

# How To Study Scripture – Romans 9

## How to study Scripture and History

Don Cole

Turn to Romans, chapter 9. We will examine some passages in context. The main issue is the problem of the rejection of Israel, especially in chapters 9-11.

*I encourage each of you to read all of Romans 9.*

### Are Romans 9:6-13 literal or a metaphor?

*<sup>6</sup>But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, <sup>7</sup>and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” <sup>8</sup>This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. <sup>9</sup>For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” <sup>10</sup>And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, <sup>11</sup>though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that **God’s purpose of election might continue**, not because of works but because of him who calls— <sup>12</sup>she was told, “**The older will serve the younger.**” <sup>13</sup>As it is written, “**Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.**”*

### Is this literal or a metaphor?

Did YHVH literally hate/reject Esau before he was born?

Calvin’s interpretation is that literally God rejects/hates newborn babies. Consequently, if this is literal, that means that Esau was hated/rejected even before he was born. God’s election would then apply to other babies even before they were born! That means that, some babies would be elected – and some would be doomed for destruction.

The following quotes are by John Calvin from his series entitled “*Institutes of Christian Religion*,” book 3, chapter 23.

John Calvin wrote:

- “*Individuals are born who are doomed for destruction.*” Calvin also adds: “*individuals are born who are doomed from the womb to certain death and are to glorify Him by their destruction.*”
- “*Therefore, those whom God passes over, He condemns and this He does for no other reason than that He wills to exclude them from the inheritance which He predestined for His own children.*”
- “*Many professing a desire to defend the deity from an individual charge admit the doctrine of election but deny that anyone is reprobated this they do ignorantly and childishly since there could be no election without its opposite reprobation.*”

### Let’s look at a simple interpretation from Scripture:

“*Jacob, I loved, but Esau I hated.*” Did YHVH really hate Esau?

Dt 23:7: *You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a sojourner in his land.*

What about the word hatred? Is hatred to be taken literally or metaphorically?

## **In the Greek language idioms and metaphors are not to be taken literally.**

In the following verse, is Yeshua literally telling us to *hate* our family and even ourselves?

Luke 14:26 *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”*

But Eph 6:2 states that *“we are to honor our mother and father.”*

Biblical use of hatred can simply refer to the choosing of one over another for an honorable purpose or service! One must put God’s Word first, before family or even ourselves.

When speaking about the word *election*, this is not regarding salvation, but rather it is regarding a service or a calling. Just because one is called for a particular service, it does not mean you are saved. Eg: in Scripture, God used a donkey, but he was not saved. Furthermore, YHVH chose Jacob to make Israel a blessing.

In the book of Galatians, there is a comparison of Ishmael & Isaac and Esau & Jacob.

*“<sup>21</sup>Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? <sup>22</sup>For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. <sup>23</sup>But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. <sup>24</sup>Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. <sup>25</sup>Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. <sup>26</sup>But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. Gal 4:21-26.*

The above passage was written to be taken figuratively/allegorically, How do we know? The Scripture says so in verses 24 & 25. Context! **Context lets the Scripture speak to you – and not the other way around.**

The mothers, in this passage, are to be taken figuratively and not literally. Paul is relating Hagar to slavery, which represents the Torah and works, because Abraham did not wait in faith for God’s promise, regarding the birth of Isaac. Abraham strove, in the flesh, through works with Hagar to fulfil the promise. Sarah – used as an illustration of this promise - represents faith and waiting on the God’s promise.

Paul, in Romans 9, is speaking about faith and NOT about works:

*<sup>30</sup>What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; <sup>31</sup>but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. <sup>32</sup>Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone. Rom 9:30-32.*

In the midst of faith and not works, Paul establishes the fact that YHVH has a right to choose whom He wants for what position He wants. God’s election is not about salvation, rather it is about His calling for a purpose.

Everything must be first done in faith and then in works. Again, election is not concerning salvation but rather it is concerning a calling. In fact, faith and works lead to salvation!