

Romans 9:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

Analysis

Who are Israelites—Paul lists Israel's covenant privileges with emphatic relative pronoun hoitines (οἵτινες, 'who indeed are'). **The adoption** (hyiothesia, υἱοθεσία)—God called Israel 'my son, my firstborn' (Exodus 4:22). **The glory** (doxa, δόξα)—the Shekinah cloud manifesting God's presence. **The covenants** (plural: Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic). **The giving of the law** (nomothesia, νομοθεσία)—unique privilege of Sinai. **The service of God** (latreia, λατρεία)—temple worship. **The promises** (epaggellai, ἐπαγγελίαι)—messianic prophecies.

This catalogue underscores the tragedy: possessing every covenant advantage, Israel still rejected their Messiah. Privilege doesn't guarantee faith. External religion without regeneration profits nothing. This prepares for verse 6's thunderbolt: not all Israel is Israel.

Historical Context

These eight privileges summarize Israel's unique status among nations. No other people received divine adoption, glory-cloud, multiple covenants, law from God's own voice, prescribed worship, and messianic promises. Yet privilege magnifies responsibility—"to whom much is given, much required" (Luke 12:48).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do Israel's covenant privileges foreshadow the greater privileges of the new covenant church?
2. What spiritual privileges do you possess that you may take for granted?
3. Why doesn't external religious advantage guarantee internal spiritual reality?

Interlinear Text

οἵτινές εἰσιν Ἰσραηλῖται ὅν ἡ νίοθεσία καὶ
Who are Israelites to whom G3588 pertaineth the adoption and
G3748 G1526 G2475 G3739 G5206 G2532

ἡ δόξα καὶ αἱ διαθῆκαι καὶ ἡ νομοθεσία καὶ
the glory and G3588 the covenants and G3588 the giving of the law and
G3588 G1391 G2532 G1242 G2532 G3548 G2532

ἡ λατρεία καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι
the service and G3588 the promises
G3588 G2999 G2532 G1860

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 2:12 (Covenant): That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

Psalms 147:19 (Word): He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

Romans 9:6 (Word): Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Genesis 17:2 (Covenant): And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

Acts 2:39 (Covenant): For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Exodus 4:22 (References Israel): And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:

Deuteronomy 7:6 (References God): For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Hebrews 9:1 (Covenant): Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

Psalms 89:3 (Covenant): I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,

1 Kings 8:11 (Glory): So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.