

THE PLAN OF GOD | God's Word Never Fails

Romans 9:6-13

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Last week we saw that Paul was filled with great sorrow and unceasing anguish because his own people Israel, who are the recipients of God's saving promises, are alienated from Christ (9:1-5).

"One would think that Israel, favored with these eight blessings, prepared and educated for centuries for the arrival of here Messiah, would recognize and welcome him when he came. How can one reconcile Israel's privileges with her prejudices? How can one explain her 'hardening (11:25)?"
John Stott

The problem that Paul is addressing in Romans 9-11 is this:

- Does Israel's rejection of Jesus mean that God's promises can fail?
- If God does not keep his promises to Israel, will he keep the promises he makes to us?

Romans 3:3-4 What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?
4 By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, "That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged."

Paul addresses this mystery with four questions:

1. Has God's Word failed (9:6-13)?
2. Is God unjust (9:14-18)?
3. Why does God still blame us (9:19-29)?
4. What then shall we say in conclusion (9:30 - 10:4)?

I. Has God's Word failed (9:6-13)?

Jer. 21:45 Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

- Answer: God's word of promise to the Jews cannot fail because not all Israel is true Israel (v. 6).

Paul uses two examples in the Old Testament to prove his point:

(1) God's choice of Isaac and not Ishmael - *Salvation is not inherited* (vv. 6b-9)

Two kinds of children:

- (1) Abraham's descendants (vv. 7a, 8a)
Ishmael and his descendant are "children of the flesh" (v. 8).
- (2) Abraham's true children (v. 7b, 8b-9)
Isaac and his descendants are Children of the promise.

> God accomplishes his sovereign purpose through his mighty power, not through man's ability (v.9).

John 1:11–13 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

(2) God's choice of Jacob and not Esau - *Salvation is not merited* (vv. 10-13)

> God accomplishes his sovereign purpose according to his grace (v. 11a).

- God promised that Jacob would be preeminent before the twins were born (Gen. 25:23).

- God's promise to bless Jacob was both prior to and not based on any good works he did.

Paul discounts "works" as a basis of righteousness numerous times in Romans (3:20, 27–28; 4:2, 6; 9:16, 32; 11:5–6).

> **God accomplishes his sovereign purpose through his free choice (v. 11b).**

Malachi 1:2–3 "I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How have you loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob 3 but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert."

Humility - This passage and others deals a crushing blow to human pride. We are put in our place.

Human responsibility (cf. Rom. 1:18–3:20; 9:30–10:21) - The correlation between divine sovereignty and human responsibility is ultimately a mystery that is beyond our finite comprehension.

Worship – Election is an indispensable foundation of Christian worship, in time and eternity. - John Stott

Psalm 115:1 Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!

Benediction

Romans 11:33–36 33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" 35 "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.