

The Letter of Paul to the Romans

Romans 9:1-18 – March 5, 2023 – Rev. David Senters

New Covenant Presbyterian Church – Richmond Hill, GA – Sunday School

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 73. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, *Thou shalt not steal.*¹

Romans – A Simple Outline

- I. Righteousness from God (1-11)
- II. Righteousness in Practice (12-16)

DQ: In Romans, what have learned so far about salvation for Jews and Gentiles? Why would Paul include a section in Romans to explain Israel and the purposes of God?

Kruse: "...many of his [Paul's] Jewish contemporaries rejected his gospel and the inferences that some of them might draw from this fact, that is, his gospel denies God's faithfulness to Israel, does away with her special place in the purposes of God, and therefore implies that God's word has failed....As chapters 9-11 unfold, it becomes clear that Paul is also counteracting a tendency on the part of Gentile believers to look down on Jews and Jewish believers."²

Looking closer at the outline—Israel and the Purposes of God (Rom 9-11)³

1. Paul's Concern for Israel and Her Privileges (9:1-5)
2. Israel and God's Election (9:6-29)
3. Jewish Responsibility for Failure to Embrace the Gospel (9:30-10:21)
4. Has God Rejected Israel? (11:1-36)

What conclusion will Paul reach about Israel and the purposes of God? God's purposes for Israel are fulfilled through Christ by grafting in the Gentiles.

DQ: What are the two views of the doctrine of election affirmed as orthodox by nearly all Christian denominations, both Reformed and Arminian? How are these views alike? How are they different?

Israel and God's Purposes of Election

A. Paul's concern for Israel and her privileges (vv. 1-5).

1. Paul was in anguish for his kinsman (vv. 1-3).
 - Why was Paul in such sorrow and anguish for his Jewish kinsman?
 - *ἀνάθεμα* (*anathema*): *that which has been cursed*. In the LXX, it is the equivalent to *הָרֵמָה* (*herem*), *devote to destruction*.

¹Ex 20:15; Deut 5:19.

²Colin G. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 366-367.

³Ibid, x-xi.

- Echoes of Moses interceding for Israel, “But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written (Ex 32:32).”
 - In their present state of rejecting the Gospel, what Paul wished for himself on their behalf, was actually true for Israel. This would be akin to his statement of those who accept circumcision as a salvation requirement: “You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace (Gal 5:4).”
2. The 8 special privileges of being an Israelite (vv. 4-5).
- Adoption of Israel as a son: “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son... (Ex 4:22).’” “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son (Hos 11:1).”
 - The glory of God revealed: “Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days (Ex 24:15-16).”
 - The covenants: Abrahamic covenant (Gen 17), the Mosaic covenant (Ex 20-24), and the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7).
 - The law: “And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today (Deut 4:8)?”
 - The worship: The sacrificial and Levitical system God gave to Israel for proper worship.
 - The promises: Likely a reference to the promises made in the covenants but emphasized here as the Abrahamic covenantal promises of progeny, land, and blessing for the nations.
 - The patriarchs: Likely a reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - The Christ comes from their bloodline.
3. Fulfillment Theology: The 7 privileges foreshadow the 8th.
- Jesus is God’s son who was called out of Egypt: “And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord has spoken by the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’ (Matt 2:14-15).”
 - Jesus is the word made flesh who tabernacles among God’s people in glory (Jn 1:14).
 - Jesus is the “Son of David” and “Son of Abraham,” not just by bloodline (Matt 1:1), but the covenantal son of David (Rev 22:16) and Abraham (Jn 8:56).
 - Jesus fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law in our place (Rom 8:3-4).
 - Jesus is our sacrificial lamb (Rev 5:8) and priest (Heb 5, 8).
 - Jesus confirms the promises given to the patriarchs (Rom 15:8).
- B. Is Israel’s rejection of Christ a failure of God’s word (vv. 6-13)?
1. God’s unconditional election of Israel instead of Israel (v. 6).
- Paul uses “the word of God” as a reference to the gospel message.
 - Why would Paul say that “it was not as though the **word** of God has failed” and not “it was not as though the **promises** of God has failed”?

- Internal and External Membership: Not everyone who was in Israel was in Israel; not everyone who was circumcised was circumcised (see Rom 2:28-29).
2. God's unconditional election of Isaac instead of Ishmael (vv. 7-9).
 - What's the story of Isaac and Ishmael?
 - How many sons did Abraham have (Gen 22:2)? How many sons did Abraham have (Gen 25:1-6)?
 - Quote from Gen 21:12-13, "But God said to Abraham, 'Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, *for through Isaac shall your offspring be named*. And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring.'" [*emphasis added*]
 - Were there external blessings for being a son of Abraham? What was the internal blessing for being the only son of Abraham? Who counted as an offspring?
 3. God's unconditional election of Jacob instead of Esau (vv. 10-13).
 - What's the story of Jacob and Esau? The story and quotation are from Gen 25:21-23.
 - There was nothing to distinguish the twins from each other, not father nor mother, and yet, one was chosen and the other rejected.
 - According to v. 11, was the election conditional or unconditional?
 - Verse 13 is a quote from Mal 1:2-3, which was an affirmation of God's love for his elect—if he didn't love Israel, then Israel would be abandoned by God like Edom.

DQ: Is it likely that Isaac and Rebekah withheld the covenant sign of circumcision from Esau since they knew beforehand that he was not the son of promise? Assuming he was circumcised, what benefit would Esau derive from his circumcision?

C. Is God unjust in unconditional election (vv. 14-18)?

1. The question and answer (v. 14).
2. God is merciful when he reveals himself, like he did to Moses (vv. 15-16).
 - The quotation is from Ex 33:19 and was God's answer to Moses' request to see God's glory.
 - Moses was unable to make God reveal himself; however, God was merciful and compassionate to reveal himself to Moses.
3. God is just when he hardens a heart, like he did to Pharaoh (vv. 17-18).
 - The quotation, which equates God's word with Scripture, is from Ex 9:16, and was God's purposes in hardening Pharaoh's heart—to reveal his power to him and make him a spectacle in all the earth. Did it work? See Rahab's words in Josh 2:9-11.

DQ: Does unconditional election exempt mankind of guilt if he rejects the Gospel? Why or why not?