



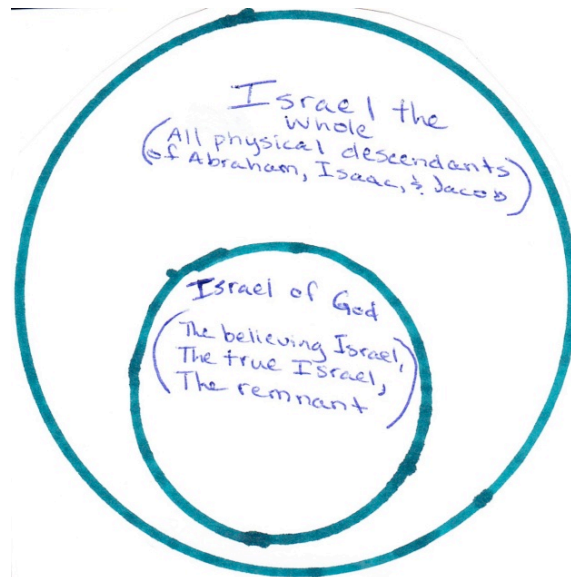
Romans 9:14-33

Mercy More than Fair | June 1st-7th, 2014

Warm Up: To what degree do you feel it's fair or unfair in the parable on the workers who are paid equally in Matthew 20?

- When you put yourself in the workers position do you feel entitled to a higher wage, or jealous?
- How do these feelings translate into your view of the Kingdom of Heaven and salvation? For example, do you feel you are somehow entitled to salvation? Do you feel jealous of those who haven't 'worked' as hard as you? Do you feel morally superior? Take some time to examine your heart before Jesus and ask Him to show you any areas He might want to change.
 - *In regards to the hotly debated issue of God's sovereignty and man's free will, we can use the example of a quarter to draw some similarities. A quarter has two sides to it. One side has "heads" and the other "tails." If we focus on one side of the quarter while neglecting the other, we will have only half of the truth about it. The same is true with God's sovereignty. The Bible teaches that God is absolutely sovereign, and yet it also teaches that man is held responsible for his decisions (free will). Both are true! It's a both and situation. Not one or the other.*
- There is tension between God's sovereignty and our free will in the Bible, and it will do us good to learn to live with that tension. How does understanding this help put your mind to rest in regards to this hotly debated subject?
- *In chapter 9 Paul's goal is to show the church in Rome that God's promises to the Jews have not failed. He explains in verse 6 that "not all who are descended from Israel are Israel." and in verse 27 he says: "though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved."*

To grasp what Paul is conveying, we need to learn the "doctrine (or teaching) of the remnant." The Doctrine of the Remnant of Israel means that there are always some who believe within the Jewish nation as a whole, and all those who believe constitute the Remnant of Israel. Thus, there are two Israels: Israel the Whole and Israel the Remnant. Ethnically, the two are the same, but spiritually, they are not. The diagram below will help explain this:



The first time this shows up in scripture is in the Old Testament. In 1 Kings, the prophet Elijah is literally running for His life from evil queen Jezebel. Frustrated and scared, he says to God: I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too. 1 Kings 19:14 (NIV)

God's response to Elijah that he was the only one left comes in verse 18: Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him. 1 Kings 19:18 (NIV)

Even though Elijah thought that he was the only Jewish believer who remained, God had reserved a remnant of faithful followers.

The remnant of Jews in Paul's day were saved in the same way that we Gentiles are saved. Not by our own righteousness but by faith in God (Romans 9:30). Unfortunately, far more Jews rejected God's gift of salvation through his son, and decided to continue in their striving to earn their salvation. Which is impossible to do!

- What does the existence of the remnant of Jews teach us about God's faithfulness to keep his promises to Israel?
- What does this teach you about God's faithfulness toward you?

Bottom line: We need to recognize that there is nothing we have done to earn our salvation and it is only because of God's mercy in sacrificing his own son on the cross that we are saved.