*Northwest Bible Church – Jun. 20, 2004 – Worship Service – Alan Conner*

**Romans. 9:7-9**

*Israel within Israel Illustrated*

**INTRO**
    Principle: Not all physical Israel is spiritual Israel (v. 6). This is Paul’s answer to the objection that God’s word and promises to Israel has failed. Paul explains how God has always, even from the beginning, called out a spiritual Israel within the nation of Israel and has chosen them alone to inherit the covenant blessings of salvation. Jer. 31:7 "O Lord, save Thy people, the remnant of Israel."
    To prove this concept of a spiritual Israel within physical Israel, Paul uses two examples. The first involves Isaac and Ishmael, and the second involves Jacob and Esau. We will only deal with the former this morning. Although Ishmael is not specifically mentioned in this passage, his face along with Isaac is all over these verses.

    Paul will illustrate the principle of a spiritual Israel using three key ideas: PROGENY, PROMISE, POWER.

**I. PRINCIPLE ILLUSTRATED (vv. 7-9).**    A. PROGENY: Isaac = Abraham’s covenant "child/descendant" (v. 7).

        1) NEGATIVE - "They are not all children because they are Abraham’s descendants."
            Ishmael was just as much a descendant of Abraham as Isaac and yet he was not among the "children" to whom the covenant belonged. These "children" = the "children of God" (v. 8), spiritual Israel, the "Israel within", the chosen Israel to whom alone God intended the promises to be fulfilled.

        2) POSITIVE - "but through Isaac your descendants/children will be named."

            a) the word "descendants" is used in two different ways just as "Israel" was in v. 6. 1st use = physical descendants only; 2nd use = true covenant line.

            b) God chose Isaac to be Abraham’s covenant child.
    Quote from Gen. 21:12. Clearly God chose Isaac over Ishmael. Also the descendants of Abraham will be called through Isaac where the "call" = Paul’s normal use as the effectual call of God.

    Thus, the true children of the covenant are chosen by God and not determined by mere physical descent.

    B. PROMISE: Isaac = example of "children of God/promise" (v. 8).

        1) NEGATIVE – "It is not the children of flesh who are children of God."
        2) POSITIVE – "but the children of promise are regarded as descendants (="children of God").

            Ishmael        vs.        Isaac

         Children of flesh        vs.     Children of Promise

     Not Children of God     vs. Children of God = saved
Not Abraham’s covenant descendant    vs. Abraham’s covenant descendant

Being a "child of promise" means that he is born by or through the promise of God. He was chosen and promised to Abraham and Sarah and his birth was the result of God’s promise.

        Just because one is physically descended from Abraham (like Ishmael) does not make him a "child of God," nor a "child of promise," nor one of Abraham’s true covenant "descendants."

        Isaac is the first example of the "Israel within Israel" (v. 6). God is faithful to His word and promise and everyone who is a child of the promise within Israel will receive the blessings promised.

    C. POWER: Isaac’s promised birth is fulfilled by God’s supernatural power (v. 9).

        1) "I WILL COME." Cf. Rom. 4:19-21.

        2) Gal. 4:28-29 - Christians are like Isaac in being both:

             a) "children of promise."

             b) born according to the Spirit

SUM of vv. 7-9: Abraham’s spiritual progeny (descendants), who are the "Israel within Israel," the "children of God" to whom belongs the blessings of salvation, are determined by God’s promise of certain chosen ones who are made children of God by His supernatural power. Or, the progeny are determined by the promise which is fulfilled by God’s power.

**HONEY FROM THE ROCK.**

1) God is always faithful to His word, even when we must wait a long time for its fulfillment.
2) God chooses those who become "children of God."
3) The marks of being a child of Abraham are having the faith of Abraham and obedience.