WHAT ABOUT ISRAEL?

In Romans 1–8, Paul has explained the significance of the good news about Jesus. His exposition of the good news has not yet answered what would have been a pressing question for Jewish Christians. What is the relationship between the story of Jesus and God’s plan for Israel? Paul answers this question in Romans 9–11.

He begins by surveying the Old Testament and discovering that someone may be ethnically related to the family of Abraham, but that doesn’t make them a genuine Israelite. Abraham had multiple children, but it was through the promised son Isaac that the “seed shall be called” (Romans 9:7). Paul deduces that being a descendant of Abraham is based on God’s promise rather than being a flesh descendant of Abraham. The concept is repeated in Jacob and Esau’s story (Romans 9:10–12).

The next section can be a bit confusing (Romans 9:13–23). One scholar has suggested that reading this section is like riding a bike. If you go too slow or stop, you will fall over, but if you keep moving, you can follow the argument. Paul is asserting (albeit in a way that seems foreign to us) the fact that God can do what He wants. It’s important to note that saying God can do what He wants is not the same as telling us what God wants to do. By asserting God’s freedom to do as He pleases, Paul is making it clear that God is not bound to save ethnic Israel simply because they are related to Abraham. He eventually gets around to telling us what it is that God wants to do. God wants to have mercy on those who will put their faith in Jesus (Romans 9:25–33; 10:9–13).
Write out Romans 10:9–13 from the translation of your choice. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw Arrows to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Romans 9–11. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

How do you sympathize with the experience of Israelites working hard to find righteousness but ultimately failing to find it?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/rom09-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Why, or why not, does the teaching that God can prune branches out of His family tree help create spiritual humility?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/rom09-4
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Isaiah 56:6–8  
Isaiah 65:1, 2  
Hosea 2:23  
1 Peter 2:9–10

What other verses come to mind in connection with the salvation of Israel and of the Gentiles?

Review your memorized verse from Romans 9–11.
Where do you see Jesus in Romans 9–11?

What can you share with those who feel that salvation is hard to access?

What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/rom09-6
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study of the chapter, how have you applied Romans 9–11 personally?

What are the social applications for Romans 9–11?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/rom09-7
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Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

In what ways does the story of Israel parallel the story of our church?

How can understanding God’s perfectly righteous and holy character protect us from self-righteousness?

Do you feel that Paul makes salvation too easy when he says that all we have to do is confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead? Is there more to it?

When you read the Old Testament, do you see the story of Jesus foreshadowed? If so, what are some examples?

Does the idea that God can prune branches out of His spiritual family make you uncomfortable? Why or why not?

Have you felt a personal responsibility to share the gospel? If so, how have you done it?

What About Israel?