

## **Romans (56)** **Election and Predestination (part 4)**

Today we resume our study of Romans 9, 10, and 11. In order for us to understand correctly where we left off last week, let us recall what the apostle Paul was teaching the church at Rome in these chapters.

Paul was explaining why it was that the Jews had largely failed to embrace Jesus of Nazareth as their Lord and Savior. But he also was explaining why it was that, whereas the Jews largely rejected Him, many Gentiles had embraced Him as their Lord. The fact that the churches of Jesus Christ were expanding in number and influence in the Gentile world called for an explanation of what God was doing in history. Why had Israel not embraced Him? Why were Gentiles embracing Him everywhere? Paul reasons essentially in Romans 9, 10, and 11 that it had always been God's sovereign intention and purpose to save only a remnant of Jews but also to save a multitude of Gentiles.

In the first portion of Romans 9, Paul had shown that God had always saved only some of those who were Jews, the physical descendants of Abraham. In verses 23 and 24 the apostle described God's elect as "vessels of mercy, which He has prepared beforehand for glory." He then described those vessels of mercy as ones that He called, but then he includes these words, "***not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles.***" Then Paul began to relate God's decree to make vessels of mercy out of more than just those from the Jewish people. He cited the Scriptures to show that it was indeed God's plan and purpose. The first quotation is from **Hosea 2:23**, which is found in **Romans 9:25**, which reads, "***As indeed He says in Hosea, 'Those who were not My people I will call "my people," and her who was not beloved I will call "beloved."***" It is clear from Paul's usage of this verse in this context that "Those who were not My people" is a reference to Gentiles who became believers in Jesus Christ. Paul declared, therefore, that God had designated believing Gentiles as "My people", in other words, God's covenantal people. And then He also declared Gentile believers as being His bride, or wife, which was a common metaphor in the Old Testament of Israel in her relationship with her God.

By the way, take note of the first clause of verse 25, which reads, "***As indeed He says in Hosea.***" Here we see the very high view of Scripture as God's Word set before us. Paul did not simply write, "Just as we read in Hosea", or even, "Just as God had once spoken through Hosea", but rather, "As indeed He *says* (present tense) in Hosea"; in other words, Paul regarded as God speaking presently through the words that were penned by Hosea over 750 years before. God was speaking to the ones that Paul was writing to in the first century. In the same manner God is speaking to us today. He does so through His abiding, authoritative Word, the Bible.

Now Paul's common way of proving his argument was to state the truth, perhaps setting before his readers a reason or two for his position, but then he quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament) to substantiate or confirm the truthfulness of his assertions. Here in Romans 9 Paul quoted four Scripture passages to substantiate his claim that God intended to save only a remnant of Jews but that He intended to save (perhaps) many Gentiles. Of these four quotations, two are from Hosea and two are from Isaiah.<sup>1</sup>

As we attempt to address the meaning of these quotations and the context of the prophets from which they were taken, the important subject of **hermeneutics** comes to the forefront. Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation, particularly of the Holy Scriptures. But though hermeneutics is a science, which might lead us to assume that the principles of interpretation are a set of rules that everybody acknowledges and employs in their interpretation of Scripture, in reality the rules of hermeneutics of Bible interpreters vary between good people who confess that the Bible is the inerrant and authoritative Word of God. For in actuality, one's understanding of biblical theology or teaching will influence one's hermeneutics. And so, as we address the meaning of these Old Testament verses as Paul used them (as well as with Old Testament verses in the next two chapters), we will

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 9:25 is from Hosea 2:23; Romans 9:26 is from Hosea 1:10; Romans 9:29 is from Isaiah 1:10; and Romans 9:33 is from Isaiah 28:16.

find repeatedly, as I will attempt to demonstrate, conflict with much of popular belief about prophecy among evangelicals. In other words, in order for us to understand Paul's teaching fully in these three chapters of Romans, we will need also to show the wrong teaching that is assumed by many to be true, teaching to which many of us have been exposed in the past.

The heart of the issue at hand is the subject of **eschatology**. Eschatology is the study of last things, or the end times. The vast majority of evangelicals have a view of eschatology taught and promoted by the fictional series, *Left Behind*, written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. They have sold over 63 million copies of these books. The futurist view of eschatology was earlier popularized by the book, *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey, first published in 1970, which has sold tens of millions of copies. But this majority evangelical view of the end times owes its popular origin to *The Scofield Study Bible*, first published in 1909 and revised and reissued in 1917. This exclusive futuristic view of the end times has a number of prominent teachings, but the ones that we might acknowledge here are only these: First, there is the common belief that the Book of Revelation should be interpreted from a futuristic perspective, that it is essentially the "history" of the last seven years before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ followed by a 1,000 earthly kingdom, or millennium. This promised kingdom will see the Jewish people, the nation of Israel, as the preeminent nation among all the other nations, ruled over by King Jesus from a literal physical throne of David in Jerusalem. They believe that the world will then be populated by both Christians and non-Christians, along with all the redeemed of history dwelling among them in their resurrected and glorified bodies. At the end of the millennium, they believe there will be a short but severe rebellion of people against King Jesus, and then the end will come and the final judgment of all the unsaved will take place. The eternal state will then be ushered in with a new heavens and new earth. This view of eschatology is commonly called **dispensational Premillennialism**. Most evangelicals, that is, those who claim to believe the Bible to be the literal Word of God, have only been taught this view of eschatology.

In contrast to those who hold to futuristic eschatology (Premillennialism), many, even most, Reformed churches and theologians have historically espoused what is commonly called, **realized eschatology**.<sup>2</sup> They have been **amillennial**<sup>3</sup> rather than **premillennial**. In other words, where premillennialists believe that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will occur prior to a future 1,000 year millennium, Amillennialists believe that those passages of the Bible that are commonly attributed to a future millennium are actually prophetic of this church age. Amillennialists understand that this church age is the kingdom age that is the fulfillment of what the prophets foretold.

The reason that we have brought this matter before us is that we will repeatedly see quite clearly in our study of Romans 9, 10, and 11, that the apostle Paul's inspired interpretation and application of the Old Testament prophetic Scriptures repeatedly substantiate that what God is doing through the gospel in this present church age is the hope of the prophetic Scriptures regarding the Messianic Kingdom. We are living in the promised age of the Kingdom of the Messiah. We will see not only the New Testament teaching us that the prophets foretold the future Kingdom of the Messiah as the success of the gospel in the (Gentile) world, but we will see the complete failure of dispensational premillennialists to understand and accept the inspired teaching of Paul regarding the Old Testament Scriptures. And so, as we begin to consider the Old Testament Scriptures that Paul cited to substantiate that God had purposed only to save a remnant of Jews through the Gospel and to save many Gentiles through Jesus Christ, we will be proving the case for the New Testament teaching regarding realized eschatology (amillennialism) and we will be exposing the wrong interpretation of those who hold to futuristic eschatology (premillennialists).

There is one point that we want to make clear at this time. Views of eschatology should not be viewed as a test of fellowship. In other words, although we may differ with sincere Christians about views of the end times, we do not marginalize them or think less of them as Christians. We differ in our understanding from them, but we do not separate from them, for they are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Unfortunately, because

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<sup>2</sup> Reformed theologians believe espouse the five solas of the protestant reformation as well as the five doctrines of grace, i.e. the doctrines of Calvinism. But in addition, most reformed theologians also are amillennial. But not all are. Some noted reformed men of the past who were also premillennial (mostly) include John Gill, Charles Spurgeon (both historical premillennialists), and James Montgomery Boice, and John MacArthur (dispensational premillennialists).

<sup>3</sup> The "a" at the beginning of the word, amillennial, essentially means "no" literal millennium of 1,000 years.

evangelicals are often only familiar with exclusively futuristic eschatology, they tend to react to us and dismiss us as being very strange and errant in our views.<sup>4</sup>

Now let us turn our attention to what the apostle Paul asserted when he quoted the Old Testament prophets. Let us read again **Romans 9:22-29**.

<sup>22</sup>What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup>in order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy, which He has prepared beforehand for glory-- <sup>24</sup>even us whom He has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup>As indeed He says in Hosea,

“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’  
and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’”

<sup>26</sup>And in the very place where it was said to them,  
‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”

<sup>27</sup>And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel:

“Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea,  
only a remnant of them will be saved,  
<sup>28</sup>for the Lord will carry out His sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.”

<sup>29</sup>And as Isaiah predicted,

“If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring,  
we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.”

The first of the four quotations that Paul cited to show that God had prophesied the salvation of the Gentiles in this church age is from **Hosea 2:23**. *“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’”*

Now, just to accept the fact that Paul was showing that the Old Testament prophets foretold this church age is significant. For the earlier classical dispensationalists taught that this church age was never foreseen by any of the OT prophets. They taught that this church age was a parenthesis, and unforeseen event that God instituted only after Israel had rejected Jesus as the Messiah, which, they taught, resulted in God postponing the offered kingdom until the Second Coming of Christ. What was commonly taught was that the understanding of the OT prophets was like viewing only the “Mountain Peaks of Prophecy.” (See the illustration on the last page of your notes.) In other words, just as one can look out across a mountain range and two mountains may appear to be as one, but the viewer is not able to see that there are two mountains, one closer and one farther, and that there is a great valley between them, so the classical dispensationalists claimed that the prophets foresaw the first and second coming of Jesus Christ as one event and that they failed to see this 2,000 plus year of the church age. We are living in a time not foretold by the prophets, so the classical dispensationalists taught.<sup>5</sup> But in contrast to their understanding of the ignorance and blindness of the Old Testament prophets to the events of this church age, Paul quoted dozens of Old Testament Scriptures to show that this church age is the promised

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<sup>4</sup> I was once sitting at a table having a meal with an evangelical pastor of a large church in our region. In our discussion I asked him if he believed views of eschatology were to be regarded as a test of fellowship. He said, “Of course not. I do not care if a man is premillennial or postmillennial; it does not matter. But those amillennialists! They don’t believe the Bible!” I just sat there silent, knowing that there was nothing I could say to him in that setting to awaken him to his ignorance and theological bigotry.

<sup>5</sup> Classical dispensationalists would include J. N. Darby, C. I. Scofield, Lewis Sperry Chaffer (the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary), John Walvoord, and Charles Ryrie. The more recent progressive dispensationalists, such as John MacArthur, would not make such a claim, I believe.

Messianic Age foretold by the prophets. This is in accordance with Peter's assertion recorded in the Book of Acts in which he declared that all of the Old Testament prophets foretold of these days in which we are living. Here are Peter's words from a sermon recorded some time after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the event of Pentecost that followed: "Yes, and *all the prophets*, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, *have also foretold these days*" (Acts 3:24).

Let us consider first the historical context in which God called Hosea to his prophetic ministry. Israel was originally one nation comprised of the twelve tribes of Israel that had been ruled by King David and then his son, King Solomon. But after the death of Solomon there was civil war. The nation split into two nations. The northern kingdom of **Israel** was comprised of 10 of the original tribes. Its capital city was **Samaria**.<sup>6</sup> The southern kingdom of **Judah** was comprised of two tribes (Benjamin and Judah) and its capital was **Jerusalem**. Both kingdoms broke their covenant with God that He had established with them at Mount Sinai. God cursed them both, causing them to be removed from the Promised Land. God defeated and destroyed Israel, the northern kingdom, through His instrument of Assyria. The destruction of Samaria occurred in 722 BC.<sup>7</sup> Later God destroyed Judah entirely through His instrument of Babylon, Jerusalem and its temple being destroyed in 587 BC. God had completely dispersed the inhabitants of Israel to many parts of the Gentile world. God later had a remnant of survivors of Judah exiled to Babylon for 70 years before they returned under Ezra and Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel.

Hosea was one of the earliest of the writing prophets, having prophesied before the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel and the destruction of its capital city, Samaria, which occurred in 722 BC. God had called Hosea to proclaim His impending judgment upon the northern kingdom. Paul quoted the message of **Hosea 2:23** to prove that God foretold the salvation of the Gentiles in this church age. Again, it reads, "*Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'*" When we turn to Hosea 2, we read of the context in which the prophet set forth these words of God. God declared that because Israel, the northern kingdom, had broken its covenant with God, that God no longer viewed them as His covenant people. We read of God distancing Himself from them due to their sin. **Hosea 2:2ff** read:

<sup>2</sup>"Bring charges against your mother, bring charges;  
For she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband!  
Let her put away her harlotries from her sight,  
And her adulteries from between her breasts;  
<sup>3</sup>Lest I strip her naked  
And expose her, as in the day she was born,  
And make her like a wilderness,  
And set her like a dry land,  
And slay her with thirst.

<sup>4</sup>"I will not have mercy on her children,  
For they are the children of harlotry.  
<sup>5</sup>For their mother has played the harlot;  
She who conceived them has behaved shamefully.  
For she said, 'I will go after my lovers  
Who give me my bread and my water,  
My wool and my linen,  
My oil and my drink.'

God then declared through His prophet His intention to punish Israel for its defections.

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<sup>6</sup> There are places in the Old Testament in which the name of the capital city of Samaria is also used as the name for the entire nation of Israel.

<sup>7</sup> God also used Assyria at this time to defeat all of Judah, almost defeating Jerusalem, the last fortified city remaining. But God intervened and saved a remnant of Judah which continued until 587 BC.

<sup>9</sup>“Therefore I will return and take away  
 My grain in its time  
 And My new wine in its season,  
 And will take back My wool and My linen,  
 Given to cover her nakedness.  
<sup>10</sup>Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers,  
 And no one shall deliver her from My hand.  
<sup>11</sup>I will also cause all her mirth to cease,  
 Her feast days,  
 Her New Moons,  
 Her Sabbaths—  
 All her appointed feasts.  
<sup>12</sup>“And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees,  
 Of which she has said,  
 ‘These are my wages that my lovers have given me.’

God determined to scatter these people throughout the world. This was the manner in which the Assyrians historically dealt with the nations they conquered. In order to assimilate conquered people into their kingdom, they caused them to be repatriated to another region of the kingdom. Therefore, as a result of God’s judgment, God no longer regarded the Jewish people of Israel as His people. They were scattered into the Gentile world. But God revealed through His prophet Hosea that He intended to save some of them once again. These people who He had declared were no longer His people, He would once restore unto Himself. We read of this in **Hosea 2:14ff**.

<sup>14</sup>“Therefore, behold, I will allure her,  
 Will bring her into the wilderness,  
 And speak comfort to her.  
<sup>15</sup>I will give her vineyards from there,  
 And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;  
 She shall sing there,  
 As in the days of her youth,  
 As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.  
<sup>16</sup>“And it shall be, in that day,”  
 Says the LORD,  
 “That you will call Me ‘My Husband,’  
 And no longer call Me ‘My Master,’  
<sup>17</sup>For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,  
 And they shall be remembered by their name no more.  
<sup>18</sup>In that day I will make a covenant for them  
 With the beasts of the field,  
 With the birds of the air,  
 And with the creeping things of the ground.  
 Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,  
 To make them lie down safely.  
<sup>19</sup>“I will betroth you to Me forever;  
 Yes, I will betroth you to Me  
 In righteousness and justice,  
 In loving-kindness and mercy;  
<sup>20</sup> will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,  
*And you shall know the LORD.*

<sup>21</sup>“It shall come to pass in that day  
That I will answer,” says the LORD;  
“I will answer the heavens,  
And they shall answer the earth.

<sup>22</sup>The earth shall answer  
With grain,  
With new wine,  
And with oil;  
They shall answer Jezreel.

<sup>23</sup>Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth,  
***And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy;  
Then I will say to those who were not My people,  
‘You are My people!’  
And they shall say, ‘You are my God!’”***

Our dispensational friends, those who hold to exclusive futuristic eschatology that God will restore the nation of Israel as a nation, claim that this passage is prophetic of a future restoration of Israel that will occur during a future 1,000 year millennium. They do not believe that it speaks at all to the church during this age. Here is the footnote in the **New Scofield Reference Bible** regarding this passage:

(2:2) “Wife” of the LORD, Summary: Marriage is one of many figures used in Scripture to emphasize the relationship of God to men. This illustration is used in both the O.T. and N.T. to picture love, intimacy, privilege, and responsibility. In the O. T., as here in vv. 16-23, Israel is described as the wife of the LORD, though now disowned because of disobedience. Nevertheless eventually, upon repentance, Israel will be restored. This relationship is not to be confounded with that of the Church to Christ (John 3:29). In the mystery of the divine Trinity both are true. The N.T. speaks of the Church as a virgin espoused to one husband (2 Cor. 11:1-2), which could never be said of an adulterous wife restored in grace. Israel is, then, to be the restored and forgiven wife of the LORD; the Church is the virgin wife of the Lamb (John 3:29; Rev. 19:6-8). Israel will be the Lord’s earthly wife (ch. 2:23); the Church, the Lamb’s heavenly bride (Rev. 19:7).<sup>8</sup>

We do not have time to identify all that is true and what is false in this statement, other than to make several points. First, they are wrong to assert that one metaphor in one place of Scripture (“wife”) renders any other metaphor (say, the “bride”) as not applying to the same entity. Sometimes Israel is referred to as God’s “son”, which is just as valid as the use of “wife” in this context. Because Israel is said to be God’s “wife” and the Church as Christ’s “bride” does not mean they have to be two different peoples. This is a false conclusion drawn upon a wrong understanding of the nature and use of metaphors in Scripture. But second, this quote shows that the futurists see this entire passage as prophetic of a future restoration of Jewish people to be God’s people once again-- “Israel will be the Lord’s earthly wife”; in other words, in a future millennium. Notice the verse that the note uses to make this claim--Hosea 2:23. Although The New Scofield Reference Bible cross references verse 23 to Romans 9:25 in the margin, it does not state that this is a prophecy of Gentile conversion to Christ in this gospel age, as the apostle Paul declares forthrightly. This, therefore, is a clear example how the premillennialist ignores the plain and literal biblical teaching insisting to affirm their established preconceptions about prophecy.

Paul quoted Hosea 2:23 as being a prophecy of Gentiles coming to faith in Jesus Christ in this church age. The note in **The New Reformation Study Bible** rightly states in its footnote to the words of Hosea 2:23, “You are my God”: “See Romans 9:23-26 and 1 Peter 2:9, 10 regarding the fulfillment of these prophecies.”<sup>9</sup> To underscore what we are saying, consider the comments of **Thomas Schreiner** on Romans 9:25 that is a quotation of Hosea 2:23:

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<sup>8</sup> C. I. Scofield, editor, **The New Scofield Reference Bible** (Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 920.

<sup>9</sup> R. C. Sproul, general editor, **The New Reformation Study Bible** (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), p. p. 1363.

God's merciful calling of the Gentiles is supported in verses 25 and 26 by quotations from Hosea 2:23 and 2:1, respectively, in the LXX (i.e. the Septuagint). The Pauline wording of Hosea 2:25 accords with no known text of Hosea, however; the clauses are reversed so that the declaration that those who are not God's people have now become God's people is moved before the clause that says that those previously unloved are now loved. Perhaps the clauses are moved because the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God is highlighted... God has called the Gentiles, who were not his people, to be his people.<sup>10</sup>

**Douglas Moo** addressed the efforts of some to make Paul mean something else by using this quotation than what we have declared to be true.

But a potentially more serious instance of what seems to be arbitrary hermeneutics on Paul's part is his application of these Hosea texts to the calling of the Gentiles. For the prophet Hosea is predicting a renewal of God's mercy toward the rebellious northern tribes of Israel: those whom God rejected and named *lo-ruhamah*, "not pitied," and *lo-ammi*, "not my people" (the symbolic names given to Hosea's children [1:6-9]) are again shown mercy and adopted again as God's people. The problem disappears if Hosea is including the Gentiles in his prophecy; but this is unlikely. Others avoid the difficulty by arguing that Paul applies these passages to the calling of the Jews rather than the Gentiles. But the explicit reference to Israel in the introduction to the Isaiah quotations in v. 27 suggests that Paul views the Hosea quotations as related to the calling of the Gentiles. Others think that that Paul may imply an analogy: God's calling of Gentiles operates on the same principle as God's promised renewal of the ten northern tribes.<sup>11</sup> But Paul requires more than an analogy to establish from Scripture justification for God's calling of Gentiles to be his people. Therefore we must conclude that this text reflects a hermeneutical supposition for which we find evidence elsewhere in Paul and the NT: those OT predictions of a renewed Israel find their fulfillment in the church. Moreover, Paul's use of these texts may further his effort to break down the boundaries between Jews and other peoples that were so basic to Jewish thinking.<sup>12</sup>

It is frankly strange to me that dispensational premillennialists ignore the significance and the meaning of the prophecy that the inspired apostle Paul set before us. This is an example of them claiming and that they alone interpret the Old Testament literally, saying, "The Old Testament means what it says." But this is a good example of the historically reformed view that says, "The Old Testament means what it says, but the New Testament reveals what the Old Testament means."

Now the second quotation that Paul cites in order to prove that God had always purposed to save Gentiles through the work of the Jewish Messiah is taken from the first chapter Hosea. We read in **Romans 9:26**, "*And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'*" This is a quotation of **Hosea 1:10**.

The initial message of God through Hosea came through the birth of his three children. Hosea had been married to an unfaithful woman, even a harlot, just as God had been "married" to unfaithful Israel, who had gone whoring after other gods. Hosea and his wife, Gomer, had three children. God named his children, with each child's name conveying a message of God to His people regarding their impending judgment.

The word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

<sup>2</sup>When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea:

"Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry  
And children of harlotry,  
For the land has committed great harlotry  
By departing from the LORD."

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Schreiner, **Romans** (Baker Academic, 1998), p. 526.

<sup>11</sup> This is the common attempt of dispensationalists; it is illegitimate.

<sup>12</sup> Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (William B. Eerdmans, 1996), p. 613.

<sup>3</sup>So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. <sup>4</sup>Then the LORD said to him:

“Call his name *Jezreel*,  
For in a little while  
I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu,  
And bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.  
<sup>5</sup>It shall come to pass in that day  
That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.”

<sup>6</sup>And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him:

“Call her name *Lo-Ruhamah*,  
For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel,  
But I will utterly take them away.  
<sup>7</sup>Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah,  
Will save them by the LORD their God,  
And will not save them by bow,  
Nor by sword or battle,  
By horses or horsemen.”

<sup>8</sup>Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. <sup>9</sup>Then God said:

“Call his name *Lo-Ammi*,  
For you are not My people,  
And I will not be your God.

<sup>10</sup>“Yet the number of the children of Israel  
Shall be as the sand of the sea,  
Which cannot be measured or numbered.  
*And it shall come to pass  
In the place where it was said to them,  
'You are not My people,'  
There it shall be said to them,  
'You are sons of the living God.'*”

<sup>11</sup>Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel  
Shall be gathered together,  
And appoint for themselves one head;  
And they shall come up out of the land,  
For great will be the day of Jezreel! (Hos. 1:1-11)

We read in verse 26 that Paul quotes **Hosea 1:10**, “*And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’*” Again, Paul applies these ones that Hosea identified as having become God’s covenant people to be Gentiles believers in Jesus Christ. They, the Gentiles, had formerly not been God’s people, but had become known as “the sons of God.”

By the way, this description of the people as being called “the sons of God” is quite unique to the Old Testament Scriptures. God had regarded Israel the nation as a whole to be as His son. Also God had regarded the kings of Israel who were King David’s heirs to have been His (adopted) sons. But to speak of individuals who are in covenant relationship with God as a Father to His children, although a common image of the New



Testament, may be (nearly) unique to the Old Testament here in Hosea 1:10.<sup>13</sup> We see again, Paul applies these verses of Hosea to show that God intended to save the Gentiles through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now here again, Paul's quoting of Hosea 1:10 serves to illustrate the matter regarding the hermeneutics (interpretation) of Old Testament prophecy. If you were to read Hosea 1 in context, you might never recognize that God through His inspired prophet was recording a prophecy of Gentiles coming to faith in Jesus Christ in this church age. But with the apostle Paul's inspired interpretation of Hosea 1:10 (just as his use of Hosea 2:23), we see clearly that God had foretold of the gospel going forth and being embraced by the Gentile world.

This difference in interpretation may be seen when comparing the comments regarding these verses in Hosea 1 and its parallel in Romans 9. For example, Charles Ryrie, a classical dispensationalist, records in the **Ryrie Study Bible** these comments on Hosea 1:10 and 11:

Having predicted judgment, Hosea assured the people of their ultimate restoration, numerically and spiritually. Jezreel, a place of judgment in verse 4, is viewed in verse 11 as a place where God will bless Israel during the kingdom age.<sup>14</sup>

What he is saying is that the prophecy is strictly for Israel, that is, ethnic Jews only, and that this prophecy will be fulfilled in a future 1,000 year Jewish millennium. Interestingly, although he included a cross reference in the margin, not his footnote, to the quotation of verse 10 in Romans 9:28, he makes no mention of Paul's use of the verse. Furthermore, when one examines Ryrie's notes in Romans 9:28 which is a quotation from Hosea 1:10, he includes no comment in his footnotes, although he does list Hosea 1:10 as a cross reference in the margin, but with no comment. In other words, for Ryrie the meaning of Hosea 1 is not to be determined by the inspired interpretation of that passage by the apostle Paul, but by a literalistic reading that disregards the Bible's own comments on the passage.

Now in contrast to Ryrie's treatment of the passage, the footnote of **The Reformation Study Bible** rightly, in our opinion, brings in the teaching of the apostle Paul on this passage. Its note on Hosea 10 reads this way:

**You are My people.** The promise of restoration to these people was fulfilled at least in part when remnants of the north were joined with the south during the reign of Hezekiah (2 Chr. 30:11, 18) and after the Exile (1 Chr. 9:3; Ezra 8:35). The New Testament applies this promise to the church, the true Israel, comprised both of Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 9:24-26; 1 Pet. 2:9, 10). For the apostles, the remnant of ethnic Israel was evidently a model for the remnant of the nations: what applied to the former applied to the latter.

**Sons of the living God.** This unique expression suggests the kind of intimate relationship God desires with Israel, in which God gives life (as opposed to the lifeless relationship Israel had with Baal). In Isaiah 40:18-20; 44:9-20; 46:5-11, dead idols are contrasted with the living God. The living relationship is now provided in Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:16; Rom. 9:26).<sup>15</sup>

As we work through these next three chapters of Romans, 9 through 11, we will see many examples of differences of interpretation, because of two different models of interpretation. May our Lord grant us grace to understand rightly these matters as we proceed in this study of God's Word. May our Lord continue to illuminate our minds and hearts to His truth.

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<sup>13</sup> The exception to this is a debated interpretation of the Genesis 6 passage in which it records the "sons of God" intermingling with "the daughters of men." I believe that "the sons of God" are not angelic beings as some have proposed, but are the godly seed of Seth, the people of God. They had become corrupted through intermarrying with the ungodly people of the lineage of Cain, thereby forsaking their former lives of faith and fellowship with God. The result was a corrupt world that would need washed clean by the world-wide flood in Noah's day.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Version* (Moody Press, 1986, 1994), p. 1328.

<sup>15</sup> R. C. Sproul, gen. ed., *The Reformation Study Bible* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), p. 1360.