

d) Proof supported from God's Purpose (9:22-23)

(1) Purpose #1: To make his Wrath and Power Known.

- God's patience here may allow time for more to respond to his grace, or enable a greater display of his wrath and power, or both.

"God's awful majesty, his authority and dreadful greatness, justice, and holiness... would not shine forth as the [other parts of divine glory] do, and also the glory of his goodness, love, and holiness would be faint without them... There would be no manifestation of God's grace or true goodness, if there was no sin to be pardoned, no misery to be saved from. No matter how much happiness he might bestow, his goodness would not be nearly as highly prized and admired.... So evil is necessary if the glory of God is to be perfectly and completely displayed." ~ J. Edwards

(2) Purpose #2: To make the Riches of His Glory Known to the Objects of His Mercy.

- "Prepared beforehand" refers to the same thing "predestine" does (8:29): "a decision of God in eternity past to bestow his mercy..."
- Primary aim is to display his mercy against the backdrop of wrath.

"Thus to show the full range of His glory God prepares beforehand not only vessels of mercy but also vessels of wrath, in order that the riches of His glory in connection with the vessels of mercy might thereby become more clearly manifest." ~ Daniel Fuller

Schedule:

- Mar 16 – Finish chapter 9, and start chapter 10.

Previous Handouts

- Online: www.theheightschurchmn.org/adult-sunday-school

Credits:

Main sources for outline and shared quotes are:

- *Epistle to The Romans (NICNT)* by Douglas Moo [Eerdmans, 1996]
- *Romans (IVPNTC)* by Grant Osborne [IVP, 2004]
- *The Justification of God: An Exegetical & Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23* by John Piper [Baker, 1993, 2nd edition]
- *Teaching Romans, Volume Two: Unlocking Romans 9-16 for the Bible Teacher* by Christopher Ash [Christian Focus, 2009]

IV. The Defense of the Gospel: The Problem of Israel (9:1-11:36)

A. Introduction: Tension with God's Promises & Israel's Plight (9:1-5)

1. Israel's plight (9:1-3)
2. Israel's privileges (9:4-5)
3. Christ as the True Israel (9:4-5)

B. Defining the Promise (1): God's Sovereign Election (9:6-29)

1. The Israel within Israel (9:6-13)

a) Thesis stated (9:6a)

- "The word of God" is broad and applies to all the privileges and promises in vv. 4-5.
- The opposite of God's word falling is seen in v. 11 "that God's purpose of election might continue [or, remain]"

b) Foundation proof statement (9:6b)

- Not all who are of Israel – these are not [true, spiritual] Israel.
- Recalls Rom. 2:28-29; Rom. 4:11-12.
- Paul focuses here on distinctions within Israel.

c) Proof supported from Isaac and Ishmael: the priority of God's promise (9:7-9)

- This proof and the next are supported by two quotations from the Old Testament.
- Merely being "[seed] of Abraham" does not make one a child.
- 1st Quote: Gen. 21:12 "In Isaac, shall your [seed] be [called]"
 - Called likely hearkens back to Rom. 8:28, 30 and 4:17.
- "This means that" (V. 8a) clarifies and points back to v. 6b.
- 2nd quote: Gen. 18:10,14 looks back to the promise that was made.

d) Proof supported from Jacob and Esau: the priority of God's choice (9:10-13)

- next pair of brothers come from one man and woman – no racial distinctions.
- The electing purpose was declared before either boy was born, and before they could do anything good or bad.
 - The point is that election is not based on works but on God who calls. (Rules out election based on foreknown faith.)
- 1st Quote: "The older shall serve the younger" – Gen. 25:23

- 2nd Quote: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” – Mal. 1:2b-3a
 - Both of these quotes have “nations” in view in the OT context.
 - Paul finds a principle in how God elects & applies it to his day: the problem of a majority of individual Israelites being lost.
 - The context of Rom. 9 (with Paul’s distress over his brother’s destiny in 9:1-5) rules out the idea that eternal destinies of individuals are not in view.
 - If the answer to the problem was God’s corporately elects nations, that would not really help address the objection.
 - This is reinforced by the sharp response from the objector to just this point – vs. 14 – *Is this unjust of God? Is this fair?* Paul will answer this in the following verses.

2. Objections Answered: God’s Freedom and Purpose (9:14-23)

“These questions state the inevitable human response to an insistence on the sovereignty of God in salvation.” ~ Douglas Moo

b) Objection stated (9:14) - Does God’s choice to reject all Israel, in favor of some (and even of Gentiles), based on his choice only, does that make God unrighteous (or unfair)?

- What does Paul’s opponent mean by “unrighteous”
 - Not right by a neutral standard (not fair)
 - Not faithful to God’s covenant promises (unfaithful)
- Paul focuses on righteousness as “faithfulness to God’s own person and character” – being true to God’s desire to magnify his glory.

c) Proof supported from God’s self-revelation to Moses: God’s Righteousness in Dispensing Mercy & Punishment (9:15-16)

- How does the quote from Ex. 34:7 respond to the objection?
 - By showing how God’s name and glory is tied up in His freedom to show mercy on some and harden others.

“It is the glory of God and his essential nature mainly to dispense mercy (but also wrath) on whomever he pleases, apart from any constraint originating outside his own will.” ~ John Piper

- Literally it depends not on “him that wills nor of him who runs”.

- What depends not on human will or effort but on God’s mercy (alone) is “God’s bestowal of mercy” (his choice to give mercy).
- d) Proof supported from the raising up of Pharaoh: the principle of God-glorifying hardening (9:17-18)**
- The purpose behind God’s hardening of Pharaoh is stressed from the quote of Exodus 9:16: it was to provide a more dramatic display of God’s power and glory.
- “Hardening” does relate to individual salvation, in context here.
- God predicted that He would harden Pharaoh’s heart – (Ex. 4:21, 7:3); then Pharaoh’s heart “was hardened” (Ex. 7:13 and several other places). Pharaoh hardens his own heart, and God explicitly hardens it. The narrative connects all the hardening to God’s actions and intentions ultimately. Yet Pharaoh is held responsible.

“Hardening ... is an action that renders a person insensitive to God and his word... that, if not reversed, culminates in eternal damnation.” ~ Doug Moo

“We [must] maintain side-by-side the complementary truths that (1) God hardens whomever he chooses; (2) human beings, because of sin, are responsible for their ultimate condemnation....” ~ Doug Moo

e) Another objection stated (9:19)

- This objection seems so natural to us. If God hardens whomever he wants, how can God truly find anyone at fault – since no one can successfully resist God’s will?
- We testify to the rightness of our interpretation of Rom. 9, since we provide the same objection at the same point as Paul’s hearers.

“Paul never offers... a ‘logical’ solution to the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility that he creates.” ~ Doug Moo

f) Proof supported from God as Creator: the principle of the potter’s freedom (9:20-21) [loose quote from Is. 29:16]

“God is our creator and as such has as much right to make of us what he wills as a potter has over his clay to make from the same lump a vessel for honor and a vessel for dishonor (9:21). We have no right to dispute with God our maker. Yet Paul does not stop with a reprimand, for man is not asked to submit to God’s sovereignty without seeing some justification for why he does what he does.” ~ John Piper