

In Romans 11:1-2, Paul verifies that the Jews were God's people (in the "positional" sense) in his day even though divorced and void of God's favor:

*I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. (Romans 11:1-2)*

Paul could teach that the Jews remained God's people in the "positional" sense because Israel will be restored and blessed when all the Jews alive at the end of the Tribulation repent and accept Jesus as Savior. Israel will then be taken off the sidelines (shed her "positional" status) and receive God's favor. Due to having remained single in her harlotry (Hosea 2:6-7), she will be free to remarry Jehovah and receive the blessings associated with the unconditional covenants He enacted with her in the Old Testament Scriptures. Let's take what we have discussed and apply it to Romans 9:25-26.

Paul has taught that Jews (Romans 9:23) and Gentiles (Romans 9:24) become "*vessels of mercy*" through believing in the same Messiah. In Romans 9:25-26, a quote from Hosea 2:23 and Hosea 1:10, Paul expands his message. He proves that just as Israel in his day was named "*not My people*" (Romans 9:25-26; Hosea 1:10; 2:23), due to having been divorced and living void of Jehovah's favor due to sin, she would be renamed as God's people ("*My people*"—Romans 9:25; Hosea 2:23), as "*sons of the living God*" (Romans 9:26; Hosea 1:10), at the end of the Tribulation—when every Jew (on the earth at that time) repents and believes. In the same way the Gentiles, who are not God's people prior to believing, become God's people once they repent and believe. Thus, in Romans 9:25-26, Paul validates that through accepting Jesus as Savior, Gentiles become "*beloved...sons*" just like the believing Jews. In fact, both Jews and Gentiles become "*vessels of mercy*" (Romans 9:23-24) through faith in Christ. You and I, as a result, have the awesome privilege of displaying God's mercy as we yield to Jesus' indwelling presence! No privilege is greater!

Paul understood that "*called*" in the phrase, "*called sons of the living God*" (Romans 9:26), is synonymous with "named." Names are significant in Jewish culture. Hosea confirms, therefore, that Jews receive a new name once they accept Jesus as Messiah. They are named, or "*called,*" "*sons of the living God.*" Paul, transitioning into his day, validates that God grants both Jews and Gentiles a new name in conjunction with making them part of His family. They each become "*sons of the living God*" (Romans 9:26). Thus, both Jews and Gentiles (during the church age, which began in Acts 2) receive a special name (which includes a calling, position, or gifting) once they are placed in Christ after repenting and believing. This spiritual gifting is to be used to spread the good news of Christ (the Messiah) to the world.

By no stretch of the imagination is Paul communicating that God is finished with physical Israel and dealing exclusively with the church—made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Hosea 1:10 (quoted in Romans 9:26) and Hosea 2:23 (quoted in Romans 9:25) will not come to full fruition until the end of the Tribulation—when every Jew living on the earth accepts Jesus as Messiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and calls Him back (Hosea 5:15). Our *Isaiah* commentary addresses this topic extensively as well as the subject matter of Romans 9:27-29, the "*remnant*" of Israel.

Paul shifts back to truth relating to the Jewish nation alone in Romans 9:27-29. Due to these passages consisting of quotes from the prophet Isaiah (Romans 9:27-28 from Isaiah 10:22-23 and Romans 9:29 from Isaiah 1:9), these three passages will be studied as a block.

*Romans 9:27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;*

*Romans 9:28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY.”*

*Romans 9:29 And just as Isaiah foretold, “UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH.”*

The doctrine of “*the remnant*” (Romans 9:27) of the nation of Israel is fascinating, for a believing Jewish “*remnant*” has always existed—even during the darkest days of Israel’s sinful past. In fact, had there been a time when Jewish believers were nonexistent, the nation would have become extinct. Paul does a masterful job of weaving Hosea’s words recorded in Romans 9:25-26 into Isaiah’s words quoted in Romans 9:27-29, for the Jews who had received new names (Romans 9:25-26) as a result of accepting Jesus as Messiah made up “*the remnant*” of Israel in Paul’s day. Once again, Paul emphasizes that only a portion of physical Israel will be saved, the portion that accepts Jesus as Savior by abandoning the falsehood that ancestry and good works result in salvation. This truth ties in perfectly with Romans 9:21, where Paul taught that the “*lump*” (Romans 9:21), physical Israel, was divided into two parts—a “*vessel for honor*” and a “*vessel...for no honor.*” The believing portion of physical Israel, the “*vessel for honor*” (Romans 9:21), made up of individual (Jewish) “*vessels of mercy*” (Romans 9:23), brings “*honor*” to God—while the unbelieving portion of the nation, the “*vessel...for no honor*” (Romans 9:21), made up of individual (Jewish) “*vessels of wrath*” (Romans 9:22), does not. Hence, God divides nations into units based on their individual choices regarding the “*seed*” of Genesis 3:15, Jesus the Messiah (Galatians 3:16). Sodom (Romans 9:29) ceased to exist, therefore, due to lacking a remnant of believers (read Genesis 18:16-19:22 with a special emphasis on Genesis 18:32).

*Romans 9:30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;*

Paul stresses in this passage that a portion of the Gentiles, who were part of a people never obsessed with appeasing God through the works of the Law, had “*attained*” the “*righteousness*” that Israel had pursued, yet failed to obtain. These Gentiles had done so simply by exercising repentance and faith while depraved. Thus, in comparison to Israel’s passionate pursuit of righteousness through the works of the Law, the Gentiles were lacking. Yet through “*faith*,” a portion of the Gentiles “*attained*” the “*righteousness*” that the majority of the Jews missed out on. Paul verifies this truth in the following passage:

*Romans 9:31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.*

Romans 3:20 ties in well with this verse, for Paul again emphasizes that no one can achieve a righteous standing before God through the deeds of the Law:

*because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)*

The Law was given to reveal our need for a Savior (Galatians 3:24), not as a means to obtain righteousness before our Maker.

*Romans 9:32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,*

Notice that Paul contrasts “*faith*” with “*works*” in this passage. Therefore, for the depraved to exercise

faith is not a work. As a result of misunderstanding the purpose of the Law, the Jews “*stumbled over the stumbling stone*,” Who is Jesus Christ. Romans 9:33 validates this truth.

*Romans 9:33 just as it is written, “BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”*

God requires faith in Christ, the “*seed*” of Genesis 3:15, before granting salvation. The “*stone*” that was laid “*in Zion*,” “*a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense*,” is Jesus. No wonder, Jesus is so offensive to those who pursue righteousness through the Law.

No one who believes in Christ will “*be disappointed*.” We need to remember this truth during seasons when it “seems” a though God has forsaken us. And yes, those seasons will come. They bear tremendous fruit in the end, however, allowing us to view life from God’s perspective to an ever-increasing degree. As a great man once said, “Everything is learned through pain, everything else is just information” (source unknown). To God be the glory!