



When in Romans Do as the Righteous Do

"The Remnants of the Day"

Romans 9:25-29

The apostle Paul had made a series of unflattering comparisons regarding the nation of Israel:

- He compared them to Ishmael rather than Isaac.
- He compared them to Esau rather than Jacob.
- He compared them to Pharaoh rather than Moses.

Then, using an illustration, he said they were a lump of clay that was marred on the potter's wheel and only good to be thrown out into the potter's field - a trash heap.

In a moment, quoting from the Old Testament prophets, Paul will compare the Jews to the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Talk about a rough sermon!

Romans 9:25 As He says also in Hosea: "I WILL CALL THEM MY PEOPLE, WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, AND HER BELOVED, WHO WAS NOT BELOVED."

Romans 9:26 "AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."

"I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved," is a loose quote of Hosea 2:23. In Hosea these words refer to Israel and not to the Gentiles. They look forward to the time when Israel will be restored as God's people and as His beloved. But when Paul quotes them here in Romans he applies them to the call of the Gentiles.

How can Paul make such a radical change? The Holy Spirit who inspired the words in the first place has the right to apply them to the current situation. He wasn't saying that Gentiles had replaced Israel. He simply

used the Hosea passage to argue that God is always reaching out to people who do not know Him. He did it to Jews who were in rebellion and He does it to Gentiles who are lost.

Why should it be so strange that Gentiles would be saved? In fact, the Jews were charged with spreading the knowledge of God to the surrounding nations. It was always God's will that none should perish. He has always been a whosoever will believe God of salvation. It should therefore come as no shock to the Jews of the first century that God was saving Gentiles.

Then, too, there was no promise that everyone born a Jew was automatically saved. Salvation was not by *race* but by *righteousness*. It was not inconsistent to reject Jews who refused to believe.

The second verse is Hosea 1:10, "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God." Once again, in its OT setting this verse is not speaking about the Gentiles but describing Israel's future restoration to God's favor. Yet Paul applies it to God's acknowledgment of the Gentiles as His sons. This is another illustration of the fact that when the Holy Spirit quotes verses from the OT in the NT, He can rightfully apply them as He wishes.

By applying these verses to Gentiles, is the Holy Spirit suggesting that Gentiles have replaced Israel in God's plan?

Gentiles have not replaced Israel but are included in God's plan. We know that Israel - ethnic Israel - has not been replaced. We see this plainly stated later, in Romans 11:25-26,

Romans 11:25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Romans 11:26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "THE DELIVERER WILL COME OUT OF ZION, AND HE WILL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB;

There is, however, a teaching called Replacement Theology, also called supersessionism. Replacement theology teaches that the church is the replacement for Israel and that the many promises made to Israel in the

Bible are fulfilled in the Christian church, not in Israel. The prophecies in Scripture concerning the blessing and restoration of Israel to the Promised Land are spiritualized or allegorized into promises of God's blessing for the church.

If you want a quick but foolproof way to refute Replacement Theology, it can be found in the New Testament passages that consistently divide the world into three distinct groups with which God has dealings: the Jews, Gentiles, and the church.

For example:

1 Corinthians 10:32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks [Gentiles] or to the church of God,

Then there is Acts 15:14-17.

Acts 15:14 Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. **[the church]**

Acts 15:15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

Acts 15:16 'AFTER THIS I WILL RETURN AND WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID, WHICH HAS FALLEN DOWN; I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL SET IT UP; **[Israel]**

Acts 15:17 SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, EVEN ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, SAYS THE LORD WHO DOES ALL THESE THINGS.' **[Gentiles]**

It is biblically clear that there are at least three groups you must keep distinct. John Walvoord suggests that we look at the prophetic program of God in four divisions, adding God's program for angels to that of Jews, Gentiles and the church.

Walvoord also provides an important clarification about the distinction between various people who are called "the seed of Abraham."

1. The seed of Abraham can in the Bible refer to all of the natural, physical descendants of Abraham.
2. The seed of Abraham can in the Bible refer to "spiritual Israel," meaning descendants of Abraham who also are justified by grace through believing in God.

3. The seed of Abraham can in the Bible refer to Gentiles who, by virtue of being saved in Jesus Christ, qualify for the promises made to Gentiles in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Referring to Gentiles as a spiritual seed of Abraham does *not* usurp the place of Israel at all. Gentiles do not replace Israel, but we fit in to God's overall prophetic program that includes Israel.

One author put your choices like this:

All the different views of the relationship between the church and Israel can be divided into two camps: either the church is a continuation of Israel (replacement/covenant theology), or the church is completely different and distinct from Israel (dispensationalism/premillennialism).

We are dispensational and premillennial.

Romans 9:27 Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA, THE REMNANT WILL BE SAVED."

You recognize "the sand of the sea" as God's promise to Abraham regarding his descendants. It refers to multiplied multitudes!

A "remnant" is a much smaller portion of something - in this case, ethnic Jews.

Isaiah anticipated that though there would be multitudes of Jews, only "the remnant" would be saved in the end.

In its original context Isaiah was referring to the Jews in the Babylonian captivity. Paul was applying it to their present and prophetic history. We recognize this "remnant" as those Israelites who remain at the end of the Great Tribulation. They "shall be saved" in the sense that they will be supernaturally preserved through that time of intense global persecution and will recognize and receive Jesus Christ as their Messiah at His Second Coming.

Romans 9:28 FOR HE WILL FINISH THE WORK AND CUT IT SHORT IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, BECAUSE THE LORD WILL MAKE A SHORT WORK UPON THE EARTH."

We have the benefit of reading this from the perspective of a completed Bible. We interpret it through the words of Jesus who said that a time of great trouble was coming upon the earth to test the Jews and that God would shorten those days to save the remaining remnant.

The Great Tribulation that comes upon the whole earth finishes God's discipline upon Israel. It's even called "the time of Jacob's trouble" by Jeremiah (30:7).

Romans 9:29 And as Isaiah said before: "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOOTH HAD LEFT US A SEED, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WE WOULD HAVE BEEN MADE LIKE GOMORRAH."

"Sabaoth" means *hosts* or *armies*. It is a reminder that God controls the affairs of men on the earth. He has vast supernatural resources by which He accomplishes His will on earth as it is in Heaven. Though earthly armies and enemies may for a time persecute the Jews, they cannot prevail against the forces of the Lord.

Isaiah here mentions a "seed." This is even smaller than a remnant. Remember that Paul's point in quoting these texts is to show that God is being consistent in His first century dealings with Israel. If only a "seed" from the remnant was saved, it was consistent with what God had promised them.

The comparison of Sodom and Gomorrah is never one to put a smile on your face. Paul had compared the Jews to Ishmael, Esau, and Pharaoh. He illustrated their condition by saying they were a vessel marred on the potter's wheel and tossed out into the potter's field. Now he said they were compared to Sodom and Gomorrah!

Paul was definitely not into building their self-esteem!

What Paul was telling the Jews by quoting Isaiah was that they had become so wicked that God must discipline them. But in the midst of His discipline He would save the righteous, a small remnant.

When will Israel's national salvation occur? There's a hint in Revelation 1:7, which reads "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see

him, and they [also] which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”

That text points directly to Zechariah 12:10, which reads

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

It's at the Second Coming - after the resurrection and rapture of the church and after the seven-year Great Tribulation - that the remnant will be saved.

I happened just this morning to come across a very good article by Dr. Andy Woods. In it he gives a few simple differences between Israel and the church:

1. Israel is the wife of Jehovah (Isaiah 54) while the church is the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5).
2. Israel gave birth to Christ (Revelation 12) whereas Christ gave birth to the church (Matthew 16).
3. Christ will return to rescue Israel upon her national conversion at the end of the Tribulation period (Matthew 23). He will return to rescue the church at the rapture (John 14).
4. King-subject imagery is used to depict God's relationship to Israel (Isaiah 33) while head and groom imagery is used to depict Christ's relationship with His church (Ephesians 5).
5. While four-fifths of the Bible pertains to Israel, only one-fifth of it deals with the church.
6. Israel is a nation (Psalm 147). By contrast, the church is not a nation (Romans 10) but rather is comprised of people from all nations (Galatians 3).
7. While Israel will be resurrected at the beginning of the millennial kingdom (Daniel 12 & Revelation 20) Church-Age believers receive their resurrected bodies at the point of the rapture (First Thessalonians 4 & First Corinthians 15).
8. Israel's judgment will take place on earth, at the end of the Tribulation period, in the wilderness (Ezekiel 20). By contrast, the only judgment the New Testament reveals for the church is the Bema Seat judgment of

rewards in heaven following the rapture (First Corinthian 3 & Second Corinthians 5).

9. While Christ's farewell address to Israel (Matt 24:15; 20) is recorded in the Olivet Discourse (Matt 24-25, His farewell address to the church (John 16:12-13) is found in the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17).

There are a few others but suffice it to say you are not Israel!