

GOD'S NEW COVENANT

Romans 9–11

Memory Verse: *“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”* (Rom. 10:13 ESV).

Background Helps:

The inclusion of the Gentiles in God's covenant (beginning with the salvation of Cornelius's household in Acts 10:1–11:18), the rapid multiplication of Gentile believers (especially through the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13–14), and the subsequent Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-35) all raised important questions about the future of the Jews. By and large they had not responded positively to the gospel message. Has God's covenant with his chosen people come to an end? Is their rejection total? Is it final? These are the main questions that Paul addresses in Romans 9–11. Here's a brief outline of these chapters:

- I. The Sorrow of Paul at Israel's Rejection (9:1-5)
- II. The Rejection of Israel Harmonized with God's Sovereignty (9:6-29)
- III. The Rejection of Israel Harmonized with Human Responsibility (9:30–10:21)
- IV. The Rejection of Israel and God's Purpose for Their Future (11:1-32)
 - A. Israel's rejection is not total (11:1-10)
 - B. Israel's rejection is not final (11:11-32)
- V. The Doxology of Paul in Praise of God (11:33-36)¹

Notice the specific reference to the “covenants” (plural) in Romans 9:4, indicating that the Jews had been privileged partners with God in the covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David. There is another reference to God's covenant (“my covenant”) in Romans 11:26-27, which is a partial quotation of Isaiah 59:20-21 and 27:9. This “covenant” (the new covenant?) promises God's forgiveness of sins to the Jews (cf. the promises of the new covenant in Jer. 31:31-34).

Lesson Helps:

A possible lesson aim: My students will learn about God's future plans for the Jews, so that they will pray for the salvation of the Jews.


A possible lesson plan:

1. **Hook.** Introduce your lesson with a contemporary news story about the Jews in the land of Israel. Yes, God's chosen people are once again back in the Holy Land!

¹ Adapted from D. Edmond Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. 2: The Pauline Epistles* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), 190-192.

2. **Book.** Give an overview of the Romans 9–11 (see outline in Background Helps above), but focus on chapter 11, where Paul lays out God’s future plans for Israel. Notice how he includes God’s plans for the Gentiles also, in relation to the Jews. You might want to emphasize Paul’s illustration of the olive tree: (1) the Jewish branches broken off; (2) the Gentile branches grafted in; (3) the Jewish branches grafted in once again. Notice that there is one olive tree, one people of God, who are all saved by faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9-10). In the time of the end, apparently after the fulness of the Gentiles has come in (v. 25), God plans to save “all Israel” (v. 26). Most commentators take this expression to mean that the nation of Israel as a whole, on earth at the time of Christ’s second coming, will be saved through faith in their Messiah. Notice how in this chapter, Paul is laying out a comprehensive philosophy of human history.
3. **Look.** Two ways that we can apply this teaching are modeled by Paul in the passage itself: (1) Praise to God for the incredible wisdom of his salvation plan in history (see Rom. 11:33-36); (2) prayer to God for the salvation of the Jews (10:1).
4. **Took.** Lead your class in a time of prayer for Jews and the nation of Israel. Specifically, pray for the Light of Life congregation in Patah Tikva where our short-term missions team visited in 2015. See prayer requests in their newsletter (available in the atrium). Urge class members to make this church a regular part of their prayer ministry.

Home Assignment:

 Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; 2 Corinthians 2:12–3:18; 6:14–7:1.

 Memorize 2 Corinthians 3:5 ESV.