

"I Will Call That My People..."

"As he saith in Hosea, I will call that my people which were not my people; and her beloved that was not beloved, and it shall be, that in the place where it was said unto you, ye are not my people, these shall they be called sons of the loving God" (Rom. 9:25f; Hos. 2:23; 1:10). Paul is ready now to explain the rejection of the nation of Israel. He quotes from the pre-exile prophets Hosea and Isaiah where Hosea said that those who had not been God's people (Gentiles) would now become his people. Isaiah was cited to show that just a remnant of Israel would be saved. *"If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that shall be saved..."* (Rom. 9:27; Isa. 10:22f). When the Assyrians led the northern kingdom into exile, then later Nebuchadnezzar decimated Judah and Jerusalem, only a few were spared, a remnant. *"Except the Lord of Sabbath had left us a seed, we had become as Sodom and had been made like unto Gomorra"* (Rom. 9:29; Isa. 1:8). The greater fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy found fulfillment when Israel as a whole rejected Jesus as their Messiah. It was truly but a remnant of them who embraced the Lord Jesus Christ. They are his remnant today. But why? Paul asks that very question himself. *"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is according to faith; but Israel following after a law of righteousness did not arrive at that law"* (Rom. 9:30-32a). Here is an example of "vessels of honor" becoming "vessels of dishonor;" "vessels of wrath" becoming "vessels of mercy." Hosea had predicted that of those whom God had called "my people," they would say "not my people" and of those who were not his people he would call, "My people." Israel had been vessels of honor; vessels of mercy. On the other hand, Gentiles had been "vessels of dishonor" but had become "vessels of honor." They had been "vessels of wrath" but were now "vessels of mercy." Had all Israel become "vessels of wrath;" all Gentiles "vessels of mercy?" No. Some of Israel still were "vessels of mercy" for after all, a remnant would be preserved. There were still many Gentiles who were "vessels of wrath."

Yet more Gentiles had become "vessels of mercy" than had Israelites. They had become such because, although they had not sought God, God had sought them through the preaching of the gospel (1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 2:14). And those who believed and obeyed the gospel attained the righteousness which is of faith: that righteousness which is revealed in the gospel (Rom. 1:16f). On the other hand, the Jew did not attain unto righteousness because he believed he was righteous by keeping the law. *"Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works"* (Rom. 9:32). Christ had become a stumbling block to them which Isaiah had anticipated: *"Behold, I lay*

in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense: and he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. 9:33, Isa. 28:16). Israel, as a whole who had been the "people of God" now were "not by people," not by God's choice but their choice (Matt. 23:27). It was of their own doing they had become vessels of wrath!

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