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The Explanation of Isra'el's Past Paradox

9: 6-13

The explanation of Isra'el's past paradox DIG: What question does the widespread Jewish unbelief today raise for some people? What is replacement theology? How has 9:6b been used for that misguided purpose? How does Paul account for Jewish unbelief in spite of the advantages seen in 9:1-5? On what basis did God choose Jacob and reject Esau?

REFLECT: There are no second generation believers. You don't get into heaven because your parents are believers. There are no "birthright" believers. And you don't get to heaven because you attend a Messianic congregation on Saturdays or church on Sundays. Just because you sit in the garage, doesn't make you a car! How can you help others see this?

Paul explains Isra'el's rejection in light of biblical history. The blessing comes not through Isra'el's physical descent, but individual choice of the Messiah, and the grace of God.

As if anticipating the question, **Paul** declares: **But the present condition of Isra'el does not mean that the Word of God has failed (9:6a).** **Paul** is going to use history, plainly written in the TaNaKh, to show that the blessing of **God** is not going to come merely because of being a descendent of **Abraham**. That isn't enough. Something else is going to be required. The contrast is between **Jews** who do not have faith/trust/belief in **the Messiah**, and the righteous of the TaNaKh, who do.

The Word of God has not failed; rather, the failure has been on the part of those **from Isra'el** who are **not truly part of Isra'el (9:6b)**. Unfortunately, this verse has been used far too often for replacement theology. Since the context here is **Isra'el**, **Paul** is merely stating that there has always been a believing remnant within **Isra'el**, **Jews** who believe that **Yeshua** is **the Messiah**, and there are plenty of **Jews** who don't. Today in **Isra'el** most **Jews** don't believe in the TaNaKh and are

atheist. Forget **Yeshua** . . . they don't even believe in **Moses**.

Because **the Jews** at the time of **Paul's** writing were so familiar with the TaNaKh, **he** chose two familiar examples that they would understand:

First, the illustration of **Isaac** and **Ishma'el** to show that being a physical descendent of **Abraham** is not sufficient. Both **Isaac** and **Ishma'el** were physical descendents of **Abraham**. Yet we know that only **Isaac** was called by **God** to be **the seed son**. **YHVH** gave **Abraham** assurance that the true **son of His promise** would be born through **his** true wife: **Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him . . . My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year (Genesis 17:19 and 21, 18:10-14 NASB)**. It was this specific passage that **Paul** referred to when **he** reminded **his** readers of **God's** declaration: **What is to be called your "seed" will be in Isaac (Romans 9:7b; Genesis 21:12)**. As **Abraham's son**, Ishmael would receive his own special blessings from **God** (**Genesis 17:18**), but he was not, and never could have been the heir of **God's** promise. After **Sarah** died, **Abraham** had six other sons by a new wife, **Keturah** (**Genesis 25:1-2**). But like Ishmael, none of them could have established **Abraham's covenant**.

Indeed, not all the descendants of Avraham are his "seed." In other words, it is not the physical children who are children of God, but "the children the promise" refers to those who are considered his "seed" by faith (9:7a and 8). For "the promise" was given to Sarah, not to Hagar. ADONAI said: At the time set, I will come; and Sarah will have a son (Romans 9:7-9; Genesis 18:14). From the very time of the Fall in the Garden of Eden, long before **God's covenant** with **Abraham**, **God** established that the only way a person can become righteous before **Him** is by **faith** (see the commentary on **Hebrews**, **to see link click Cl - The Hall of Faith**). The writer to the **Hebrews** explains that, in regard to Adam's own sons, the sacrifice of Abel was accepted by **Ha'Shem** because it was offered in **faith**, and that the sacrifice of Cain was rejected because it was not offered in **faith**. **By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead (Hebrews 11:4 NIV)**. In summary, **not all Jews** are **"children of the promise."** **Paul** summarized this whole argument to **his Galatian** disciples in one sentence when **he** said: **And if you belong to Messiah**

[by faith], then you are Abraham’s “seed” - heirs according to “the promise” (Galatians 3:29).

Secondly, but having said this, someone could say to **Paul**, “By your very admission that there were different mothers involved (Sarah and Hagar), even if they had the same father, doesn’t that prove there is a distinction made merely by physical descent and not merely on the basis of election?” So, to refute that line of thinking, **Paul** uses a second illustration, that of **Jacob** and **Esau**. **They** both had the same father and mother. The emphasis is on having the same mother. And on top of that, they were twins. Nevertheless, **the seed son** was **Jacob** and not **Esau**. **And even more to the point, Paul** continues, **is the case of Rebekah; for both her children were conceived in a single act with Isaac, our father (9:10).**²⁴⁸

Even though **she** lived outside the Land, in Padan-Aram, **God** specifically chose **Rebekah** not only to become **Abraham’s** wife, but to bear **him** twin sons. Yet, instead of allowing those twins to be equal heirs of **Isaac**, **YHVH** sovereignly chose **Jacob** instead of **Esau** to be the “**seed son**” of blessing. Even **before they were born, before they had done anything at all, either good or bad (so that God’s plan might remain a matter of His sovereign choice, not dependent on what they did, but on God, who does the calling), it was said to her, “The older will serve the younger” (9:11-12).**

Unconditionally, and completely apart from any consideration of human merit, **YHVH** elects those who will choose **His** heirs of “**the promise.**” **Jacob and Esau** not only had the same father and mother, but were born at virtually the same time. Technically, **Esau** was born slightly ahead of **Jacob**, but **God** purposely disregarded that fact, telling **Rebekah** that, contrary to the custom of those days, **the older will serve the younger (Genesis 25:23).**

And just as when **he** sold his birthright, which showed that **he** despised it, by marrying **Hittites**, **he** continued to show how unfit **he** was for **God’s** blessing (see the commentary on **Genesis Gt - The Wives of Esau**). **Ha’Shem’s** statement that **Esau** would serve **his** younger brother extended to **his descendants** as well. While there is no biblical record of **Esau’s** being personally subservient to **Jacob**, there is much evidence that the nation of **Edom**, which descended from **Esau**, was often in direct or indirect subservience to, and in conflict with, the nation of **Isra’el**, which derived from **Jacob**, whose name was changed to **Isra’el**.

The Edomites soon became idolatrous, and centuries later the prophet **Amos**

declared to them: **Here is what Adonai says: For Edom's three crimes, no, four — I will not reverse it — because with sword he pursued his kinsman and threw aside all pity, constantly nursing his anger, forever fomenting his fury; I will send fire on Teman, and it will consume the palaces of Bozrah** [the ancient capital of Edom]. **Obadiah warned them that, for the violence done to your kinsman Jacob, shame will cover you; and you will be cut off forever (Obadiah 10).**



This accords with where it is written, “Jacob I loved [chosen], but Esau I hated [not chosen]” (Romans 9:13; Malachi 1:2-3). Esau, the older, did not actually serve Jacob, his younger twin; but Esau's descendants, the Edomites did (First Samuel 14:47; Second Samuel 8:14; First Kings 11:15-16, 22:47; Second Kings 14:7). The “love” of ADONAI for Jacob was revealed in His [choice] of Jacob, and God's “hatred” of Esau was seen in His rejecting Esau to be a descendant of Messiah because he lacked the faith of Abraham. Hatred in this sense is not absolute, but relative to a higher choice (Matthew 6:24; Luke 14:26; John 12:25).²⁴⁹ Therefore, if the nation of Isra'el - Abraham's physical descendents - have rejected God's Word; it was not God's Word that had failed, but those who failed to believe in it!

Dear Heavenly Father, How great Your love is to call as Your children, all who love You! See how glorious a love the Father has given us, which we should be called God's children - and so we are (First John 3:1)! Praise You that becoming Your child with inheritance rights to heaven, is not gained by money, nor by many good deeds (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor even by anything our fathers or forefathers have done, but by loving/trusting You as our Lord and Savior. But whoever did receive Him, those trusting in His name, to these He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

Your love and forgiveness is so amazing! For as high as the heavens are

above the earth, so great is His mercy for those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so ADONAI has compassion on those who fear Him. (Psalms 103:11-13). I worship **You** in holy, reverent fear and delight to please **You**. I know that **Your** gracious offer of **love** is not an open door to sin, but rather such great **love** causes me to want to live a pure life in great thanks to you. **Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure (1 John 3:3).** You are such a wonderful and wise Heavenly **Father** to have chosen as **Your children** all who choose to **love** and to follow **you**. I **love** and worship **you**. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen