*Northwest Bible Church – Jun. 6, 2004 – Worship Service – Alan Conner*

**Romans. 9:4-5**

*The Special Status of Israel*

**INTRO**

Chapters 9-11 is Paul’s vindication of God’s dealings with Israel. He begins with his sorrow for the lost condition of Israel (9:1-3) and then this grief is painted on the canvas of Israel’s special standing before God (vv. 4-5). In setting forth this special status of Israel, Paul acknowledges the tension that his gospel creates in light of Israel’s current spiritual condition.

        These special blessings upon Israel can be summed up in four categories:

**I. COVENANT STANDING: ISRAELITES (v. 4a).**
        "Jew" – looks at the Jewish people from their relationship to the Gentiles.

        "Israel" – looks at the Jewish people in their relationship to God and salvation history.

**II. COVENANT BLESSINGS (v. 4):**
    There are six items mentioned here that really unfolds for us the significance of the name "Israelite." What does it mean to be an Israelite? Paul now explains some the blessings.

    The Greek suggests a designed arrangement of two sets of three items each.

            Set 1-
                A (adoption)
                    B (glory)
                        C (covenants)
            Set 2-
                A’ (law)
                    B’ (service)
                        C’ (promises)

        A. ADOPTION – "adoption as sons". This must be understood in its Old Covenant context, not in the New Covenant context of Rom. 8:15-16. See Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9; Hos. 11:1; Deut. 14:1.
            Also significant is the present tense "are" for Paul says that they still are Israelites which suggests that God has not completely washed his hands of Paul’s kinsmen according to the flesh.

        B. GLORY - "glory" also is found in 8:17, 18, 21, 30 as the future glory of the redeemed saints in heaven but here it probably refers to God’s presence with the people of Israel throughout its history and maybe hint at a future work of God in saving grace among them.
        C. COVENANTS - here all of the historical covenants made with the fathers beginning with Abraham, Moses, David, and New Covenant are in view. Contrast the status of the Gentiles in Eph. 2:12.

        D. LAW – God gave the law to Israel at Mt. Sinai. The law was designed to be a blessing but of course due to sin it became a curse.

        E. SERVICE - refers to God’s blessing of giving Israel the privilege of worshipping Him in and through the temple with its sacrificial system and feasts days.

        F. PROMISES - given in and through the various historical covenants. "Covenants of promise" in Eph. 2:12.

**III. COVENANT ROOTS: THE PATRIARCHS (v. 4a).**    Another privilege is that they are descended from the "fathers" or the patriarchs who were esteemed in the eyes of God. They were the beginning, the root of God’s history for Israel. God bestowed promises on them which were valid for them and their descendants. To be descended from them was a high honor.
    But the crucial issue that Paul will address is HOW TO INTERPRET THESE PROMISES.

**IV. COVENANT FRUIT: THE MESSIAH (v. 4b).**    The final privilege mentioned here is that from them came the Messiah who is the consummation of Israel’s history.
         "from whom" which implies source, not "of whom" which implies possession for many within Israel did not belong to the Messiah in saving faith.

        "according to the flesh" – the Messiah came from Israel only in the sense of his human nature. But there is more to the Messiah than just his human descent.

        "who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." - Paul tells us that the Messiah is also God.
(See also Titus. 2:13; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:15; 2:9; 1 Cor. 8:6, etc.)

**CONCLUSION**

    1) You can be a member of the Old Covenant Israel but not a member of the New Covenant Israel.

    2) Possessing external blessings and spiritual privileges and being "close" to God does mean that you are saved.

    3) Don’t squander and waste your blessings and privileges for your judgment will more severe.