

## Romans Chapter 9: (1 - 29)

Romans 9:

**1** I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—

**2** that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

**3** For 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.

If God is so faithful and Paul does not say this out of pride that he is a Christian and they are not. He says this in agony because this is his countryman, he loves them, he rather be cursed and not have salvation for their sake. What happened to the Jews? They had God's promises, can God be trusted. If Jews are the evidence of God's promise then finish for us because did not get salvation. So he needs to explain that to them, otherwise God's word does not count. So you have got gentiles embracing the Messiah and God's promises and you have got Jews rejecting him and his promises, the implications for all of us.

### Privileges of Israel

**4** They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

**5** To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

These privileges are theirs, it is unmistakable. In Romans chapter 2 we looked that they were chosen people, they have law of God, they boast in God, they prove His will and yet they are in darkness. It is not as if the word of God has failed, the answer is not all Israel is true Israel.

**6** But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,

**7** and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."

Abraham had two sons, so it does not mean that all his sons are going to be genetically given the promises. They are not going to inherit the covenant. So basically it is not by transmission genetically, it is actually through a promise that God chooses. So there is an example, Ishmael did not get it, Isaac got it.

**8** This 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.

**9** For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son."

It is very clear that physical inheritance is not going to be the transmission of the covenant. It is always based on a promise. So God sovereignly elects

**10** And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac,

**11** though 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—

**12** she was told, "The older will serve the younger."

**13** As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Why God choose Jacob and not Esau? Does God hate Esau even when he is not born? The word hate is an Hebrew idiom. Jesus Christ says, you must hate your mother, brother and sister, so basically it is a relative term where we say you love God so much that your love for your family is like hate. So basically it is saying I have chosen one, I have not chosen the other. So here the evidence of sovereign election is that God chooses one over another and he uses this idea of Esau rather than Jacob to tell us that when we are a fetus inside our mother's womb basically one is chosen and one is rejected. There is no human input, He does not choose them on their outlooks, and it is basically no human merit at all.

**Does it mean He predestined someone to hell and predestined someone to heaven?**

**14** What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!

**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."

How does mercy come into it?

God chooses not based on merit, but we criticize God that he is unfair and then God answers us it is built to mercy. So what sense does it make? In Exodus 33 Moses wants God to show him His glory and God only shows him His backside, God does not comply completely. Because if God shows Moses completely everything He will die. So He will have mercy on whomever He will have mercy. So the issue here is mercy. So God has mercy on one and God does not have mercy on this one, so He left the natural justice. So basically you are chosen reprobate to the fact that this is one who is chosen is saved, this one is left to what he actually deserves. The decree and fulfillment of action provides mercy for the elect while the efficacy of reprobation provides justice for the reprobate. When God pardon someone they are all bad. They show no evidence of any growth or any potential but there is nothing of human merit. So the principle is God's characteristic and divine freedom to bestow mercy on whoever he chooses, a divine right.

**17** For 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."

**18** So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

God hardened the heart of Pharaoh and that is why 10 plagues came and in the end Israel is saved mightily. God can save Israel after one plague but instead there were 10 plagues. But God wants to show his power to Pharaoh and proclaim. Hardened means make spiritually insensitive. It is a sovereign act of God upon sinners already deserving death and it maintains them in the already state of sin, he does not call spiritual insensitivity in innocent person. Pharaoh is not an innocent person; it does not go to innocent person and cause him to sin. It goes to person who is already a sinner and hardens his heart. An example is

**Romans 1:24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,**

So therefore they are already dishonoring themselves and so what God does is that, for example the judgment is now coming upon the world, “you look at America, 30 states have already allowed same sex marriage. Look at Australia, they just reelected Malcolm Turnbull. First thing he is going to do is hold the plebiscite, 60% of Australian public want to have same sex marriages, so therefore God allows Australian people to harden their heart, given them more power and more power they have they will destroy themselves. Hardening means God giving you what you want and you give them enough rope they will hang themselves and that is how the civilization will crash. Look at the Roman Empire, all civilizations will rise and then they will fall. It is the history of the mankind that no civilization will last forever. So further you move away, so God hardens them. It is a progressive part process where he moves the restraints of common grace. Pharaoh, Hitler, Kim Jong-Un; every single one of them had their hearts hardened by God, by God giving them more power. Through that hardening process God is going to bring glory, instead of one plague there are 10 plagues and God’s people are saved miraculously through 10 plagues and God’s glory is shown.

Hardening occurs in the context of sinners already rebelling against God, God does not directly infuse unbelief. The highest purpose in the universe is to glorify God. God’s negative action also provides a positive purpose, the demonstration of God’s power. We live in an era and a time now where we are so human centric. Everything we see, we see it from the perspective of men. So whatever does not fit into your ego is not fair. You never see actually the Romans tells you that the world should be seen in God’s eyes, God’s perspective, it is His glory, His power that is most important thing but not you. You see the trouble is our level of man, our view of man is so high that God becomes low. So Romans tries to re-fix your world view that the real world view you should have is God’s world view, because He is the only one that matters.

There is an objection, if that is the case how can man be held accountable

**19 You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?"**

So if God is so powerful and He is so sovereign then why does He punish us? How does Paul answer this question? He uses potter and clay analogy.

**20 But 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?"**

**21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?**

He is actually changing our world view. This world is under control of one God and if God decides what He wants to make with the clay. So the creator has absolute right to determine the future of creature.

**22** What if 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?

Paul is saying here that God intervenes and elects, so there are two vessels, one for glory and mercy, one prepared for destruction. The original meaning is these vessels of wrath are preparing for themselves destruction. Vessels of mercy is an active participle which means God is directly intervening. The other one God letting them do whatever they got to do to, which means in order to make known the riches of His glory for the vessels of mercy. The vessels of mercy are the Christians.

Why did God made human beings whom he plan to punish?

So basically God defers his immediate judgment by vessels of wrath, so that he can unveil the full extent of His power and wrath on those who continually resist his offer of repentance, His extenuates mercy on those who are saved. If we look at the way salvation goes, all of us deserve death and destruction and if we look at Pharaoh, the 10 plagues are nasty, he dies a horrible death but the Israelites received mercy. It actually extenuates the grace that we actually receive and feel and the gratitude that we have in our life and that makes this glory great. God is basically painting a contrast, and the darker the contrast is the more grateful we will feel and his glory is magnified. That is what Paul is saying but the unfortunate situation here is that there are some vessels of wrath, sinners, who are painting themselves into destruction but the end result God looks good.

T. Schreiner said,

*Thereby God displays the full range of his attributes: both his powerful wrath and the sunshine of his mercy. The mercy of God would not be impressed on the consciousness of human beings apart from the exercise of wrath just as one delights more richly and warmly, beauty and tenderness of the spring after one experience the cold blast of winter.*

So God uses human beings who are sinners in that way. So the highest purpose is to God's negative action also serve a positive purpose demonstration of his power. The last one is a church.

**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?

So therefore we are the church of Jesus Christ. God's ultimate plan is a passage in Hosea that talks about, it has been retranslated to inclusion of the gentiles,

Here is from Isaiah, the remnant of Israel the saved.

### **Philosophical ISSUES**

1. There are people who do not interpret the scriptures this way. Reason why? They cannot accept the fact that if you say God is so sovereign He chooses people even before they are born, it implies there is no free will. It cannot be like that. So therefore they will look at Romans 9 and say basically about election of nations not individual. So when you say Jacob is chosen, he was predestined to be covenant people. He is not chosen to be Israel, it did not talk about salvation, it just talks about being chosen to be Israel and being chosen not to be Israel, had nothing to do about personal salvation.

As far as God is concerned he can predestine a group of people called the church. As far as free will is concerned, individuals have free will but the whole group does not. The logic is that. For example God has to predestine for example Hitler. One man has impacted the entire course of history. So how we are going to say, the individual has free will but the entire nation does not have?

**Ephesians 1:**

**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,**

**4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love**

**5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,**

Here it is very specific. It is us who are individuals. So we cannot translate all of those passages about predestination into corporate, it has to apply to the individuals. That is where the alternative interpretation falls down.

2. Left unresolved with this idea of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. We need to look at the word of God and see what God writes in the Bible and then see what we can make sense of.

The whole idea is God's sovereignty because there will be predestination, free man's will. God is not so slow to fulfill his promise as some counts slowness but is patient towards you not wishing anyone should perish. So here God stated desires that everyone should be saved.

- i. He loves us all.
- ii. God is sovereign.

**Proverbs 16:33** The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

God knows everything what we eat, what we plan. No sparrow falls without Him even knowing about it that is the extent of his sovereignty.

**Pro 21:1** The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.

A prime minister is not in-charge of the country, the Lord gives him authority to rule, God controls it.

**Psalm 139:16** Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Nebuchadnezzar lost his mind and then he regains his mind in the field. He cannot oppose God.

**Lamentations 3:37** Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it?

**38** Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?

**39** Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins?

**Act 13:48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

It means after preaching the gospel in a city those who are appointed to eternal life were saved. Those who were not appointed for eternal life were not saved. The sovereignty of God is important in evangelism.

**John 6:35** Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

**36** But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.

**37** All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

Both free will and predestination are here. That means those who actually will come to Jesus are the ones that the father will give me.

**John 6:44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

**John 12:32** And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

So basically nobody comes to Jesus unless Father God draws them. The sovereignty of God applies to our salvation, whether you are saved or not.

3. Lord has made everything for His purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble. God has even made the wicked for the day of trouble.

Deuteronomy 32:39 "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

God is in charge of everything.

Isa 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me,

6 that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other.

7 I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things.

So it means that God is responsible for all the earthquakes. Now if we have to balance this

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

As it is a religious text so we need to see from two views, the cockpit view and the street view. On the street view God tells you, you choose me, in the cockpit view he already choose you. When we read in John, he is moving in and out of cockpit view and street view. That is the only way these two views can cohere. This is the predestination where the God is sovereign in the cockpit view when you go behind the scenes. In street view you have free will, Pharaoh sins directly against God. Now how does all this work out, how do we make the two things work out, whether you got free will and you have got predestination. There are several philosophers to try to work things out, one of them is famous philosopher from Cambridge called Alvin Plantinga, his view is called Molinism or Middle Knowledge, which means God in any event knows counterfactual. So middle knowledge is that God knows in any given situation what you will do under 5-6 different conditions and he arranges things so that you get to decide on your own, but actually He is pulling the strings behind. So that is called Middle Knowledge. The problem with Middle Knowledge is that you got various outcomes and it would seem as if God has given the set of cards, he has dealt with set of cards and he cannot control those cards. So that does not make him very strong either. So that is a criticism against that view. Another view is that predestination is like this, we have free will like a gold fish in an aquarium and God is like the man who holds the full goldfish bowl and He takes the goldfish bowl and put it on other side. Within the goldfish bowl you can swim and do whatever you want, you can share, you can eat, you can jump, you can do whatever you want but it is free

will, but God will determine where you are going to be. So that is another way of which we can actually put these things together.

John Calvin took his theory of Calvinism from Augustine. We can either highlight two things: God sovereignty or man free will.

So if you are a Calvinist you would believe that God sovereignty is so powerful that the Holy Spirit touches man and converts him so that he can open his eyes and see who Jesus Christ is, accepts him as Lord and savior and he gets saved. Jacob Arminius takes the opposite view that God is sovereign, He provides Jesus on the cross. What Jesus cross does as it allows every single man on the face of the earth, changes him to a neutral color. That means you have enough free will. Arminians will say Jesus Christ died for the whole world, well the Calvinist say he only died to save limited atonement, only the Christians. The Arminians will say when he died on the cross; every single person in the world had free will. This doctrine is not in scripture, it is just infer. So Arminian favor man's responsibility, Calvinism favors God sovereignty.

Dual predestination or hyper Calvinism. It says that God predestined Esau to go to hell and then predestined Jacob to go to heaven. There is no bible verse that tells us that God has predestined from the beginning to time, Hitler to be born and to burn in hell. There are bible verses that tell us that from the beginning of time we are chosen to be holy and blameless and to enjoy heaven with God, but you don't have a reciprocal verse that tells you that human beings are chosen to be condemned and lost in hell. So therefore the hyper Calvinist or the people who people in double predestination basically logically infer.

What about God and evil?

We will do case study of Joseph and Jesus. Joseph was thrown into the well and then he was taken away as slave and later on he became the Prime Minister of Egypt and he saved his people. His brother threw him down and one day he confronted them and this is what he said,

Genesis 45:

**5** And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

**6** For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest.

**7** And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.

**8** So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Joseph's brother meant it for evil, God meant it for God, same action but different motive. God allowed the evil brothers to do it but God brought a good purpose out of that in the end.

Jesus Christ

Acts 2:23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

**Isaiah 53:10** Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

It was God's plan all along to crush Jesus.

Act 4:27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

Act 4:28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

So when Jesus Christ hung on the cross, Herod and Pontius Pilate were only carrying what God has planned in the first place for them to do. So we actually have two motives of the action whether in Joseph or in Jesus Christ, God and man. Two motives, same action. The compatibilist view which is a view I take is that both men and God if you are doing something good, God takes credit directly. If you are doing something bad God passively allows and controls but man bears responsibility. That is the only way you can bring the two views and this is what the scripture paints. Scripture does not paint God directly responsible for the evil aside from him causing calamity of which good can come out of it. So therefore scripture always paints God as asymmetrically, scripture puts God safely away at arm's length from evil. That man is more responsible for evil.

Abraham argued with God right up to 10 people and somehow at the end of 10 persons Abraham never got the opportunity to lower it down and God walks away. He does not find out exactly how many righteous man can save the whole city, may be there weren't enough and it is left intention. So here Abraham is scratching his head, how many would it take to save the city. He never knows. He is left with this tension and then he has to watch in a distance and he realizes God destroys Sodom and Gomorrah but He saves Lot and his two children. He has to live with that tension. Same thing is "shall not the judge of all the earth do what is right".

Job suffered so badly he lost his 10 children, lost all his money and all his wealth and all his ships and he asked God, "Why". At the end God asked him questions which he was not able to answer. God never answered his question why he was suffering, all God did was show himself, he is the creator of all good. He is the king. He is the creator God and then Job had no words to say.

We have the majesty of God's sovereignty, we have free will which He gives us and how the two cohere we are never going to know because God is not going to tell us.

God could have easily Job that I was testing you to make sure that you really love me for whom I am rather than for all the things I give you, which he stated in Job chapter 2. God basically wants Job to live with the tension to love and trust God for the magnificent God that he is and the same applies to us that we are left with this unresolved thing, the only thing we can resolve is the nature of God and the most important thing that meets us resolve this tension is on the cross. If we say God is so sovereign, He is so unfair, He does not give me free will and He condemns people, you just look at the cross. When you look at the cross you will see the justice of God, you will see the love of God and we will keep our mouth shut. It is very hard to condemn God for being unjust but He himself comes and suffers from the wretched horrible experience.

God leaves that emptiness just like Abraham was left with 10 but didn't go any further, so that the cross can fill that space. The cross will tell in your heart, how free will and predestination fits together.