A Study of Romans 9:6 — The People of Promise

Introduction

Romans 9:6 (KJV) confronts a question that echoes through every age: *Has God's Word failed because many of Israel according to the flesh reject the Messiah?* Paul answers decisively—"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." In a single sentence he dismantles any notion that God's covenant promises hinge on mere genealogy, and he opens a vista onto the larger, Spirit-defined people of God. The following brief essay weaves Paul's argument with complementary passages to show that Scripture consistently locates true Israel in faithful union with Christ rather than in physical descent alone.

The Heart of Romans 9:6

Paul's first clause assures his readers that God's promises remain intact; the apparent unbelief of many ethnic Israelites does not nullify the divine plan. The second clause explains why: "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." In other words, a distinction exists between *Israel according to the flesh* and the *Israel of promise*. God's Word is effectual precisely because it always aimed at a believing remnant—not an indiscriminate, ethnic totality.

Confirming Voices in the New Testament

Elsewhere Paul states the principle explicitly: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham" (Gal 3:7). Indeed, "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed" (Gal 3:29). Jesus Himself pressed the point when His opponents claimed Abrahamic lineage: "If ye

were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39); their unbelief proved they were "of [their] father the devil" (v. 44). Likewise, Romans 2:28-29 defines a true Jew as one whose heart, not merely flesh, is circumcised by the Spirit, and Philippians 3:3 calls Christ-trusting believers "the circumcision," warning against any confidence "in the flesh."

Old Testament Foundations and Prophetic Fulfillment

Paul's theology rests on the prophets. Isaiah foretold that "though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant…shall return" (Isa 10:22), and Hosea anticipated Gentile inclusion: "In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the sons of the living God" (Hos 1:10). Paul cites both prophecies in Romans 9 to demonstrate that the promise always embraced a spiritually defined Israel composed of believing Jews and Gentiles alike.

One New Humanity in Christ

Ephesians 2:11-19 crowns the argument: Christ "made both one," abolishing the ethnic wall of partition and creating "one new man." The people of God are now a single household—"fellowcitizens with the saints"—because redemption's basis is Christ's blood, not birth records. Thus the Word of God has, in fact, taken full effect; it gathers a redeemed community that transcends national boundaries and embodies the faith of Abraham.

Closing Remarks

Romans 9:6 invites us to measure covenant membership not by ancestry but by allegiance to Christ, the promised Seed. Far from failing, God's Word has accomplished its purpose, calling forth a remnant from Israel and a multitude from the nations into one Spirit-wrought family. When we grasp this truth, the

Old and New Testaments harmonize: every promise finds its “Yea and Amen” in Jesus, and those who are in Him—whether Jew or Gentile—stand as the true Israel of God.