

Small Group Guide

Israel's Role in God's Plan (Romans 9)

Opening Question:

How has your understanding of Israel's place in God's plan changed or evolved over time?

Key Takeaways:

1. Paul emphasizes that God's promises and covenants with Israel are still valid.
2. Israel's role includes being a light to the nations and sharing the knowledge of God.
3. Not all who are ethnically Israel are fulfilling Israel's spiritual calling.
4. God's choices in His plan of redemption may sometimes seem unexpected to us.
5. Both Jewish and Gentile believers are part of God's plan, with Gentiles being "grafted in."

Discussion Questions:

1. What struck you most about Paul's passionate statement in Romans 9:1-5? How does this reflect his heart for his people?
2. The sermon mentions several things that "belong" to Israel (adoption, glory, covenants, etc.). How do these aspects of Israel's calling relate to believers today?
3. How do you understand the phrase "not all those who are descended from Israel are Israel" (Romans 9:6)? What implications does this have?
4. In what ways might believers today build unhelpful "walls" that prevent them from sharing the Good News, similar to what happened with some in Israel?
5. How does Paul's discussion of God's sovereign choices (e.g., Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau) challenge or comfort you?

6. What does it mean for Gentile believers to be "grafted in" to Israel's relationship with God? How should this shape our understanding of the church?

Practical Applications:

1. Reflect on your own calling as a "light to the nations." How can you more effectively share God's love and truth with others this week?

2. Examine any prejudices or assumptions you might have about who is "worthy" of hearing the Gospel. Commit to praying for openness to share with unexpected people.

3. Study more about God's covenants with Israel. How can a deeper understanding of these strengthen your faith?

4. If you're a Gentile believer, consider how you can show appreciation for the Jewish roots of your faith. If you're of Jewish background, reflect on how to bridge understanding with Gentile believers.

5. Spend time in prayer, thanking God for His sovereign plan of redemption and asking for guidance in playing your part in it.

Closing Thought:

"In Messiah we are all one body." How can we live out this unity while still appreciating the distinct roles God has given to different groups within His plan?