

Sunday Bible Study, Session 1 – January 11, 2015

"War in Heaven" – Revelation. 12:7-10

Read [Revelation 12:7-10](#)

Note the [time line diagram](#) emphasizing Church Age, Tribulation and Millennium.

Review last Wednesday's presentation on [Anti-Semitism](#). We see by the [timeline](#) that God had a specific plan for the Gentiles (Church Age, Millennium) and He had a plan for the Jews (Age of Israel, Tribulation, Millennium).

Open Romans 9. We see the greatest apostle of Grace was the apostle Paul. Read [verses 1-11](#).

[Romans 9:6-9](#)

ETHNIC ISRAEL – "CHILD OF THE FLESH"; TRUE ISRAEL – SPIRITUAL ISRAEL, "CHILD OF PROMISE"

ISAAC – NOT – ISHMAEL... JACOB, NOT ESSAU:

1. Ethnic Israel and True Israel: First, in verse 6b he says, *"For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel."* In other words, Paul's argument is that the promises of God always hold true for the true Israel, the spiritual Israel, but not all ethnic Israel is *true Israel*. That's his first statement of the argument: *"They are not all Israel who are descended from Israel."* The assumption is: there is a *true Israel*; God's saving promises are made to them; and these promises have never failed.
2. All Descendants of Abraham and the Children of Abraham: Second, in verse 7a he says it a little differently, but makes the same point: *"Nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants."* In other words, he is distinguishing here between two kinds of "children" – there are all of Abraham's descendants, and there is a narrower group in that number, whom he calls here *"the children"*, or we could say *"The true children"*, since the others are physical children also. The assumption is that the promises of God hold true for the *true children* of Abraham but *not for all* the descendants of Abraham. So in verse 6, he says that not all Israel is Israel, and in verse 7 he says that not all the children of Abraham are children. There is a true Israel and there are true children. The word of God has not failed, because it was meant for the true Israel, the true children, and it has never failed any of them.
3. The Children of the Flesh and the Children of God: Third, in verse 8 Paul states the argument a third time in more general terms, without naming Israel or Abraham, so that we see the principle involved. *"That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants."* This, he says again, is why the word of God has not failed – why the promises of God have not failed – even though many of Israelites according to the flesh are accursed, and cut off from Christ. It's because the promises are for the children of promise – the children of God – and not every child of Israelite flesh is a child of promise. When Paul distinguishes "children of the flesh" and "children of God", he means

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that not all physical Israelites are "children of God." And that means that the term "children of God" is not a mere ethnic or physical or historical term. It has its full saving meaning just like it does in [Romans 8:16, 21, and Philippians 2:15](#) (cf. [Hosea 1:10](#)). And when he then says that these "children of God" are "children of promise," he means that they have their spiritual position, not because of their physical connections, but because of God's effective promise. *The promise produced the position.*

What is the Old Testament Support?

Now this is where we need to look at Paul's Old Testament support for this. But first, remember that we have seen [three different statements](#) of Paul as to why the Word of God to Israel has not failed.

1. Verse 6b: *"They are not all Israel who are descended from Israel."*
2. Verse 7a: *"Nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants."*
3. Verse 8: *"It is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants."*

That is why the Word of God has not failed even though so many Israelites are accursed and cut off from Christ. They were not true Israelites. They were not true children of Abraham. They were children of the flesh but not children of promise, that is, children of God.

Now where does Paul see this idea of a people within a people in the Old Testament? Where does he find the idea that the promise of God is not simply for every Israelite, but for those who are children of promise? And what does that mean – children of promise?

The Case of Isaac and Ishmael:

Paul gives two illustrations in [verses 6-9](#) (and another one in verses 10-13 that we will look at next week). The first is in verse 7. After Paul says, *"Nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants"*, he quotes [Genesis 21:12](#). *"But: 'Through Isaac your descendants will be named.'"* The context here in the Old Testament is that God is saying to Abraham, *even though you have an older son, Ishmael, he will not be the heir of the promise. Rather "through Isaac your descendants will be named (or called)."* What Paul sees here is that being a physical child of Abraham, and even being the oldest, did not make Ishmael an heir of the promise to the covenant people.

Then Paul adds another insight from [Genesis 18:10](#) in verse 9. After saying in verse 8 that *"the children of promise are regarded [God says] as descendants"*, then he quotes Genesis 18:10, *"For this is the word of promise: 'At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.'"* The context here is tremendously important.

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God had promised Abraham that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him ([Genesis 12:3](#)) and that his descendants would be like the stars in the sky ([Genesis 15:5](#)). But Abraham had no offspring and his wife Sarah was barren. What was *his* solution? Abraham's answer should have been, *"I'll trust God for a child of promise. I'll trust God that the divine promise itself is powerful enough to bring itself to pass."* But instead Abraham did what he could do in his own strength: he used Hagar, a maid of Sarah, as a concubine and produced a child named Ishmael. Abraham "helped God out of his pickle". And he produced what Paul called a *"child of the flesh."* He was *"born according to the flesh"* ([Galatians 4:29](#)). That is, his position was owing to no more than what man could do.

Abraham wanted Ishmael to be the heir God had promised. In [Genesis 17:18](#), Abraham said to God, *"Oh that Ishmael might live before you!"* But God said, *"No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac."* That's the context of Paul's quote in [Romans 9:9](#). God promises: *"At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son."* You see the sovereign purpose of God's word here. *I make the promise*, God says. *And I bring it to pass. My promises are not predictions of what may come about with your help. My promises are declarations of what I intend to bring about by my sovereign power. "I will come, and Sarah shall have a son."* Barren Sarah and old Abraham will have not a child of the flesh, *but a child of promise.*

So what is a child of promise (child of God)? A child of promise is an heir of God's Saving Grace, not because of ethnic origin or physical birth, or, as we will see next week, *any* human resource. But because of God's sovereign Word. The birth of Isaac is a picture of how every child of God spiritually comes into being. The decisive work is *God's work* – NOT Abraham's and not Isaac's and not ours. *But God's.*

Notes on Romans 9

OBSERVATION, INTERPRETATION, APPLICATION

MAIN THINGS ARE PLAIN THINGS

Israel is the focus of God the Holy Spirit and Paul in Romans 9.

Jews – proud people in [Romans 9:6-12](#). As a nation – They missed it!!

Being Blood kin to Abraham, their Pride blinded them and caused them to have *false security of Son-ship, based on Kin-ship*. Paul, a converted Jew, knew the only way: *FAITH ALONE in CHRIST ALONE!!*

God has not changed His plan – for the Jew or for the Gentile – Old or New Testament. God's choice is never based on Physical descent.

Look again at our verses from [Romans 9](#).

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9:6 – Did the bloodline back to Abraham insure a right standing with God? NO!

9:7 – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (named changed to Israel). Abraham had two sons – one by Hagar (Ishmael) – the other ISAAC. IS IT FLESH—or FAITH?

9:8 – READ this verse. Read [Galatians 3:7](#).

9:9 – takes us back to: NOT Genesis 12 or 15, BUT [Genesis 17:25-27](#) – ABE IS 99, SARAH 89 and Ishmael 13 (IT'S NOT YET TIME TO PAINT THE NURSERY) GOD SAID IN GENESIS 17 "I WILL MULTIPLY YOU".

[GENESIS 17:11](#) "BE CIRCUMCISED – SIGN OF COVENANT"

- A MIRACLE CHILD WILL BE BORN – SPEAKS OF ANOTHER MIRACLE CHILD TO BE BORN
- ISAAC – LAUGHTER – AT 8 DAYS OLD WAS CIRCUMCISED.

Isaac marries Rebekah – [Genesis 24:67](#)

Twins came – [Genesis 25](#) – two nations in her womb – Jacob and Esau (womb mates). Esau was a skillful hunter, Jacob a peaceful man. Jacob's name was changed to Israel ([Genesis 35:10](#)).

JEWS WERE PROUD OF WHO THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE. JEWS WERE ALSO PROUD OF WHAT THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD DO FOR GOD.

War in Heaven continues next session.