

Romans 9 ESV Text

God's Sovereign Choice

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—²that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

⁶But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, ⁷and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” ⁸This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. ⁹For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁰And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— ¹²she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” ¹³As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

¹⁴What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! ¹⁵For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. ¹⁷For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” ¹⁸So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

¹⁹You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” ²⁰But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” ²¹Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? ²²What if

Romans 9 Teaching

1 Rhetorical, not defensive. He’s getting their attention. Speaking truth doesn’t worry about getting defensive. “In the Holy Spirit” = at 8:26-27 Paul taught that the Holy Spirit is within us. He leads us to the Word of Christ (see John 14:26)

2 Paul feels distress because he cares deeply for the Jews (like Jesus, see Matthew 23:37).

3 Paul has Christ’s love for his fellow Jews, willing to give his own life for them. This is what made the early church powerful, this kind of love.

Christians must have burdens for those without Christ. (John 15:13)

4 People of God’s covenant, the apple of God’s eye! The chosen people of God.

5 Patriarchs = the Fathers (Big 3 + 12). Most importantly, the royal line leading to Messiah.

6 God’s promise holds. **Key:** first “Israel” = physical descent; second = children of promise. To understand you must see TWO Israels.

7 Not the fleshly lineage of Abraham, but the spiritual lineage through Isaac and the promise of the Gospel. Offspring or “seed” used in Gen 3:15

8 The true children of God are children of the promise who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

9 The miraculous birth of Isaac is through the Word of promise. Promise expresses grace.

10-13 Emphasize the two quotes at 12 & 13 (Read). The distinction here is that the promise went through Jacob. Why is this important? So that people don’t get the impression that it is only through the historic Israel that salvation comes.

Esau and Jacob were both Israelites, but Jacob received the PROMISE by grace. // In respect to predestination: God is speaking about historical destiny, not personal salvation.

14 Someone might try to accuse God of injustice.

15 But the emphasis is on God’s mercy and compassion.

16 *Sola Gratia* and divine monergism upheld. Salvation is 100% from God.

17 Not a spiritual predestination, but God knew that Pharaoh would rebel and resist.

18 God is merciful to all, but He hardens those who continue to reject Him. We might be bothered by this, if we are, then bow to God and confess your sin and hold to Christ for sinners.

God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— ²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea,

“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’
and her who was not beloved I will call
‘beloved.’ ”

²⁶ “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will 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, only a remnant of them will be saved, ²⁸ for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.” ²⁹ And as Isaiah predicted,

“If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring,
we would have been like Sodom
and become like Gomorrah.”

Israel's Unbelief

³⁰ What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. ³² Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³ as it is written,

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of
stumbling, and a rock of offense;
and whoever believes in him will not be put
to shame.”

¹⁹ Put in a different way, the question is, “If God’s sovereign will is always done, how can anyone be held responsible for his or her actions?”

²⁰ Put we forget that God is the Potter, and we are the clay. How arrogant we are to question Him. Sinful pride is being exposed here.

²¹ God is free to do as He pleases, but we know He does so in mercy.

²² “patience” = bearing up under provocation. “vessels of wrath” = people under God’s wrath. God does not prepare people for destruction as in making them for this purpose, but rather the word “prepared” is rather “finished,” or “fitted,” or “due”...God’s judgment is just.

²³ Franzmann: “God is patient with the vessels of wrath, and He makes the vessels of wrath serve the work of His right hand, His work of mercy.”

²⁴ Those receiving mercy are from both Jews and Gentiles!

²⁵ Beautiful words, powerful words. God restored the 10 tribes of Israel who rebelled, who had abandoned God, but His mercy makes people of God who were never before His people.

²⁶ “sons of the living God” = adopted heirs.

²⁷ In respect to the Jews, only a remnant is saved.

²⁸ God’s judgment comes speedily.

²⁹ God left a few saved from Sodom and Gomorrah. He did the same for historical Israel.

This is the remnant. Even now the road is broad that leads to destruction, but the gate is narrow that leads to life. We are the “little flock.”

³⁰ Here God’s mercy abounds. The Gentiles not only did not pursue God but were aggressively unrighteous and ungodly. We are saved by grace through faith alone. Our salvation never rests on what we do.

³¹ National Israel wanted salvation based on the Law. An approach doomed for failure.

³² Pursuing the Law in and of itself is good, but not for salvation. They left faith in Messiah behind.

³³ Christ is the stone. National Israel stumbled over Him. He was offensive to them. May He never be offensive to us. He is our cornerstone and foundation stone. We hold to Christ alone.