

ROMANS CHAPTER 9

The Covenant Promises, the Election of Yisra'El, and the Faithfulness of YaHuWaH

Romans Chapter 9 begins a new section in Sha'ul's letter. The first 8 chapters have primarily established the foundation of YaHuWaH's righteousness, the condition of man, the work of Messiah, and the transformation accomplished through the Spirit.

Now Sha'ul turns directly to one of the most difficult covenant questions facing the early assemblies:
If YaHuWaH gave promises to Yisra'El, and many among Yisra'El have rejected Messiah, has the Word of YaHuWaH failed?

This question is at the heart of Romans 9 through 11. Sha'ul is not beginning a new unrelated subject. He is answering the concern that naturally follows everything he has written. If righteousness comes through Messiah and if the nations are being brought near, what has happened to Yisra'El? Has YaHuWaH replaced Yisra'El? Has He abandoned His covenant? Have the promises failed? Sha'ul's answer throughout these chapters is: **Absolutely not**. The faithfulness of YaHuWaH is the foundation of everything. Romans 9 begins by showing that YaHuWaH's covenant purposes have always operated according to His promise and calling, not merely human expectation or physical descent.

Sha'ul's Grief Over Yisra'El

Sha'ul begins with an intense expression of sorrow:

"I speak the truth in Messiah, I do not lie, my conscience also bearing witness with me in the Set-apart Spirit, that I have great sadness and continual grief in my heart." - Romiyim (Romans) 9:1-2

This opening is important because it reveals Sha'ul's heart toward his own people. Romans 9 is not written from hostility toward Yisra'El. It is written from anguish.

Sha'ul continues:

"For I myself could have wished to be accursed from Messiah for the sake of my brothers, my relatives according to the flesh." - Romiyim (Romans) 9:3

This echoes Mosheh's own intercession after Yisra'El's sin with the golden calf.

Mosheh said:

"And now, if You would forgive their sin, but if not, please blot me out of Your book which You have written." - Shemoth (Exodus) 32:32

Both Mosheh and Sha'ul reveal the heart of a shepherd. They do not rejoice when people fall. They intercede. They desire restoration.

The Privileges Given to Yisra'El

Sha'ul then lists the covenant blessings entrusted to Yisra'El:

"Who are Yisra'Elites, whose is the adoption and the esteem and the covenants and the giving of the Torah, and the worship and the promises; whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Messiah according to the flesh..." - Romiyim (Romans) 9:4-5

This passage is essential because Sha'ul identifies the unique calling of Yisra'El. He does not say: "These things once belonged to Yisra'El but now belong to someone else." He says they belong to Yisra'El. The covenant history matters. The promises matter. The Torah matters. The fathers matter. The Messiah Himself comes through Yisra'El.

The Meaning of Yisra'El

The name Yisra'El itself carries covenant meaning. The Hebrew name **Yisra'El** (ישראל) is traditionally connected with the idea of striving, overcoming, or prevailing with Elohim.

The name was given to Ya'aqob after his encounter with the Messenger of YaHuWaH:

"Your name is no longer called Ya'aqob, but Yisra'El, for you have striven with Elohim and with men, and have overcome." - Bereshith (Genesis) 32:28

Yisra'El represents a people called into relationship with YaHuWaH. It is a covenant identity.

Has the Word of Elohim Failed?

Sha'ul declares:

"But it is not as though the Word of Elohim has failed." - Romiyim (Romans) 9:6

This is the central issue. If some among Yisra'El have rejected Messiah, does that mean YaHuWaH's promises have collapsed? Sha'ul says no. Why? Because the promises of YaHuWaH were always based on His faithfulness. Human failure does not cancel divine promise.

The same principle was established earlier:

"Let Elohim be true and every man a liar." - Romiyim (Romans) 3:4

The question is not whether YaHuWaH is faithful. The question is how His faithfulness unfolds.

Not All Physical Descendants Represent the Full Covenant Purpose

Sha'ul writes:

"For they are not all Yisra'El who are of Yisra'El." - Romiyim (Romans) 9:6

This statement requires careful understanding. Sha'ul is not denying physical Yisra'El. He is distinguishing between physical descent and covenant faithfulness. The Scriptures have always made this distinction. Being physically connected to Abraham was never presented as sufficient without faithfulness.

Yahusha Himself confronted this misunderstanding:

"If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham." - Yohanan (John) 8:39

The covenant was never merely biological. It was relational.

Abraham's Two Sons: Yitshaq and Yishma'El

Sha'ul explains:

"Neither are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham, but 'In Yitshaq your seed shall be called.'" - Romiyim (Romans) 9:7

Sha'ul returns to Genesis. Abraham had multiple sons, but the covenant promise continued through Yitshaq. This demonstrates that YaHuWaH's covenant purposes operate according to His promise. The question is not simply: "Who descended physically?" The question is: "Who belongs to the covenant promise?"

YaHuWaH's Purpose Through Promise

Sha'ul writes:

"That is, those who are children of the flesh, these are not the children of Elohim, but the children of the promise are reckoned as the seed." - Romiyim (Romans) 9:8

This does not mean physical descendants are irrelevant. The Scriptures repeatedly affirm YaHuWaH's promises concerning Yisra'El. Rather, Sha'ul is showing that covenant identity has always involved promise. Abraham was chosen before he had descendants. Yitshaq was promised before he was born. Ya'aqob was chosen before his actions determined anything. The foundation is YaHuWaH's purpose.

Ya'aqob and Ėsaw

Sha'ul continues:

"For the children not yet having been born, nor having done any good or evil, so that the purpose of Elohim according to choice might stand, not of works but of Him who calls..." - Romiyim (Romans) 9:11

This passage is often removed from its covenant context. Sha'ul is discussing the continuation of the promise. The question is not merely individual deliverance. The question is how YaHuWaH carries forward His covenant plan. Through Ya'aqob came the tribes of Yisra'El. Through Ėsaw came Edom. The distinction concerns covenant purpose.

Is There Injustice With Elohim?

Sha'ul asks:

"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with Elohim? Let it not be!" - Romiyim (Romans) 9:14

The answer rests upon the character of YaHuWaH. He is righteous. He is just. He is faithful. The Hebrew concept of justice is **tsedeq** and **mishpat**. YaHuWaH's decisions are never arbitrary. They flow from His wisdom and righteousness.

The Potter and the Clay

Sha'ul uses the imagery of a potter:

"Does not the potter have authority over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for value and another for no value?" - Romiyim (Romans) 9:21

This imagery comes directly from the prophets.

Jeremiah was told to go to the potter's house:

"Look, as the clay is in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand, O house of Yisra'El!" - Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 18:6

The point is not that YaHuWaH creates people without moral responsibility. The point is that the Creator has authority over His creation. Mankind does not define the Creator. The Creator defines mankind.

The Nations Brought Near

Sha'ul then quotes Hosea:

"I shall call them My people who were not My people, and her beloved who was not beloved." - Romiyim (Romans) 9:25

This is one of the strongest connections to the restoration of the whole house of Yisra'El. The original prophecy concerns the restoration of the northern kingdom of Yisra'El, often identified as Ephrayim. Through rebellion, they lost covenant identity. YaHuWaH promised restoration.

Hosea declared:

"And it shall be, instead of what was said to them, 'You are not My people,' it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living El.'" - Hoshea (Hosea) 1:10

Sha'ul applies this restoration language to the nations being brought near through Messiah. This reveals something profound: The restoration of the nations and the restoration of Yisra'El are connected. The covenant promise expands. It does not disappear.

The Stone of Stumbling

Sha'ul concludes:

"See, I lay in Tsiyon a stumbling-stone and a rock that makes for falling, and everyone who believes on Him shall not be put to shame." - Romiyim (Romans) 9:33

The stone is Messiah. Yahusha is the foundation stone. But He becomes a stumbling stone to those who seek righteousness apart from YaHuWaH's purpose. The issue was not that Yisra'El possessed Torah. The issue was misunderstanding its purpose. Torah points to righteousness. Messiah embodies righteousness.

Romans 9 and the Restoration of the Whole House of Yisra'El

Romans 9 is often presented as a chapter about rejection. But its deeper message is faithfulness. YaHuWaH has not abandoned His covenant purposes. The promises remain. The calling remains. The Messiah came through Yisra'El. The nations are being brought near. The scattered are being restored. The covenant family is being renewed according to the promise given to Abraham. Romans 9 prepares the way for Chapters 10 and 11, where Sha'ul will further explain the relationship between Yisra'El, the nations, and the olive tree of covenant promise.

Conclusion of Romans Chapter 9

Romans 9 reveals that the foundation of redemption is not human strength but the faithfulness of YaHuWaH. The covenant did not fail. The promises did not fail. YaHuWaH did not fail. Mankind failed. But YaHuWaH continues His work of restoration. He remains faithful to Abraham. He remains faithful to Yisra'El. He remains faithful to the nations. Through Yahusha Messiah, He is bringing His covenant purposes to completion. The question Romans 9 leaves before us is not: "Has YaHuWaH rejected His people?" The answer is already clear: No. The question is: "How is YaHuWaH fulfilling His promises through Messiah?" Romans 10 and 11 will continue unveiling that mystery.

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