

I. Introduction and Review.

- A. Romans 9 proclaims the sovereign electing purpose of God.**
1. Paul passionately longs for the salvation of lost Israel. v. 1-5
 2. God's plan for Israel has not failed. v. 6-13
 - a. He is saving the true Israel within ethnic Israel. (2 circles)
 - b. Isaac and Jacob are examples of Divine election.
 3. Paul defends God's sovereign justice in election. v. 14-23
 - a. Is God unjust to choose some above others? v. 14-18
 - b. How can God blame men who are unable to resist His will? v. 19-23
- B. Paul presents a God centered view of God and man.**
1. God alone is absolutely free. He does whatever pleases Him.
 2. He is not dependent upon man's will to accomplish His purposes.
 3. The glory of God is the highest purpose of every creature and event.
- C. Many are disturbed by these truths. II Pe. 3:15-16**

II. Is God unjust to choose some and reject others? v. 14-18

- A. Why would this question be raised? v. 14a**
1. To the natural man it seems unfair for God to favor some over others. v. 10-13
 2. Such questions could only be provoked if Paul is teaching God's sovereign grace.
- B. Notice how Paul responds to this question. v. 14b**
1. Paul doesn't back off or claim that he has been misunderstood. Instead he presses further with the implications of God's freedom. v. 15-18
 2. Paul upholds the perfect justice of God. v. 14b
 3. Paul quotes Scripture which affirms God's sovereignty on every page.
- C. God sovereignly bestows mercy, apart from human merit or effort. v. 15-16 Ex. 33:19**
1. It is crucial to address this question in terms of mercy, not justice! v. 15a
 - a. If justice (merit) were the only issue, none would be saved. 3:10f,23 5:12
 - b. For most, human depravity, not divine election is the critical concern.
 2. God is free to show mercy to unworthy sinners as He pleases. v. 15b
 3. Salvation depends, not upon man's efforts, but solely upon God's mercy. v. 16
Jonah 2:9 John 6:44
 - a. The difference between the saved and the lost has absolutely nothing to do with anything in man. v. 16a 3:10f 8:7-8 I Co. 2:14 Eph. 2:1f *Including faith.*
 - b. Human efforts are the result, not the cause, of God's mercy in salvation. v. 16b John 1:12-13 Phil. 2:12-13 I John 4:19 Eph. 2:5,8-9 I Co. 9:24-26
 - c. This is contrary to every other religion, including many forms of *Christianity.*
- D. God also is sovereign in hardening those He rejects (reprobation). v. 17-18**
1. God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Ex. 4:21 7:3 9:12 10:1 Ro. 1:24,26,28
 - a. Didn't Pharaoh harden his own heart? Ex. 7:13-14 8:15,19,32 9:7
 - b. God did not take an innocent or good man and make him bad.
 - c. Pharaoh is a picture of the unbelieving Jews. v. 6 Is. 6:9f Mt. 13:13f Jo. 12:39f
 2. Pharaoh was elevated and then hardened so that God's power might be more gloriously displayed. v. 17, 22 Josh. 2:9-11 9:9 Ex. 15:1f Ps. 105,106,136
Why didn't God soften Pharaoh's heart? Pr. 21:1
 3. God uses the wicked for His own glory. 8:28 Ge. 50:20 Pr. 16:4 Jude 4 I Pe. 2:7-8
II Sam. 24:1 I Chr. 21:1 Lu. 22:22 I Co. 5:5 Acts 2:22-23 4:27-28
 4. Summary: God is sovereign both in showing mercy and in hardening. v. 18

III. How can men be held responsible, if it is God Who hardens them? v. 19-24

A. Why would this question be raised?

- 1. The natural man thinks it is unfair to blame Pharaoh if he is simply fulfilling God's sovereign purpose.**
- 2. The objector understands what Paul is saying, but has drawn a false conclusion.**
- 3. Again, Paul doesn't claim the objector has misunderstood his statement that God hardens the reprobate.**

B. God's right: Who are you to challenge Almighty God?! v. 20-21

- 1. Your question itself is out of order. v. 20a**
- 2. Remember your place! The creature has no right to charge the Creator. v. 20b**
- 3. God's ways are beyond your comprehension. 11:33-36 Isa. 55:8-9 Deut. 29:29**
- 4. God has the right to do as He pleases with sinful men. v. 21 II Ti. 2:20**

C. God's reason: God is glorified both through His mercy and His wrath. v. 22-23

- 1. God is glorified in the destruction of the wicked. v. 22 II Th. 1:6-10 Mt. 25:41f**
 - a. This answers the question of why many in ethnic Israel don't believe. v. 6**
 - b. This also touches upon the question of why God allows evil in His universe.**
- 2. God is also glorified by showing mercy to unworthy sinners. v. 23 8:29-30 Eph. 1:4f II Ti. 1:9 John 6:37**
 - a. According to His eternal purpose, He has called people from among both Jews and Gentiles to be trophies of His great grace and mercy. v. 24**
 - b. The display of God's wrath helps us to better appreciate His mercy to us.**

IV. Concluding applications.

A. Whether men receive mercy or not depends solely upon God's sovereign will.

B. Don't draw faulty conclusions from the truth of God's absolute sovereignty.

- 1. God is just and good. Js. 1:13**
- 2. Men are fully responsible for their sins.**
- 3. God is merciful. Ezek. 18:23,32 33:11 Ex. 34:6 II Pe. 3:9**
- 4. The gospel is freely offered to all. Acts 17:30**
- 5. All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. Acts 16:30-31**
- 6. Prayer for and evangelism of the lost are meaningful. I Th. 5:17 I Co. 15:10**
- 7. Evangelism always accomplishes God's purposes. Isa. 55:11 II Co. 2:14-17**

C. Don't expect to fully comprehend these truths. Deut. 29:29

D. Humble yourself before Almighty God. Isa. 6 Job 42 Ex. 3:1f Ecc. 5:2 I Co. 1:31

Discussion questions for family worship.

1. What should you do when you read something in the Bible which goes against your present ideas about God?

2. Why is it just for God to choose some and not others? v. 14

3. On what basis does God choose some and not others? v. 15-16

4. What was God's purpose in the life of Pharaoh? v. 17-18

5. How can Pharaoh be blamed if he was under God's control? v. 19

6. What should your attitude towards God be? v. 20

7. How is God like a potter with us being the clay? v. 21

8. How is God glorified through those who are destroyed? v.22

9. How is God glorified through those who are saved? v. 23

10. In what sense is God Alone absolutely free?

11. True or false:

a. Because God is sovereign in election, there is no point to our praying or evangelizing.

b. God gladly saves all who call upon Him for mercy.