

## Romans: Verse-by-Verse

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### Romans 9:5-7

#### Study Notes

Context: Paul has told us about eight privileges or blessings that Israel had in her Old Testament Covenant. These things should have prepared and educated Israel for the coming of their Messiah.

History tells us, it didn't work that way. A serious question: How did that happen? How do we reconcile Israel's privileges with their failures?

But first: Two Current Views of the Jewish Messiah: 1. The State of Israel is the Jewish Messiah. 2. The Jewish Messiah is yet to be revealed. Neither view accepts Jesus Christ as the Jewish Messiah.

An outline of Paul's Questions and Answers: (John MacArthur) Verses 6-13: "Has God violated his promises?" Verses 14-24: "Has God violated his personal integrity?" Verses 25-29: "Has God violated His prophetic Word?"

#### **Verse 6 and 7 again:**

*It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."*

- Two questions for today:

#### **1. "Has God's promise to Israel failed?"**

God had promised to bless them, but they had forfeited his blessing through unbelief. Israel's failure was her own, but how do we reconcile that failure with God's promise?

Paul: "Not as though God's Word had failed ..." v. 6a

Romans 3:3: "What if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" A better translation is, "What if some were without faith?" Does their lack of faith cancel out the faithfulness of God?

Paul's answer in chapter three: God's Word remained true, even if Israel lacked faith in it. Paul's answer is chapter 9: "If the advantages of the Jew did not serve the intended purpose, God's faithfulness to His people is still not annulled.

J. Vernon McGee: "God's promise to send Israel the Redeemer was not defeated promises for the future of the nation will belief."

A literal way of translating verse 6: "Not as though the Word of God has taken no effect". Note: Jeremiah 32:42-43; Isaiah 55:10-11

Even if Israel rejected God's Word, it didn't mean that God's faithfulness suffered. Someone has said that "What appears to be a breach of promise is only an apparent breach, not a real one."

## **2. What Constitutes The Genuine Israel?**

*"For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel."*

The emphasis: Not all the natural offspring of Israel are the real Israel. Being born to a Jewish family didn't necessarily constitute the full prerequisite of being an Israelite. Paul: "Not all those born to Israel are true Israelites".

Physicality alone didn't make one a true Israelite. It wasn't only about birthrights.

One way of putting it is that there are two Israels. One is an Israel that is formed simply by birth into a Jewish household. The other is the true

Israel – those whose hearts actually belong to God. As someone has said, “The real Israel is contained within the natural Israel.”

New Testament context: A person might be born to Christian parents, but that doesn't automatically make them Christians. Each person must give their hearts to Christ.

Paul: “You could be born to Jewish parents, be born into the Jewish nation, but not truly be a fully functioning Israelite.”

Romans 3:3 -- “What if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” - Romans 3:3

The Exodus Example: Kadesh Barnea

After 40 days of spying, two men believed God and said, “Let's go right into the land and take it.” Ten spies said, “It is a lovely land, but we will never be able to defeat those who live there.”

God sentenced the entire generation – except for Joshua and Caleb -- to wander in the wilderness. All ten spies were part of Israel – but only two of them made it to Canaan.

The Elijah Example: During the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, the people of Israel had all but forsaken God. Elijah complained to God that he and he alone had remained true.

God's Response: “I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.” – I Kings 19:18

Two Israels in that story. One was the physical Israel that had bowed their knees to Baal and kissed his image. There was another Israel – some 7,000 whom God had as a remnant. That 7,000 was the spiritual Israel – the true Israel.

A New Testament example of a real Israelite. Jesus' first encounter with Nathaniel. “Yehoshua saw Nataniel coming to him, and he said, Here

is a genuine son of Israel, in whom is no deceit." – John 1:47 (Jewish version of the New Testament)

**Here is a what?** "A genuine son of Israel". As one scholar explains it, Nathaniel was a Jew outwardly and inwardly. He was not just a Jew by physicality, but in his heart. That was the real issue.

Paul says not all Israelites are true Israelites: He is making a distinction between the natural offspring of Jacob and the spiritual offspring.

We will see more of Paul's explanation next time.