

ROMANS Part 89

Chapter 9:25-33



As He is saying in Hosea also: I shall be calling those who are not My people “My people,” And she who is not beloved “Beloved,” 26 “And it shall be, in the place where it was declared to them, ‘Not My people are you,’ There they shall be called ‘sons of the living God.’” 27 Now

Isaiah is crying over Israel, If the number of the sons of Israel should be as the sand of the sea, the residue shall be saved, 28 for “a conclusive and concise accounting the Lord will be doing on the earth.” 29 And according as Isaiah declared before, “Except the Lord of hosts conserved us a seed, As Sodom would we become, And to Gomorrah would we be likened.” 30 What, then, shall we be declaring? That the nations who are not pursuing righteousness overtook righteousness, yet a righteousness which is out of faith. 31 Yet Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, into a law of righteousness does not outstrip. 32 Wherefore? Seeing that it is not out of faith, but as out of law works, they stumble on the stumbling stone, 33 according as it is written: Lo! I am laying in Zion a Stumbling Stone and a Snare Rock, And the one believing on Him shall not be disgraced.

Many believe that the nations to whom Paul writes in Romans are a fulfillment of the Hosea prophecy quoted by Paul here in this passage. The belief goes like this: The nations—those who are non-Israelites—magically fulfill the prophecies that God made to Israel when Israel rejected her Messiah. God couldn’t consummate His promises to the literal seed because of their frustrating disobedience (you have to feel sorry for God here), so He developed a very clever Plan B: God forsakes the covenant people, sends the Israel message to heathen who are “not His people” and then by a dandy piece of alchemy and genetic der-ring-do, turns the non-Israelites *into* His people. There is a name for this science-fiction, and it is “Replacement Theology.” Replacement Theology states—I’m paraphrasing it here—that God is finished with the descendants of Abraham and has replaced them with Blacks from New Jersey, Mexicans, Brazilians, and all manner of Europeans, including Frenchmen—basically, anyone who can manage to believe in Jesus. Another

name for this deception is “Spiritual Israel.” Pentecostals especially gravitate toward this mistake because they like the idea of Israel-style miracles and seeing angels, especially that handsome celestial magistrate Gabriel. How a band of religious people doubting God’s ability to deliver upon ancient promises can consider itself spiritual *anything*, mystifies me.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT FULFILLMENT

The fact of this matter is that God inspired Paul to use Israel as an example of how He has reached out before to “those who are not My people.” True, the “not My people” people of this context—from the Hosea prophecy—were still Israelites, but they were in such a divorced state that they may as well have been Blacks from New Jersey. I have a suspicion that, being aware of the Jews in his audience, Paul attempted here to convince *them* of the legitimacy of his work; the nations didn’t really care how their blessings came, only that they were now the newest apples of God’s eye. I believe that Paul would have gently nudged his fellow Israelites and said, “See? What is so strange about God calling a non-people, His ‘people.’ He has already done it and will do it with our very nation.”

“And it shall be, in the place where it was declared to them, ‘Not My people are you,’” There “they shall be called ‘sons of the living God’” (Hosea 1:10).

This is Hosea. Hosea was told by God to take a wife of prostitution and have several children by her. In order to demonstrate His dealings with whorish Israel, God would name these children strange things. God told Hosea to name one of the sons of the prostitute-wife, “Lo-ammi,” which means “Not My people.” This was God symbolically divorcing Israel for their chasing after other deities. This would not be the end of the story, thankfully, for as Hosea writes in 1:10, “It will be in the place where it was being said to them, ‘Not My people are you,’ it shall be said to them, ‘Sons of the living El.’” This is God pulling another Romans 11:32 stunner (where He locks up all together in stubbornness in order to have mercy on all), divorcing in order to re-marry. It’s all about the contrast experience of the creature and the joy that comes on the heels of deliverance from jerkdom. This passage alone should discourage the “Replacement Theology” brigade into silence, but it doesn’t.

In this very book of Romans, those having no historical right to God are being called, by Paul, sons of God. It was good that Paul had this little example handy from



Hosea to calm his Jewish kin. It wasn’t much, but it was something. The hoped-for calming effect failed on application with the majority of the Jews, obviously (the majority of Jews hated Paul), but I think that Peter, James and the leaders of the Jerusalem ecclesia got the message. This further solidified, in their minds, Paul’s mission.

Thus, the nations are not the *fulfillment* of the Hosea prophecy, but rather an *illustration* of it. (My apologies to all the “Spiritual Israelites” out there; sorry, you’re only a metaphor.) The first six words of our key passage should seal the deal, and really, the first word only ought to suffice: “As He is saying in Hosea...” The presence of the word “as” tells us that the nations—to whom Paul is writing—are an illustration and an example of God calling non-people “people,” and not the thing itself. These aren’t literal Israelites. In one particular respect, however (being “not [God’s] people”), they are *as* Israel. We find the literal fulfillment of the thing itself (the Hosea 1:10 prophecy), not in New Jersey, but in Hosea 2:23, when the prophet writes, “Then I will sow her for Myself in the land ... and I will say to Lo-ammi, ‘My people are you!’ And he shall say, ‘Yahweh, my Elohim are You!’”

It is Lo-ammi, in the land of Israel, who will say, “Yahweh, my Elohim are You!” and not some Frenchman living in Nice.

ISAIAH VEXED

27 Now Isaiah is crying over Israel, If the number of the sons of Israel should be as the sand of the sea, the residue shall be saved, 28 for “a conclusive and concise accounting the Lord will be doing on the earth.” 29 And according as Isaiah declared before, “Except the Lord of hosts conserved us a seed, As Sodom would we become, And to Gomorrah would we be likened.”

Isaiah apparently went nuts over Israel; He couldn't stop crying over his relatives according to flesh. Though Israel was as multitudinous as the sand of the sea, only a few would be saved. God knew the exact number of believers because God is the ultimate accountant where His people are concerned. Had Isaiah any confidence in his brethren? None. He knew them like the back of his gnarly, white-haired hand. Thus, he knew that only God could conserve a seed able to maintain faith in the patriarchal promises. Without the conserving power of God, the entire people would have joined whatever Sodom-styled fleshfest rolled into town.

Here are Isaiah's exact words, from Isaiah 10:21-23—

A remnant, it shall return, a remnant of Jacob, to the Masterful El. Even if the people of Israel should become as the sand of the sea, a remnant, it shall be saved in it. Failure was decided, but justice will be overflowing; for a conclusive and decisive accounting, my Lord, Yahweh of hosts, shall make within the entire land."

HOW TO BE HAPPY

30 What, then, shall we be declaring? That the nations who are not pursuing righteousness overtook righteousness, yet a righteousness which is out of faith. 31 Yet Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, into a law of righteousness does not outstrip.

The presence of the "then" in Paul's first sentence above tells us that what follows is founded upon Paul's previous points. Paul just said that the nations are *as* Israel in one particular aspect only: like Israel in her divorced state, the nations were not God's people, but now they are. Israel, too, will one day regain "My people" status when God replaces its stone heart with a heart of flesh. But what about Paul quoting Isaiah, who laments over the paucity of faithful Jews? What fellowship does the apostle see between these two seemingly disparate quotes—that from Hosea and that from the son of Amoz? Those whose salvation is of faith (the nations, who have come *out* of a Lo-ammi state) are actually better off than the law-chasers, who yet remain "not My people." The believing men and women of the nations are not only more numerous than believing Israelites (here is where Paul addresses Isaiah), but happier. The reason? Grace is superior to law.

Paul explains that the nations, who were not pursuing righteousness (probably because they didn't even know it existed), got a large dose of it wrapped in a red bow, and flourished. Thanks to Paul's faithfulness to his calling,

the message of unprecedented grace created gaggles of heathen believers. Contrast this with Isaiah's complaint over a barely-rescued "seed." One gets the impression that Paul's people are drinking, dancing, and kissing one another with holy kisses, whereas not even the remnant manages to crack so much as a grin—so narrow is their escape from the national defection. What a strange state of affairs: the people madly pursuing righteousness, through law, never get it, whereas the people who couldn't care less about it receive boatloads of the stuff. Not only this, but the frustration of pursuing perfection through law creates the saddest, most self-righteous people since the purple-robed idiots who killed Christ. Only a small remnant escape apostasy. (Sorry, Isaiah). Upon reading and re-reading this passage, I retain my opinion that not even the saved Jews are as happy as grace-loving nobodies from a Jew-free stock.



GRACE SUPERIOR TO LAW

32 Wherefore? Seeing that it is not out of faith, but as out of law works, they stumble on the stumbling stone, 33 according as it is written: Lo! I am laying in Zion a Stumbling Stone and a Snare Rock, And the one believing on Him shall not be disgraced.

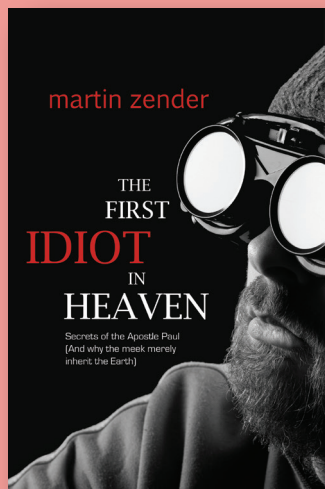
What explains the significant difference between Israel and the nations, both of which have suffered

under a “not My people” status? The righteousness of the nations is out of faith (no works; all grace), whereas the Jewish people attempted a *law* of righteousness, i.e., a works-based salvation. Attempting to do the law of Moses turns out to be real downer—and wildly unproductive. Paul prefers to call it a stumbling block. God intended this for educational purposes. Law pitched to Israel as “do this or else” was God’s way of providing an example to the world of how flesh and blood cannot attain His righteousness, either through chasing it or trying to do it once it’s caught. Rather, His righteousness must be *granted* to people by the Righteous One Himself. The stumbling part of the stone is the law refusing to shout its true purpose on its way down from Sinai. God saved *that* revelation for Paul, disclosing it in what would become the twentieth verse of the fifth chapter of Romans. The stumbling becomes a failure to realize that the true purpose of law was to demonstrate the righteousness of God and the inability of humanity to please Him via willpower. The nations get this information in a few strokes of Paul’s pen. Israel still hasn’t gotten it as she painfully continues carrying out the lesson.

Thank God that this is not our lesson to live. —MZ



Martin, I wanted to encourage you about what your words and efforts are doing in the hands of God... I have a couple of sisters in the faith (actual believers) who came to know God DIRECTLY through God using *The First Idiot in Heaven* ... both of them randomly shared something with me about the crap going on in their lives and I told them that the level and type of crap they were experienced would make sense if they read your book... and it DID. Your words keep adding to the Body of Christ... THANK YOU!



Martin. I printed your article a few weeks ago contrasting *The Wizard of Oz* and Moses. Everyone who read it loved it. This one is again phenomenal, with much truth in a succinct package.



Thank you Martin so much for your commitment to this ministry. Your writings and videos have had a major impact on my life in helping me understand the Evangel of grace and the sovereignty of God. I wish you the best.

About every 7.3 months I binge-learn on your writing and videos. Then I take a break to let the info settle into my gut.



I recently started watching your Revelation series and I'm through #36. *Very good stuff.* Your honesty and openness with your life is refreshing. Plus I'm learning new things and growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus. Plus, you make me laugh almost as much as Shawn Spencer. Thank you.

I'm also going through your site reading about law and grace, as I have recently met a man who is hanging around my two adult sons and is attempting to be a law-keeper. I don't think he's influencing them yet, but I am influencing *him* toward the true full gospel of the salvation of all through Jesus.

Your Romans part 62 is masterful, and it is one that I'm sending to my son.

Keep up the good work.

Dear Martin...I have just finished my third reading of *The First Idiot in Heaven*. With each reading I have gotten more understanding of Paul's evangel. I will probably read it again, maybe even many times more. It is a treasure trove of good things. My daughter has been following your articles for several years and has been so very patiently trying to get her Mommy to understand what she knows; she sent me your Romans 8:28-30 article via email in January this year (ZWTF Volume 5, Issue 1) and it suddenly clicked. I am so grateful for your diligence, understanding and zeal!!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTERS! —MZ
Keep them coming; I need them.