11, Rev 14:17-20, Rev 19:17-21**)
28. God will remove sin from His creation sooner than we imagine. (**2Pe 3:7-13**)
Unrepentant sinners will be consumed by fire and forever eliminated. (**Na 1:7-9, Mal 4:1-3, Rev 20:11-15**)
29. God will have a people who possess His righteous character. (compare **Isa 1:9**) (**Ge 17:7, Heb 8:10, Rev 21:3**)
30. True righteousness comes through faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. (compare **Hab 2:2-4**)
Jesus is our Righteousness. (**Jer 23:6, Jn 15:4,5, Ro 5:19, 2Co 3:18, 2Co 5:21, Gal 2:20, Php 1:11, Php 3:8,9**)
- 31-32. Righteousness does not come through works of the law. (**Isa 64:6, Ro 3:20,28, Ro 4:2-6, Ro 4:13, Ro 11:5,6, Gal 2:16, Gal 3:11, Gal 5:4, Eph 2:8,9, Tit 3:5**)
On the contrary, joyful obedience to God's law results from our relationship with Jesus. (**Ps 119:97-104, Jn 14:15,21, Ro 3:31, Ro 8:3,4, 1Jn 2:3,4, 1Jn 3:4-10, 1Jn 5:2,3, Rev 12:17, Rev 14:12**)
33. Jesus is the foundation Stone and Rock. (**Isa 8:13-17, Isa 28:16, Mt 7:24,25, Mt 21:42-44, 1Co 10:1-4, Eph 2:19-22**)
Jesus is the only foundation for righteousness and eternal life. (**Jn 14:6, Ac 4:12, 1Co 3:11, Gal 1:6-9, 1Jn 5:12**)
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