

CEC Bible Study: Romans

Session 6: Romans 9 – 11: What About Israel?

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Christ Episcopal Church

Cape Girardeau, MO

Group Introductions

- Any newcomers?
- Recap of last week (all of our discussion notes may be downloaded [here](#))

Opening Question: What do Christians and Jews share in common?

Romans 9: Something Is Troubling Paul

- With the end of ch.8, Paul has concluded his outline of the Gospel that he preaches
- Problem: What does this Gospel mean for Israel? ([9:1–3](#))
 - Most Jews are *not*, in fact, “in Christ,” having rejected Jesus’s Messiahship
 - Does Christ therefore make the Law and the promises of God to the Israelites null and void? Has God’s word — i.e. God’s covenant with Israel — failed?
 - Paul, thinking out loud: No, that can’t be right ([9:4–6a](#))
- The question of adoption: Who are the children of Abraham?
 - Back to the scriptures! ([9:6b–13](#))
 - It would be one thing if God’s heirs were genetic descendants
 - The problem, as far as Paul is concerned, is that *belonging to the family of God is based on God’s own promises to God’s people.*
 - Among other things, this raises the question of whether or not God can be trusted ([9:14–27](#))
- Conclusion:
 - The difference between Israel and the gentiles regarding the Law ([9:30–33](#))

Romans 10: Can Israel Be Saved?

- Paul doesn’t offer a systematic explanation for the salvation of Israel
 - It is a mystery, and completely up to God’s own impartial judgment ([10:1–13](#))
- Paul’s justification of his own Christian mission ([10:14–17](#))
- Conclusion:
 - The problem is that Israel *has* heard the Gospel proclaimed, and yet does not believe it ([10:18–21](#))

Romans 11: Has God rejected Israel?

- Paul’s strong response to the question: Absolutely not! ([11:1–2](#))

- Perhaps God caused Israel to reject Jesus’s Messiahship so that salvation might be extended to the gentiles? ([11:7–12](#))
 - The hope of Israel’s eventual redemption is a symbol of resurrection: God’s power to make alive what was once dead ([11:15](#))
- Paul addresses the gentiles: “Don’t get too big for your britches” ([11:13–36](#))
 - Before you start bragging about how you’re better than your Jewish siblings, remember that *you* are the interlopers here — the gentiles are the “young prodigal” to Israel’s “elder brother” (see [Luke 15:11–32](#))
 - Two metaphors to explain the relationship between Israel, gentile Christians, and Israel’s God:
 - Leavened dough ([11:16](#))
 - The grafted branch of an olive tree ([11:17–24](#))
 - Conclusion: If God could include even you “wild” gentiles, there is of course still hope for Israel ([11:24](#))
- Paul’s conclusion ([11:25–36](#))
 - Israelites remain the heirs of God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses
 - “The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.” ([11:29](#))
 - As he did with Pharaoh (see [Exod. 7:1–5](#)), God has “hardened the heart” of Israel concerning Jesus’s Messiahship in order to include the gentiles — and thus the whole world — among God’s own people.
 - All of Israel will eventually be saved, but exactly how God will accomplish this remains a deep mystery ([11:25–27, 33–36](#))