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# Romans

**...even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?**

Romans 9:24

Paul has been speaking of election in the preceding paragraphs. He now turns to the concept of our calling. This progression is found in Romans 8:30 -

"Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

The Jews and Gentiles are those described in the preceding verse (9:23), "the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory." When speaking of these individuals, the Greek word *ex* is used for "of the." This word means more precisely "out of" or "from" and indicates, as has already been revealed elsewhere in Romans, that this is a select portion of the Jews and Gentiles. It is not a national privilege, but an individual honor - for both Jew and Gentile.

This calling of the Gentiles, and selection of a portion of the Jews, is not unique to Paul. Rather, it was prophesied in the Old Testament as well. Passages such as Isaiah 49:6 show us this is so -

Indeed He says,  
'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant  
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,

And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;  
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,  
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”

God has always preserved a righteous remnant of the people of Israel (see Isaiah 1:9, for example). Preserving a remnant implies that not all are called. But along with this remnant would be something that is often overlooked by this covenant people. God promised to send His Servant not only for them, but to be "as a light to the Gentiles" as well. This promise is hinted all along, but was somehow dismissed by the Israelites.

Life application: In Christ, the boundaries of life are removed. There is neither slave nor free, Jew nor Gentile, black nor white, male nor female. When one is in Christ, they are a child of God and one of the elect. Handle your relationships with others in Christ in a manner fitting your calling.

**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 9:25

As he has consistently done in order to substantiate his claims, Paul turns again directly to Scripture to show that God's election and calling are not just for the Jews. Today he turns to the prophet Hosea. There in Hosea 2:23, we are shown that God's people are rejected or called according to a plan and a wisdom that we don't always fully understand.

Hosea was a prophet who was used by God in a most unusual way. He married a woman named Gomer per the Lord's instructions which stated -

“Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry  
And children of harlotry,

For the land has committed great harlotry  
By departing from the Lord.”

Gomer had three children. The first was named Jezreel, "God sows." The second was named Lo-Ruhamah, "No mercy." The third was named Lo-Ammi, "Not my people." What is implied is that the first child was born to Hosea whereas the second two were children of harlotry. God used this dysfunctional family, with an unfaithful wife and illegitimate children, to show how He works even among those who are not His while rejecting those who are His. However, even His rejection is something that won't continue on forever. Instead, He will call His rejected people back to Himself.

The symbolism of the book of Hosea is so rich and beautiful. We reject God; God calls us back. And so Paul uses the words of this book to show us these truths in his letter to the Romans. As the apostle to the Gentiles, he shows us how God worked through the Jews to demonstrate His character and His righteous requirements. In due time, Christ came and fulfilled these requirements, thus allowing all to share in His goodness, but at this point, the Jews rejected Him.

During this time of rejection, Paul tells us of the dispensation of grace which is poured out upon the Gentiles, he being the minister of this period. Passages such as Ephesians 3:1-9 show us this. His thoughts there are summed up in verses 8 and 9 -

"To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ."

However, despite Israel's rejection of Christ, the symbolism of Hosea (as Jesus' words and Paul's writings also) shows us that they too will be called back by God at some point in the future. When the "times of the Gentiles" end, God's attention will be focused on His people who have long rejected Him.

As a sort of hidden confirmation of these things and as if opening up a treasure of beautiful gems, the passage Paul refers to in Hosea is marked with a special pattern known as a chiasm. This pattern shows the contrast of rejection and acceptance by God. A chiasm is a pattern which states a truth and then turns around and restates it in the opposite order. Sometimes, such as in the case of this one in Hosea, the pattern says the opposite as it unfolds, thus it is a chiasm of contrasts. I discovered this one in 2007. I hope you will enjoy seeing both the grace and mercy of God revealed in it -

Hosea 1:9-2:23 - "But Me she forgot," says the LORD.

A Chiasm of Contrasts - Our Unfaithfulness and God's Unlimited Mercy (11/23/07)

a 1:9 You are not my people, I will not be your God.

b 1:10 Jezreel (God will sow)

c 2:3 Dry Land, thirst.

d 2:5 Wife departs from her husband.

e 2:7 Wife returns to her husband.

f 2:9 Take away the new wine.

g 2:10-12 God punishes Israel.

h 2:13 God will punish her.

x 2:13 "But Me she forgot," says the LORD

h 2:14a God will allure her.

g 2:14b God comforts Israel.

f 2:15 Give vineyards.

e 2:16 LORD says, "That you will call me 'My Husband.'"

d 2:19 Husband betroths wife.

c 2:21, 22 Grain, new wine, oil.

b 2:22 Jezreel (God will sow)

a 2:23 You are my people; You are my God.

Life application: Though the gentiles were once out of the picture, there were still hints of God's love for them - Ruth for example. And though the Jews rejected Christ, God has not given up on them. He will again call them as a people to Himself, thus demonstrating that He truly is a God of grace and mercy.

**“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.”** Romans 9:26

Verse 26 is a continuation of Paul's citing of Hosea. He turns from chapter 2, back to chapter 1 and cites verse 10. This is, as was noted yesterday, speaking to Israel about Israel. This select group of people had rejected Him. Because of this, He had rejected them. But God says,

"It shall come to pass" - As surely as time will move forward, there will be a time when the thing will come about.

"In the place where it was said to them" - The nation was exiled for disobedience. Before that occurred, it was said through the prophets that there would be a sentence pronounced. And then, after the exile happened, in that place, the pronouncement was made.

"You are not My people" - The bond is broken and you who once were the object of my affection and the apple of my eye have now been cast off and disinherited.

But what is implied for the term "You are not My people" is also implied for the second statement...

"There they shall be called sons of the living God" - In that same place of prophecy which is the land of Israel, and in that same place of judgment, which is exile from the land, God has determined that Israel shall once again "be called sons of the living God."

This was seen very clearly in the chiasm which was included with the commentary on 9:25. What God rejects, God can also reclaim as His.

The term "shall be" is, in the biblical context, as reliable as if it were already done. In other words, when God speaks that something "shall be" it is as certain as something that has already come to pass. Jesus speaks this way at times, such as in Mark 11:17 -

"Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'"?"

Understanding God's sovereign decree concerning Israel, we can therefore deduce that the same is true concerning the gentiles. If God can disinherit His people and then re-establish them as His own, then He can do so for those who are outside of that specially chosen line as well. This is where Paul is going with this, and which we will see as he continues along.

During the time of Israel's exile for disobedience, there has been a time of God's favor upon the gentile world. The precedent has been set in Israel and therefore it can, and does, apply to those who are not Israel as well. The interesting thing for people alive in this day is that Israel as a nation has been re-gathered to Israel the land. It does appear that the prophecy which was pronounced is coming to pass. If so, then the "times of the gentiles" may now be coming to a close.

Life application: If God's word says something will come to pass, it is as certain as if it has already happened. When we dismiss prophecies because they don't fit our theology, we treat God's word as less-than-reliable. Likewise, when we dismiss a particular verse because it is contrary to what we want to hear, we hold

God's word in contempt. What God says, should always take precedence over what we do or don't like.

**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. Romans 9:27**

Paul has established that there was, in fact, a plan and a place for the gentiles in God's redemptive workings, but to demonstrate that what had occurred to Israel should have been expected, he turns again to their own Scriptures. He cites Isaiah 10:22, 23 as supporting verses, but he could have pulled out countless others.

Paul says that "Isaiah also cries out..." In other words, what he wrote wasn't a quiet "Oh, by the way..." comment written by one of the minor prophets. Rather, it is a declarative statement by Israel's prince of the prophets which should have been heard and heeded. Paul's statement that Isaiah "cries out" is intended to show that there was simply no excuse for not understanding his words. They were boldly proclaimed and should have been painfully evident to the people.

And they weren't written about the surrounding nations as so many prophetic utterances were. Instead they were "concerning Israel." God was telling them in advance that despite being His chosen people, there would be consequences for rebellion. Such consequences included a state which would bring them almost to the point of extermination - "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea" is an obvious description. There were millions of Israelites living in the land and feeling secure in their status. This was a state that they could look all the way back to Abraham for -

"By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies." Genesis 22:16, 17

The father whom they looked back to was given incredible promises which recognized them as God's people. From him came Isaac and then Jacob. Through this line came the exodus and the giving of the law. Among this people could be found God's temple and the great line of kings; the Davidic dynasty. Surely they were safe and secure. But Isaiah told them something different; something they didn't want to heed, "the remnant will be saved."

A remnant is but a small portion of the whole and is the part which is least favored, such as when one cuts off the extra portion of a carpet. Normally, the choice part is kept, but the remnant is discarded. But in the case of Israel, the opposite would be true. Only the remnant would be saved. Paul, citing Isaiah in this way, surely meant to show the nation that what he wrote wasn't just pertaining to the time of the Babylonian exile, but that it was an established principle that could (and was going to be) repeated. Solomon wrote of this principle in Ecclesiastes -

That which has been is what will be,  
That which is done is what will be done,  
And there is nothing new under the sun. Ecclesiastes 1:9

God had exiled the northern kingdom to Assyria. He did it again to the southern kingdom when they were taken to Babylon. Paul was demonstrating that this would again occur because of their rejection of Christ.

Understanding that this was known to Paul from the very Scriptures which established Israel as a people, we can properly evaluate what he will say in the coming chapters and verses concerning Israel of Paul's future (and our present). Failing to heed this established pattern has led to the doctrine of "replacement theology" which says that the church has replaced them. Paul is showing, in advance, that this isn't the case. As happened before, so it will be again - a remnant will be saved."



Life application: God's intent and purpose for Israel didn't end with the coming of Jesus. Nor did the church replace Israel as a people. Rather, during Israel's time of exile for their rejection of Him, God has worked to procure a unique people for Himself from among the Gentiles. When this dispensation ends, God's attention will be redirected fully toward Israel, preparing them for the return of Jesus. He will dwell among them during the next dispensation, the millennial reign of Christ. Because this is what the Bible teaches, remember to pray for Israel - that eyes will be opened and hearts will be converted.