GOSPEL IN ROMANS · STUDY NOTES

# Study 4: God's plan for Jew and Gentile

For personal study or groups

Your name

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**How to use these notes.** Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

PART 1

# God's election, the ultimate reason

## Romans so far

The whole world is guilty and condemned. God credits righteousness to those who believe. Those who are counted righteous should live righteously. Believers have victory over sin and suffering through God's predestining love.

This study is about **"God's plan for Jew and Gentile" (Romans 9–11)**. Israel rejected God, and this brought blessing to the Gentiles. God rejected Israel, but not totally and not for ever; and Paul gives the reasons, and God's final plan.

**A note from the author**
Not all commentators agree that Israel, as a nation, will turn to Christ. Some take many of the references to Israel in these chapters as "spiritual Israel", that is, God's chosen people from among both Jews and Gentiles.

## God's election: the ultimate reason (9:1–29)

**1. Paul's sorrow over Israel's rejection of Christ (9:1–5).** He would rather be condemned in their place (Paul uses words like Moses' in Exodus 32:32). They were the privileged nation from whom Christ came.

1 **Read Romans 9:1–5**

**How did Paul feel about his own people? How is that like Christ's love?**

*See also: Exodus 32:32.*

**2. God's purposes have not failed for Israel (9:6–13).** God is selective, choosing some and passing over others (compare Romans 11:5). He chose Isaac and Jacob without any regard to

their works. God chooses Gentiles for salvation as well as Jews (Romans 9:23–24; Ephesians 1:4–5).

**2** **Read Romans 9:6–13**

**Did God choose Jacob because of anything he had done (verses 11–12)? How does God bring His chosen people to Himself today?**

*See also: Ephesians 1:4–5.*

**3. God has a sovereign right to save or to condemn (9:14–29).** God chooses to save some, though He could justly condemn all (vv. 14–18). So human clay, like Pharaoh, has no claim against the divine potter (vv. 19–29).

**3** **Read Romans 9:14–29**

**What does God's mercy depend on (verse 16)? Why would we never choose God, if He had not chosen us? (See Ephesians 2:1.)**

*See also: Ephesians 2:1.*

PART 2

# Unbelief, the immediate reason

## Unbelief: the immediate reason (9:30–10:21)

**1. Israel sought righteousness by works, not faith (9:30–10:4).** Israel failed to obtain righteousness, but the Gentiles obtained it – by faith (9:30–32). Israel was zealous, but ignorant, trusting in their own righteousness (10:1–4).

**4** **Read Romans 9:30–10:4**

**Many Jews were zealous for God. What did they not know? Why can zeal without knowledge do harm?**

*See also: Romans 9:30–33.*

**2. Righteousness by law-works and by faith contrasted (10:5–13).** Righteousness by the law is impossible; by faith it is within reach (vv. 5–8). The faith that saves is ready to confess Christ openly (vv. 9–13).

**5** **Read Romans 10:5–13**

**Who will be saved (verse 13)? Write out verses 12–13.**

**3. Israel had every opportunity to believe (10:14–21).** Faith is trusting the preached message of the gospel (vv. 14–17). But Israel heard, and still would not believe (vv. 18–21).

**6** **Read Romans 10:14–21**

**How does faith come (verse 17)? Why do some still not believe, even when they hear good preaching?**

PART 3

# Rejection is not total or final

## Not total, not final (chapter 11)

**1. God has not rejected every Jew (11:1–10).** Paul and a "remnant" are saved – as in Elijah's day (v. 5). The rest "were hardened", in response to their sinful unbelief (v. 7).

**7** **Read Romans 11:1–10**

**Has God rejected His people? God will save His chosen people: how should that encourage us to tell others the gospel?**

**2. God has not finally rejected the Jewish people (11:11–24).** They are stirred to jealousy by the Gentiles, and Paul hopes to save some of them (vv. 11–15). "Grafting" them back in is easy for God (vv. 16–24).

**8** **Read Romans 11:11–24**

**Did Paul believe that Jews who opposed the gospel could still be saved? How can that hope help us when people oppose it today?**

**3. God will complete His plan for Jew and Gentile (11:25–36).** The hardening of Israel is only "in part": while the full number of the Gentiles comes in, God goes on saving the remnant chosen by grace. In this way "all Israel" – every one of God's chosen people among the Jews – will be saved, through faith in Christ (vv. 25–27). God's plan for the salvation of Jew and Gentile is wonderful, and worthy of praise (vv. 28–36).

**9** **Read Romans 11:25–36**

**God's ways are beyond our understanding. Write down briefly how God brought you to Christ.**

## To conclude

Paul goes on to end his letter with practical application. This is the topic of the next study.

THINK IT THROUGH

## Questions for reflection and discussion

1. How does God's choosing grace humble us, and comfort us?

2. Why does the gospel have to be preached for people to believe (10:14–17)?

3. What in Romans 11:33–36 moves you to praise God?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

# Memory verse for study 4

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

GOSPEL IN ROMANS · STUDY 4 · MEMORY VERSE

*“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.”*

**Romans 11:36**

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

# The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Romans 9:1–5** *[1]I speak the truth in Christ; I am not lying, as confirmed by my conscience in the Holy Spirit. [2]I have deep sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. [3]For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my own flesh and blood, [4]the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory and the covenants; theirs the giving of the law, the temple worship, and the promises. [5]Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them proceeds the human descent of Christ, who is God over all, forever worthy of praise! Amen.*

2 **Romans 9:6–13** *[6]It is not as though God's word has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. [7]Nor because they are Abraham's descendants are they all his children. On the contrary, "Through Isaac your offspring will be reckoned." [8]So it is not the children of the flesh who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as offspring. [9]For this is what the promise stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son." [10]Not only that, but Rebecca's children were conceived by one man, our father Isaac. [11]Yet before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad, in order that God's plan of election might stand, [12]not by works but by Him who calls, she was told, "The older will serve the younger." [13]So it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."*

3 **Romans 9:14–29** *[14]What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Certainly not! [15]For He says to Moses: "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." [16]So then, it does not depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. [17]For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth." [18]Therefore God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden. [19]One of you will say to me, "Then why does God still find fault? For who can resist His will?" [20]But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to Him who formed it, "Why did You make me like this?" [21]Does not the potter have the right to make from the same lump of clay one vessel for special occasions and another for common use? [22]What if God, intending to show His wrath and make His power known, bore with great patience the vessels of His wrath, prepared for destruction? [23]What if He did this to make the riches of His glory known to the vessels of His mercy, whom He prepared in advance for glory— [24]including us, whom He has called not only from the Jews, but also from the Gentiles? [25]As He says in Hosea: "I will call them 'My People' who are not My people, and I will call her 'My Beloved' who is not My beloved," [26]and, "It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'" [27]Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the Israelites is like the sand of the sea, only the remnant will be saved. [28]For the Lord will carry out His sentence on the earth thoroughly and decisively." [29]It is just as Isaiah foretold: "Unless the Lord of Hosts had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have resembled Gomorrah."*

4 **Romans 10:1–4** *1Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is for their salvation. 2For I testify about them that they are zealous for God, but not on the basis of knowledge. 3Because they were ignorant of God's righteousness and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4For Christ is the end of the law, to bring righteousness to everyone who believes.*

5 **Romans 10:5–13** *5For concerning the righteousness that is by the law, Moses writes: "The man who does these things will live by them." 6But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) 7or, 'Who will descend into the Abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." 8But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 9that if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10For with your heart you believe and are justified, and with your mouth you confess and are saved. 11It is just as the Scripture says: "Anyone who believes in Him will never be put to shame." 12For there is no difference between Jew and Greek: The same Lord is Lord of all, and gives richly to all who call on Him, 13for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

6 **Romans 10:14–21** *14How then can they call on the One in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? 15And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" 16But not all of them welcomed the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" 17Consequently, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. 18But I ask, did they not hear? Indeed they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." 19I ask instead, did Israel not understand? First, Moses says: "I will make you jealous by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation without understanding." 20And Isaiah boldly says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I revealed Myself to those who did not ask for Me." 21But as for Israel he says: "All day long I have held out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."*

7 **Romans 11:1–10** *1I ask then, did God reject His people? Certainly not! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2God did not reject His people, whom He foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says about Elijah, how he appealed to God against Israel: 3"Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars. I am the only one left, and they are seeking my life as well"? 4And what was the divine reply to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5In the same way, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. 6And if it is by grace, then it is no longer by works. Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace. 7What then? What Israel was seeking, it failed to obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, 8as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see, and ears that could not hear, to this very day." 9And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution to them. 10May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever."*

**8** **Romans 11:11–24** *11I ask then, did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Certainly not! However, because of their trespass, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous. 12But if their trespass means riches for the world, and their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! 13I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry 14in the hope that I may provoke my own people to jealousy and save some of them. 15For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16If the first part of the dough is holy, so is the whole batch; if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17Now if some branches have been broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others to share in the nourishment of the olive root, 18do not boast over those branches. If you do, remember this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." 20That is correct: They were broken off because of unbelief, but you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. 21For if God did not spare the natural branches, He will certainly not spare you either. 22Take notice, therefore, of the kindness and severity of God: severity to those who fell, but kindness to you, if you continue in His kindness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24For if you were cut from a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into one that is cultivated, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!*

**9** **Romans 11:25–36** *25I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you will not be conceited: A hardening in part has come to Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come from Zion; He will remove godlessness from Jacob. 27And this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins." 28Regarding the gospel, they are enemies on your account; but regarding election, they are loved on account of the patriarchs. 29For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. 30Just as you who formerly disobeyed God have now received mercy through their disobedience, 31so they too have now disobeyed, in order that they too may now receive mercy through the mercy shown to you. 32For God has consigned everyone to disobedience so that He may have mercy on everyone. 33O, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! 34"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?" 35"Who has first given to God, that God should repay him?" 36For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says 'man', 'he' or 'brothers' where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

# Study 4: God's plan for Jew and Gentile

> **Memory verse:** “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.” (Romans 11:36). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

## Aims

- Understand Paul's answer to Israel's unbelief: God's sovereign election (the ultimate reason) and Israel's own unbelief (the immediate reason).
- See that Israel's rejection is neither total nor final, and be moved to worship God's wisdom.
- Apply both truths to evangelism: God's chosen will be saved, and the gospel must be preached.

## Suggested timing (about 75 minutes)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer.
- **25 min** Part 1 video (4 min); Romans 9:1–5, 9:6–13, 9:14–29.
- **20 min** Part 2 video (3 min); Romans 9:30–10:4, 10:5–13, 10:14–21.
- **20 min** Part 3 video (3 min); Romans 11:1–10, 11:11–24, 11:25–36.
- **5 min** Summary and closing prayer.

## Tips

- Romans 9 raises hard questions. Paul's own answer is humility (9:20) and worship (11:33–36). Hold both: God chooses, and all who call on Him will be saved (10:13).
- The authors note that commentators differ on Israel's national future; let the group see this is a secondary matter.
- Practical: election encourages evangelism; it doesn't replace it (10:14–17).

## Answers to watch for

- **9:1–5:** Paul's sorrow; he could wish himself cursed for his people.
- **9:6–13:** not all Israel is Israel; God's plan of election, not by works.
- **9:14–29:** God has mercy on whom He has mercy; the potter and the clay.
- **9:30–10:4:** Israel sought righteousness by works; zeal without knowledge; Christ the end of the law.
- **10:5–13:** confess "Jesus is Lord" and believe; everyone who calls will be saved.
- **10:14–21:** faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
- **11:1–10:** a remnant chosen by grace.
- **11:11–24:** God is able to graft them in again.
- **11:25–36:** the depth of God's wisdom; to Him be the glory for ever.