



Epistle to The Romans



Lesson 14, Romans 9:14-33 – God’s Sovereignty

Romans Outline

- 📖 Chapters 1 - 8 FAITH Doctrinal
 - - 1-3 Sin (the most complete diagnosis)
 - - 4-5 Salvation
 - - 6-8 Sanctification
- 📖 Chapters 9 - 11 HOPE Dispensational
 - † - 9 Israel – Past
 - † - 10 Israel – Present
 - † - 11 Israel – Future
- 📖 Chapters 12 - 16 LOVE Practical

Review

In Chapter 9 we are currently looking at Israel’s past specifically for lessons that is has for us today. Paul has written elsewhere that all of scripture is here for our learning. That as we learn and uncover knowledge in the scripture it would give us hope. Scripture also sets examples for our own conduct.

Divine Election

“No man seeks after God...” (Rom 3:11). It’s the choice of God before they were born; His sovereign choice: not on a basis of merit. If it was left up to use, we would ALL be losers. God started dealing with us BEFORE the foundation of the world.

- Who chooses who?
- Why does one person believe, and another doesn’t?
- Fate vs. Free Will?
- Predestination vs. Free Choice?

PARADOX

The paradox dissolves when one recognizes that God is outside this physical dimension of time: “God alone knows the end from the beginning” (Isa 46:10). Righteousness is not of works, but of Divine Grace—uncaused by us!

Was Judas predestined to betray Christ? (Ps 41:9). Did Jesus know Judas would betray Him when He was choosing His disciples? Yes, He did!



What about Judas? Was he responsible? Is he accountable? His actions are foretold centuries before (Zech 11:12-13). He was not a robot; he was totally responsible; he had free choice—God just knew in advance; God is not bound by time!

During this age of Grace mankind's knowledge has increased in many ways. In science we have discovered the theories of relativity. The theory of relativity teaches that time is a physical property and relative. It changes according to location, speed etc... God is outside this physical universe which constrains us.

Inheritance

In the last lesson we discussed the alternative sons—Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau. Their situations portray, consistently and typologically, the tension and conflict between...faith and works...grace vs. the law.

Esau was firstborn, with all the rights, but disparaged them and lost them through poor choices. Jesus achieved His inheritance by perseverance in suffering (Heb 2:10; Phil 2:9-11). His companions (Greek "Partakers") will inherit the same way (Heb 1:9,14). The inheritance can be forfeited because of disobedience, as in the case of Esau (Heb 12:17). It is only obtained by persevering— "faith and patience" (Heb 6:12).

To be true Israel, one needs to hold to the faith of Abraham. God has no "grandchildren."

Each person, to be in God's Forever Family, must enter by their own faith.

However, the doctrine of Israel's national election raises several crucial theological questions:

Doctrinal Questions (Addressed in the Rest of This Chapter)

- 1) Is God unrighteous? (Rom 9:14-18)
- 2) Why does God find fault if none can resist His will? (Rom 9:19-29)
- 3) What about the Gentiles? (Rom 9:30-33)
- 4) If Israel had assurances, how did they fail? Can we (How does it apply to us)?

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 14..... Paul asks a rhetorical question. Let us remember: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD* (Isaiah 55:8).



Paul's Example #3: Moses and Pharaoh

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 15..... If we study carefully Exodus Chapters 33-34, esp. 33:12-17; 34:1, 27, 28, 32.

What were the circumstances when God declared that? In response to Moses' intercession (Ex 33:19) where Moses offered to die in the stead of his people (Ex 32:32). God's mercy is not extended as a recognition of human will, nor is it a reward of human work.

"I Will Have Mercy On Whom I Will Have Mercy," God took refuge in His own inherent right to suspend judgment, if it pleased Him. There was no resource left in man! All have forfeited title to life through sin.

Let's flee to the ultimate authority: Jesus Himself.

Read John 3:15-20..... There will be no one in hell because of their sins. They will be in Hell for rejecting the provision He has made for their sins.

Make it personal: Why did you believe in God?

Read John 6:40-47. It was God's initiative for His own purposes (John 6:40-47). Mixture: God's initiative and human responsibility.

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 16..... We all have free will. And our first choice is to reject God (John 3:18- 20). All of us, no exceptions. However, it is His will that prevails.

B'nai HaElohim or the "Sons of God" is used throughout the Bible to refer to angels. It means direct creation of God. We are sons of Adam, yet John 1:11-12: *He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

Through Christ we become "Sons of God."

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 17..... God knew up front that Pharaoh would not yield, so He left Pharaoh with his decisions. Pharaoh is going to serve God's purpose. Note Pharaoh's choice (Ex 5:2). However, it was also in God's purpose to leave it to its natural state: heavy, stubborn, increasingly hardened (Ex 4:21; 7:3, 4, 13, 14).



Although it is hard for us to understand, Satan even serves God's purpose to an extent. Remember, God is omniscient, Satan is not.

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 18..... It has to do with who He is, not who we are. God's choice is His, free of any obligation. If God did not elect, none would be saved. "There are none that seeketh after God" (Rom 3:11). Men are not lost because they are hardened; they are hardened because they are lost; they are lost because they are sinners. The lies gave motivation for choice to rebel...

Man, instantly died spiritually; in the place of that spiritual life, came the nature of rebellion. We, their children, are like them: born spiritually dead, with a nature of rebellion against God. (Do you have to teach your children to be bad? It comes naturally.) God is under no obligation to do anything to bridge that chasm, but He has chosen to.

① Is God unrighteous? Of course not! For election has nothing to do with justice, but rather free grace. "God is unjust if He chooses one and leaves another," ignorant people often say. But the purpose of God goes beyond justice; for if God did only what was just, He would have to condemn all of us! We don't want His justice, we want His mercy!

Paul uses Moses (Ex 33:19) and Pharaoh (Ex 9:16) as proof that God can do what He wishes in dispensing His grace and mercy. Nobody deserves God's mercy, and nobody can condemn God for His choice of Israel or His bypassing of other nations.

Why does God find fault if none can resist His will? Let's see what Paul says...

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verses 19, 20, & 21..... Those who meet God fall into the dust: Abraham (Gen 18:27); Job (Job 30:19; 42:6).

Let's go with Jeremiah to the potter's house (**Read Jeremiah 18:3-6**).

The point God is trying to make is that He can do what He wants because He is God. We are literally but dust (Gen 2:7; 3:19). The nations are as nothing (Isa 40:15, 17).

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 22..... Verb "fitted" in verse 22 is in a form that can mean middle voice or passive voice. English doesn't have middle voice. Many translators assume passive; the subject receives the action. This should be the Greek middle voice (receives and acts simultaneously), or "*vessels of wrath who prepared themselves for destruction.*" Let's not confuse God's actions with man's responsibility:

The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Psalm 58:3

The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. Proverbs 16:4



And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 1 Peter 2:8

When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall . . . he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered ... Ezekiel 3:20

Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes . . . Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; Ezekiel 20:24,25

Yet, He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:18

That's our prerogative, our freedom to choose. It's God's mercy that makes it available. It's God's initiative. Are we responding to God?

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 23..... An Echo of Ephesians 1:4. "He alone knows the end from the beginning" (Isa 46:10). There is no limitation when God says: "Whosoever will may come." 1 John 2:1-2 rebuts "limited atonement":

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the

propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

There are those that would argue that He dies for only those that are saved. No, He died for everybody. There is no limitation on His atonement, nor does He wish any should perish.

God is Necessarily Sovereign in Salvation

1. Man was lost and he could not save himself.
2. Man was guilty and none could pardon him but God.
3. Man, by nature is “a child of wrath” and not able to change.
4. Man is allied with God’s Enemy. His mind not subject, or able to be subject, to God’s law or will.
5. Mankind does things “worthy of death” and we persist in them.
6. Any move toward salvation, must be from God.
7. God knew the attitude of every man toward His overtures would be to oppose them. That is man in the natural sense.
8. Since any real response to those overtures must come from God’s grace, He must elect to overcome effectually man’s resistance

Election is outside of human history altogether: it is of God. Do not try to rationalize God’s election process. In some cases, we can say His election was predicted, in other cases it was a sovereign choice.

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 24.....The Jews were not the only ones called!

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 25..... Here is Hosea God is talking prophetically about the Gentiles.

And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God. Hosea 2:23

Peter also quotes this in a similar manner (1 Pet 2:9).

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 26

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Hosea 1:10

The second prophecy (v. 26) is from Hosea 1:10 and refers to Gentiles anyplace on the earth who turn to Christ now and in the future. As James put it: “*That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things*” (Acts 15:17).

Now “some better thing” (Heb 11:40) has been provided for us: Becoming sons of the living God! (Cf. Gal 4:1-7).

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 27..... From the beginning, it is only a remnant that shall be saved. (Isa 10:20-23; 11:11,16; 37:32 written even before Babylon) (Jer 23:3; 50:20; Mic 2:12; 4:7; Zeph 2:7). Paul writes after the second, Roman, destruction. (Verses about “the remnant”: Gen 45:7; Isa 1:9; 10:21, 22; 11:11, 16; 46:3; Jer 23:3; Ezek 6:8; Amos 5:15; Mic 2:12; 5:7, 8; Zeph 2:7, 9; 3:13; Zech 8:6, 12). If you study the whole concept of “the remnant” throughout history it is a small select group that was saved in Israel, among the Gentiles, The Bride, etc...

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 28..... After a patient forbearing silence, He suddenly executes His eternally formed purpose. Thus, it was at the Flood; at Sodom and Gomorrah; and against the Canaanites. It’s coming again during the tribulation (3 ½ years, 42 months, the final half of the 70th week).

② Why Does God find fault if none can resist His will? (Rom 9:19- 29) Paul replies with a parable about the potter (Jer 18:1-6). God is the Potter, and the nations of the world (and their leaders) are the vessels. Some are vessels of wrath that God patiently endures until their time of destruction (Gen 15:16); others are vessels of mercy that reveal His glory. Paul then quotes Hosea to show that God promised to call a “people” from among the Gentiles, a people to be called “children of the living God.” (Hosea 2:23 and 1:10). This is the church (1 Peter 2:9-10). He also quotes Isaiah, showing that a remnant of Jews would also be saved (Isa 10:22, 23; cf. Isa 1:9).

In other words, God’s purpose in election makes it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to be saved by grace. Neither Jew nor Gentile could be saved any way other than by the grace of God.

③ What About the Gentiles? (Rom 9:30-33)



Read Romans Chapter 9 Verse 29..... We, too, but for the intervention of His grace, would go into perdition (Isa 1:9). The only reason Israel has survived so far is due to God’s grace, they didn’t earn it either. And America, too—so far. Jay Leno in one of his past monologues said, “with all the firestorms, all the floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes, with all the terrorist’s attacks, is this really a good time to remove God from the Pledge of Allegiance?”

Why are you in the Kingdom of God? Only because you responded to His initiative! You did your half.

Read Romans Chapter 9 Verses 30 through 33..... In other words, Israel, pursuing after a law which should give righteousness, did not arrive at such a law. This is a sobering statement. The Jews tried to produce a righteousness of their own through the Mosaic system. They didn’t produce it—look at the nation today. All religious systems try to reconcile themselves to God by works. Religion is trying to reconcile yourself to God. You can’t do it, yet all religions try in various ways. After the destruction of the temple is 70 a.d., Judaism redefined itself at the Council of Jamnia (a.d. 90). For the Jew, there is no

place for sacrifices, so sin is rationalized away rather than accepting the work of their Messiah.



Rock of Offence (Read Isaiah 28:16)

- He offended the Jews claims to be “children of Abraham;”
- He offended their false claims of righteousness;
- He offended the leaders of Israel by exposing their sin;
- He offended their hopes of an immediate, carnal, earthly kingdom;
- He offended the nation by overthrowing their false hope of works.

Here is the paradox of history: the Jews tried to be righteous and were rejected; the Gentiles, who did not have the privileges the Jews had, were received! The reason is because the Jews tried to attain righteousness by works, while the Gentiles received righteousness by faith through the grace of God.

The Jews stumbled over a crucified Messiah (Isa 8:14; 28:16; Mt 21:42; 1 Cor 1:23; 1 Pet 2:6-8). They wanted a Messiah who would lead the nation to political freedom and glory; they could not believe in a crucified Christ. Paul’s purpose in this chapter is to explain Israel’s position in the plan of God. Israel was an elect nation, given privileges that no other nation had; yet it failed miserably to follow God’s program of blessing for the world.

This entire chapter exalts the sovereign grace of God without minimizing the responsibility of men and women for making right decisions. God’s Word will prevail regardless of human disobedience; but disobedient sinners will miss the blessing. No human mind can fathom the wisdom of God, yet without the sovereign grace of God, there would be no salvation (Rom 11:33-36).

④ If Israel had assurances, how did they fail? Can we? (let’s talk about Inheritance).

The Rights of the First Born: The “Person of Special Privilege,” he received a double portion and held a pre-eminent position over his brothers. He was destined to be the priest of the family. The rights of the firstborn could be transferred, forfeited, or lost. Yet, his son-ship could not be lost.

Inheritance means a reward for a life of faithfulness. Inheritance is not automatic... It involves the Father’s choice. This verb is used 4X in Hebrews: 1:4; 1:14; 6:12; 12:17. The inheritance rights of the firstborn can be lost, in both the OT and the NT. Inheritance can be forfeited because of disobedience (as in the case of Esau; Heb 12:17) and it is only obtained by persevering—“faith and patience” (Heb 6:12).

There are at least two kinds of inheritance in Old Testament:

- † There are portions of your inheritance you cannot lose. You will always be a son, therefore an heir, but not necessarily a “joint heir” (firstborn status).
- † Being an heir is unconditional. Being a “joint heir” is conditioned upon perseverance.

Are we all going to be joint heirs with Christ? Only if we “suffer with Him” (Rom 8:17). If you are saved, you are guaranteed entry into heaven. Justification is a free gift of God; we did nothing to earn it. But entry is not ownership. I can give you access to my home, but that does not give you the right to rearrange my furniture. There’s a difference between entry into heaven and your role once you get there.

For centuries the theologians have fought the wrong battle: Calvinism vs. Arminianism—“Once saved always saved” vs. conditional salvation. The problem is the difference between justification (entrance) and sanctification (for inheritance).

We need to understand the Metachoi (“Partakers”). They are the select ones, the “joint-heirs” with Christ (2 Tim 2:11-13 Heb). You and I can also be disqualified from the prize (2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 9:27; 1 Jn 2:28). Our final exam has been scheduled... on the basis of what we have done...

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 2 Corinthians 5:10

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. 1 Corinthians 9:26, 27

Paul was worried about “being a castaway”?! Why?

And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. 1 John 2:28

Jesus achieved His inheritance by perseverance in suffering (Heb 2:10,11; Phil 2:9-11). His companions (“Partakers”: Greek metochoi) will inherit the same way.

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Romans 8:17

Perseverance of the Saints

And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Hebrews 6:11, 12

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; Hebrews 3:4

Partakers are those who share in, companions, comrades; partners (in a work, office, or dignity). All Christians will be in the kingdom, but not all will be co-heirs there.

Next Session: Romans Chapter 10: Israel Today;