

Romans 9

An Exposition – God’s Free and Sovereign Grace

Romans 9 - Outline

A. Paul's Sorrow over Israel's present rejection of Christ	9:1-3
B. Paul enumerates Israel’s privileges and blessing	9:4-5
C. God's Sovereignty in salvation and in judgment explained in the cases of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, and Pharaoh	9:6-17
D. God shows mercy and judgment according to His own sovereign purpose, and none have a right or power to find fault with His decisions	9:18-21
E. God’s grand design in the dispensing of judgment and mercy	9:22-24
F. The prophets predicted the calling of the Gentiles and their salvation, and the rejection of the Jews	9:25-29
G. The faith of the Gentiles and the stumbling of the Jews	9:30-33

Romans 9:1-5 - 1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. NASB

A. 1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. -

Paul’s sorrow over Israel’s rejection of Christ, as a corporate body. Note the context of the passage carried over from Chapter 8, the salvation of the called and elect, 8:28-32. From this it is clearly seen that the context of Chapter 9 is the salvation of individuals, not corporate callings or privileges.

Albert Barnes - The chapter, therefore, has not reference to national election, or to choice to external privileges, but has direct reference to the doctrine of the election to salvation which had been stated in chap. 8. To suppose that it refers merely to external privileges, and national distinctions, makes the whole discussion unconnected, unmeaning, and unnecessary.

B. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, -

Paul’s sorrow is so severe that he is willing to trade his faith for Israel’s acceptance of Christ. Here is the deep and godly compassion of a man who believes in God’s Sovereignty through and through.

C. 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. -

Paul here enumerates the great privileges which belong to Israel and yet means to show that in spite of all of these, they are lost in regard to salvation. This is the reason for his sorrow. He will show in this chapter that salvation is rooted in a divine privilege which is given to individuals based on nothing more than God's free and sovereign grace. It is not according to works(v-11,16,31-32) or according to man's will(v-16), but according to God's free and sovereign design(v-8,11,15-18,21-24,28-29)

Romans 9:6-9 - 6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants will be named." 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. 9 For this is a word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son." NASB
A. 6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. -

God's promises to Israel in His Word have not failed but are being realized even now by those whom God has called.

B. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants will be named." 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. 9 For this is a word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son." -

Salvation is not based on Abraham's heritage – Isaac was the promised one and came by supernatural appointment, Ishmael was a product of fleshly efforts, not God's supernatural design

Romans 9:10-13 - 10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, 12 it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." 13 Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." NASB
A. 10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; -

Salvation is not based on Isaac's heritage – Both Jacob and Esau had one father, but only one was chosen by God for His redeeming privileges

B. 11 for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, 12 it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." 13 Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." -

Salvation is not based on good or bad works, but is according to God's purpose in election, and because of Him who calls. – Rom 11:5, Eph 1:4-6, 1 Thess 1:4, 2 Tim 1:9

Romans 9:14-15 - 14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! 15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." NASB

A. 14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! -

God is not unjust. Consider why Paul raises this question.

1. **If Paul had designed to show that salvation was based on man's will, he would have never brought this up, for no one would try to charge God with injustice, and would not feel like their rights were being violated.**
2. **Paul brings up this matter anticipating the readers accusation of God being unjust because the matter of salvation is by God's choice, not by human effort(v-11,16,31-32) or human will(v-16).**

B. 15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." -

The dispensing of God's mercy and compassion is according to His own free will.

1. **Those who receive the mercy of salvation, receive it by "God's purpose according to His choice"(v-11) and by His own free grace(otherwise it is no longer grace.**
Romans 11:6-8 - 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, **otherwise grace is no longer grace.** 7 What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but **those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;** 8 just as it is written, "**God gave** them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day." NASB
2. **The choice of His will to dispense mercy to one and not the other is the reason for Isaac's blessing(not Ishmael's), and Jacob's blessing(not Esau's). It is not based on their heritage, or works, or their human willing(v-16).**

Romans 9:16-18 - 16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth." 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. NASB

A. 16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. -

Consider the "it" in verse 16.....what is "it" referring to? "It" refers to the dispensing of God's mercy and compassion.

1. **"It" refers to the dispensing of God's mercy and compassion to the children of promise, (not the children of the flesh), v-8.**
2. **"It" refers to the dispensing of God's mercy and compassion to those God has chosen v-11, not because they have one father Isaac, or because they do good or bad.**

Here "it" does not depend on man's will BUT on God who has mercy. This verse plainly states that salvation does NOT depend on man's will but on God's FREE mercy.

B. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth." -

Paul reasons that God did as He willed with Pharaoh,(and this was not unjust, for it was God's privilege and right), and His purpose was to show His power in judgment over

Pharoah and His ability to hardened Pharoah's heart in order to accomplish His purpose. This purpose was the fame of God's name which He clearly accomplished both in that day(Num 14:15, Eze 20:9, 14, 22, Psalm 46:10) and to this day.

Proverbs 21:1 - The **king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD;**
He turns it wherever He wishes. NASB

C. 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. -

It is re-asserted that God dispenses His mercy to whomever He "desires" or wills. But what of this statement, "He hardens whom He desires." Who shall charge God with injustice? And by what power shall His Sovereign authority be overruled? By what court shall you arraign or try God?

Romans 9:19-21 - 19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? NASB

A. 19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" -

Paul again anticipates an argument from those who would charge God with injustice. Here the argument is, if God is free in the dispensation of His mercy and in the execution of His judgment, then why does He blame men for their wrongdoing? Consider....this argument would never be raised if Paul were reasoning that salvation(the dispensing of God's mercy) was according to the will of man, or that its rejection was because of the stubborn will of man.

B. 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? -

Here Paul shuts the mouth of anyone who would dare challenge the design and purposes of God. He reasons that God is the Creator, and has the Sovereign Prerogative to do as He pleases with what he has made.

C. 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? -

Here it is affirmed that God has a "right over the clay." Clay here is analogous to "people." Here "honorable use" speaks of the privileges of eternal salvation(v-22-24) and "common use" speaks of those "vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction." This is a very humbling and fearful concept indeed. Dear reader, NOW is the day of salvation, the free offer of the Gospel is extended to you! Why will you be destroyed, repent and receive Christ by faith and you SHALL be saved!

Romans 9:22-24 - 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. NASB

A. 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? -

Here is the second point Paul uses to answer the objection of verse 19. The first point was, *“the potter has a right over the clay.”* And here then God is *“willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known.”* Further He is *“enduring with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.”* God is willing to permit sin in His creation for at least four purposes here;

- *To demonstrate His wrath*
- *To make His power known*
- *To display much patience with the vessels of wrath*
- *To make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy*

Here the Sovereignty of God over evil in His world is clearly seen. God will do as He pleases with the wicked, and He will do it for the purposes of revealing His Goodness to His chosen vessels of mercy. This as an answer to the objection in verse 19, *“why does He still find fault,”* is a crystal clear statement of God’s own Sovereign and Free right(or prerogative) to do as He pleases with His creation.

B. 23 And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy -

Here is given the reason why God *“demonstrates His wrath, power and patience”* with the wicked. It is to *“make known”* or to DISPLAY *“the riches of His glory”* to His own *“vessels of mercy.”* Note then, that the vessels of mercy should look at the destruction of the wicked and stand in awe at the wrath, power and patience of God in dealing with them. The Bible plainly declares that God’s purpose in the destruction of the wicked is to display His glory.

C. which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. -

Here it is stated that God *“prepared beforehand for glory”* the vessels of mercy, that is, His church, the saved, the elect, the called, the foreknown remnant of Jews and the foreknown people who have received mercy from among the Gentiles. Consider that the Bible plainly declares that God PREDESTINES the vessels of mercy by *“preparing them beforehand for glory”* and that this is God’s work, He prepares, and this according *“to His own purpose and grace”* (2 Tim 1:9). Also, consider what they vessels of mercy have been prepared for, GLORY! Prepared for GLORY! We become partakers of the nature of God! (2 Pet 1:4)

Romans 9:25-29 - 25 As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' And her who was not beloved, 'beloved.'" 26 "And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, ' you are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God." 27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; 28 for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly. " 29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah." NASB

A. 25 As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' And her who was not beloved, 'beloved.'" 26 "And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'you are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God." -

Here the prophecy of Hosea is fulfilled in God's choosing of certain Gentiles to be saved and to receive the designation, "my people" and also "the sons of the living God." Paul uses this to show that Israel(the sons of Abraham) did not corporately receive the promised blessing of salvation, but only a believing remnant of Jews did along with a believing remnant of Gentiles. Here the point of verse 6-7 is re-affirmed,

Romans 9:6-7 - it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants
NASB

It is rather the ones who are "according to the purpose of God's choice" (verse 11), and the ones "on whom I will have mercy" (verse 15,18), and the people He has "prepared beforehand for glory" (verse 23) who are the recipients of His promise of salvation.

B. 27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; 28 for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly. " 29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah." -

Here Paul re-affirms the fact that only a remnant of Jews will be saved, and that at the mercy of God, for if God would not have graciously "left a posterity," the Jews would have been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Romans 9:30-33 - 30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed." NASB

A. 30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. -

Because Israel sought to BOAST in their own HERITAGE(being Abraham's seed), and in their own ability to be righteous before God by WORKS(keeping the Law), they have been corporately cut off from the blessing of salvation. They should have rather glorified God for His mercy by humbly acknowledging their dependence on God by FAITH, and trusted in His righteousness, provided by CHRIST ALONE, to be considered JUSTIFIED in God's sight.

B. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed." -

They stumbled by rejecting Christ the Messiah, instead of believing in Him, who alone merited the righteousness of God for sinners. Here is the reason Paul weeps in verse 2.