

## The Four Classes of Israel of Romans 9-11

- A. In **ROM 11:26**, Paul says, “And so all Israel shall be saved...” Compare this with **ISA 45:17, 25**.
1. Some have concluded that the totality of the nation of Israel, or the totality of the posterity of Abraham will be unfailingly everlastingly saved.
  2. Based upon texts like **ISA 45:17, 25** the statements of Jesus of Nazareth would have been quite offensive to the Jews of His day. **MAT 23:15, 33; JOH 8:43-44**.
  3. God cannot lie (**TIT 1:2**). Thus, all Israel shall be saved indeed but this demands that we identify who this Israel is.
    - a. By God’s measure, the true Jew is one inwardly. **ROM 2:28-29**.
    - b. The true circumcision is inward: of the heart, in the spirit.
    - c. His praise is not of men but of God: a spiritual worship which praises and rejoices in Christ Jesus rather than the flesh. **PHIL 3:3**.
  4. Paul’s arguments from Scripture in **ROM 9-11** in which he proves a spiritual distinction among the Jews according to God’s elective purpose are the basis for his statement, “And so all Israel shall be saved...” (**ROM 11:26**).
    - a. so: In the way or manner described, indicated, or suggested; in that style or fashion.
    - b. God will save an Israel as defined and described by Paul in **ROM 9-11**.
  5. There are, of necessity, four classes of “Israel” under consideration in **ROM 9-11**.
- B. Israel is the general term referring to the stock of Abraham and their national identity.
1. These are Israelites according to the flesh, the kin of Paul. **ROM 9:3-5**.
  2. These have a descent and heritage from the O.T. patriarchs traced from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob (renamed Israel, **GEN 32:28**) and were eventually made into a covenant nation under the Sinaitic Covenant with unique blessings.
  3. “Behold Israel after the flesh...” (**1CO 10:18**), a community largely defined by fleshly genealogy and circumcision in the flesh.
    - a. Neither regeneration nor faith were requisites for this Israel.
    - b. It was in general “...a disobedient and gainsaying people” (**ROM 10:21**).
- C. Within the O.T. covenant people called Israel are two major groups.
1. There are those who have only fleshly descent from Abraham and circumcision to their credit.
    - a. These are not the children of God, not the children of promise counted for the seed. **ROM 9:6-8**.
    - b. These are not in God’s election of grace (**ROM 11:5**), and are, as Esau, hated of God. **ROM 9:9-13**.
    - c. They are *vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*. **ROM 9:21-22**.
    - d. Being not counted for the seed, they share Sodom and Gomorrha’s hellish fate. **ROM 9:29 c/w JUDE 1:7**.
    - e. Being reprobate, they have no spiritual nature and therefore no ability to believe and please God by faith. **ROM 8:7-8; 1CO 2:14 c/w HEB 11:6**.
    - f. This class of Israel is distinct from “the election” and are *irremediably* blinded, always looking *down*, not up. **ROM 11:7-10**.
      - (1) alway: All along, all the time, perpetually, throughout all time.
      - (2) They are of the earth earthly and speak of it. **JOH 3:31**.
      - (3) They are all about things of earth: their table, a plot of earth, food, minerals and gold from the earth, buildings of earth, ruling the earth, laying up treasures on earth, etc. **ct/w MAT 7:19-21**.
      - (4) This condition is not uniquely Jewish, it is the universal condition of natural men everywhere.

2. There is a spiritual seed of Abraham within the nation of Israel. It is Christ and all those counted in Him. **GAL 3:16, 28-29.**
    - a. These are as Isaac, born after the Spirit and children of the promise. **ROM 9:7 c/w GAL 4:28-29.**
    - b. Like Jacob, they are God's elect and loved of God Who wills to show them mercy, being *vessels of mercy God afore prepared unto glory*. **ROM 9:11-16, 23-24.**
    - c. They are elect unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ Who took away their sins and gave them a heavenly inheritance. **1PE 1:1-5.**
    - d. These are properly "...the Israel of God" (**GAL 6:16**) and have a shared inheritance with the called from among the Gentiles. **ROM 9:24.**
    - e. They are a *remnant* (That which remains or is left of a thing or things after the removal of a portion; the remainder, rest, residue. Now applied only to a small remaining part) of the fleshly posterity of Abraham, of Israel. **ROM 9:27; 11:5.**
- D. Of the elect, spirit-born remnant of Israel, there are two sub-groups:
1. Believers like the O.T. saints and prophets, the apostles and early church converts.
  2. Unbelievers who are yet part of the election. **ROM 11:25-29.**
    - a. This class of Israel share in the blindness of the non-elect reprobates but for a different reason: a judicial imposition of blindness upon them in spite of them being God's elect.
    - b. This condition may be overcome if their hearts turn unto God (**2CO 3:12-16**) and will be overcome when *the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*. **ROM 11:25.**
    - c. This is the Israel for whom Paul prays in **ROM 10:1-4** and hopes they will be provoked to emulation. **ROM 11:14.**
  3. The "...remnant according to the election of grace" (**ROM 11:5**) are the Israel of God's interest and everlasting love.
    - a. They will all be saved in the sense of their sins being taken away. **ROM 11:26-27.**
    - b. They will all be saved from blindness, either by conversion presently or "...when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (**ROM 11:25**).
    - c. It is certain that any spiritual blindness of any degree in any of God's elect shall be taken away by the resurrection of the last day. **1CO 13:12; 1JO 3:2.**
- E. Israel as a covenant community lost the kingdom of God which was then given to the New Covenant community of faith which includes believing Gentiles in "...the commonwealth of Israel..." (**EPH 2:11-12**). **MAT 21:43 c/w 1PE 2:5-9.**
1. The non-elect portion of Israel (the children of the flesh) are utterly cast away from kingdom blessings and privileges since the Old Covenant under which they had a share in them has been set aside and abolished by Christ. **HEB 8:13; 9:15-17.**
  2. God has not utterly cast away the entirety of Israel: "...God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew..." (**ROM 11:1-2**).
    - a. The foreknown are secured in Christ all the way to glory. **ROM 8:29-30.**
    - b. They are of the "...remnant according to the election of grace" (**ROM 11:5**).
  3. The unbelieving elect portion of Israel are also cast away from kingdom blessings and privileges but it is possible for them to be grafted back into their own rootstock by turning to Christ in faith. **ROM 11:11-24.**
    - a. The phrase "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid..." (**v. 11**) must refer the pronoun "they" back to the *foreknown* in **v. 2.**, not to the non-elect Israel which is perpetually blinded in **vs. 7-10**.
    - b. Sometimes the Holy Spirit makes us search for the proper antecedent to a pronoun, as in **PSA 105:37** where "them" is not *Egypt* of **vs. 25-36** but *Israel* of **vs. 23-24**.
    - c. The castaways who may be recovered (**ROM 11:11-24**) are not utterly cast away

but are cast away from the kingdom blessings and privileges under Christ which believers enjoy.

- F. What was Israel seeking for and missed which the election obtained? **ROM 11:7.**
1. They were seeking righteousness by trusting in their works of the law, a futile endeavor since human nature forbids it. **ROM 9:30-10:5; GAL 3:10, 21-22.**
  2. The election has obtained it through Christ Who made them righteous in Himself. **ROM 5:19; 2CO 5:21.**
  3. As opposed to unbelieving Jews who were given the Law of Moses, believing Gentiles without the Law of Moses have nevertheless "...attained to righteousness..." (**ROM 9:30**).
    - a. attain: To come so far as, succeed in coming to, get (*to*). **to attain to** = reach, arrive at. *arch.*
    - b. Believers are successful in reaching via Christ what law-works-righteousness types will never reach: rest in a provided flawless righteousness. **ROM 10:4.**
    - c. Unbelievers, even elect unbelievers, cannot reach this.
- G. Both of the classes of Israel which miss Christ and miss N.T. covenant kingdom blessings in *the LORD Christ their righteousness* (**JER 23:6 c/w PHIL 3:9**) do so for the same reason: unbelief.
1. The non-elect unbelievers miss because of their reprobate nature which is delusionally self-righteous. They will never believe, period.
  2. The elect unbelievers miss because their regenerate inward man is overruled by an imposed blindness until the blindness gets taken away by a sovereign intervention (as Paul), or by a convicted/softened heart that reacts like those in **ACT 2:37-41**.
    - a. They may have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge, a destructive force. **ROM 10:2 c/w HOS 4:6.**
    - b. As long as they persist in the system of the Pharisee doctors who take away *the key of knowledge they are hindered*. **LUK 11:52.**
    - c. Until their veiled hearts turn from legacy to the Lord, the veil remains in place. **2CO 3:13-16 c/w 1PE 1:18-21.**