

## Romans 9:1-29

Use the Gold-Standard **Context Tool**. Although we're now into a new section of Romans, there are obvious connections with what's come before. Can you work out why Paul's argument at the end of chapter 8 might lead to the issue raised in 9:1-5?

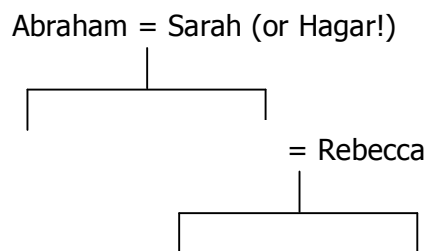
Use the Gold-Standard **Structure Tool**. Can you identify the main stages of Paul's response to the issue raised in vv1-5?

[Hint: look for further related objections along the way]

Paul's argument in the rest of the passage will have **Quotation/Allusion Tool** users licking their lips in anticipation. Let's consider each Old Testament reference in turn:

Paul begins in Genesis:

- Read the account of Abraham's sons in Genesis 17:15-21; 21:1-14. Does the covenant promise apply to both of them?
- Read the account of Abraham's grandsons in Genesis 25:19-34. Does the covenant promise apply to both of them?
- Complete the family tree below and circle those who are members of 'Israel'.



- Now look at v6 using the **Linking Words Tool**. What's the logic of Paul's argument? What does his study of Genesis prove?

The Genesis family tree stuff leads to a further objection in v14 – ‘is there injustice (or ‘unrighteousness’) on God’s part?’ This time Paul’s answers come not from the first book of the Bible but from the second:

- Both quotations from Exodus come from contexts in which God reveals his character or his name (check and see). What does the fact that God chooses on whom he will show mercy tell you about him?
- Look at the context of the quotation from Exodus 33. Are the people in a position to argue that God is *unjust* to exclude them from his covenant promises? Where do they stand vis-à-vis the covenant at this point? What is it about the nature of *mercy* (the point that Paul seems to highlight) that excludes discussion of human rights and deserts?
- Look at the context of the quotation from Exodus 9. Is Pharaoh in a position to argue that God is *unjust* to punish him? How do we see divine sovereignty and human responsibility woven together in the Pharaoh narrative?

[The argument moves on to a further stage (vv20-21) that we we’ll look at in the study. If you really have a *lot* of time to prepare you could look for how the argument of vv22-29 anticipates chapter 11.]

Using the Gold-Standard **Author’s Purpose Tool** try to summarise the point that Paul is making in this chapter.

Let’s finish with the Gold-Standard **So What? Tool**:

- How has this passage expanded your view of God (his character, his faithfulness to his promises, his mercy etc)?
- How ought it to reassure us (especially given where it comes in the argument of Romans)?

What would you say to a fellow-Christian for whom ‘predestination’ is almost a swear-word? What have they misunderstood? What is at stake if we ditch this teaching from the Bible?