

THE ISSUE OF ISRAEL

Introduction – Romans teaches us that the Bible’s story is our story. From the creation to enslavement to sin, exodus, giving of the Law, wilderness wanderings, and the inheritance of the land, our story is developing on a cosmic scale. This story starts with one person then it expands only to be defeated by sin and returns to one person again (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, King David, and Jesus). *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone; first for the Jews, then for the Gentiles* (Romans 1:16).

A. The Paradoxical Puzzle of Ethnic Israel

Romans 9:1-5

B. Many Questions Come to Mind Over God’s Purpose for Israel

Romans 9:6-21

1. Not everyone who grows up in the “church” becomes a part of God’s people.
2. Abraham had two sons, but God chose to continue the promise through only one. Isaac and Rebekah had two sons, but the eldest was rejected and the second accepted.
3. God used mighty Pharaoh to show the futility of human power compared to God.
4. God is the initiating Potter, but we are not helpless victims (Jeremiah 18:5-10).

C. God’s Mercy Triumphs over Wrath

Romans 9:22-29

1. The prophet Hosea’s life embodied the predicament of God with Northern Israel.
2. Isaiah predicts not only an exile for sin by Judah, but a restoration of a remnant.

D. Christ Is the Ultimate Fulfillment of the Law

Romans 9:30-10:4

1. In Paul’s day, Israel had become a racist, nationalistic, imperialist power that believed in their superiority.

2. The message of a crucified Jewish King at the hands of the godless Roman Empire was a stumbling block for Israel.
3. We are left with the choice to believe that what God did in Jesus is the climax of history or to pursue our own righteousness.

E. The Message Is Heard through the Word of Christ

Romans 10:5-21

1. In the Law, Moses discussed a new way of life made possible by God after Israel's sin resulted in their exile (Deuteronomy 30:1-6, 11-14).
2. The promise of the prophets is that anyone who trusts God and calls on His name will be saved (Acts 22:16).
3. To fulfill God's promise we are sent to proclaim the gospel to everyone.
4. God continues to leave the door open to the Jews and other religious people who have been disobedient and obstinate.

Conclusion – Paul was sent by God to the Gentiles and he helped the predominantly Jewish Christian church to accept them. Now he is trying to get the predominantly Gentile church in Rome to hold out hope for the Jews. We must never let the prejudices of our society shape our congregations. In Jesus God is bringing together all people who will inherit the future prepared by Him.

(This week we will have no discussion groups.)