

ROMANS

KNOW THE TRUTH

July 14, 2024

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SERMON: The Sovereignty of God

SCRIPTURE: Romans 9

SUMMARY: The first 8 chapters of Romans address Sin, Salvation and Sanctification. In chapters 9-11, Paul inserts a discussion of Israel's past, present and future in relation to God's Sovereignty. Chapter 9 beautifully and powerfully illustrates the sovereignty of God in His grace and mercy. This chapter can be challenging, but it provides a helpful look at God's sovereign will and His purpose in election. Paul helps us see and understand God's sovereignty and ultimately what it means for all people.

In Chapter 9, Paul explains that salvation is not a function of lineage or merit but of God's merciful election, God's sovereignty, which is mediated by His Justice and mercy. Holman's New Testament Commentary, p. 277.

God decides who receives *grace* and who does not.

God decides who receives *mercy* and who does not.

Grace is receiving what we do not deserve.

Mercy is not receiving what we do deserve.

I. PAUL'S BROKEN HEART (VERSES 1-5).

Paul wants everyone, including his Israelite brothers and sisters, to be saved. Reality is that he knows many of them are not saved.

Human side of salvation verses 1-3

Divine side of salvation verses 4-5

ROMANS 9:1-5

1 With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it. **2** My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief **3** for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them. **4** They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God’s adopted children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his wonderful promises. **5** Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned. And he is God, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

The past of Israel is consistent with the Gospel. *Holman New Testament Commentary*, p. 277.

II. GOD’S SOVEREIGN WILL (VERSES 6-17).

Paul knows that only children of the promise are true children of Abraham.

ROMANS 9:6-17

6 Well then, has God failed to fulfill his promise to Israel? No, for not all who are born into the nation of Israel are truly members of God’s people! **7** Being descendants of Abraham doesn’t make them truly Abraham’s children. For the Scriptures say, “Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted,” though Abraham had other children, too. **8** This means that Abraham’s physical descendants are not necessarily children of God. Only the children of the promise are considered to be Abraham’s children. **9** For God had promised, “I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

10 This son was our ancestor Isaac. When he married Rebekah, she gave birth to twins. **11** But before they were born, before they had done anything good or bad, she received a message from God. (This message shows that God chooses people according to his own purposes; **12** he calls people, but not according to their good or bad works.) She was told, “Your older son will serve your younger son.” **13** In the words of the Scriptures, “I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau.”

14 Are we saying, then, that God was unfair? Of course not! **15** For God said to Moses, “I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.”

16 So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it nor work for it.
17 For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, “I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you and to spread my fame throughout the earth.”

III. WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF YOUR HEART?

ROMANS 9:18-29

18 So you see, God chooses to show mercy to some, and he chooses to harden the hearts of others so they refuse to listen.

19 Well then, you might say, “Why does God blame people for not responding? Haven’t they simply done what he makes them do?”

20 No, don’t say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to argue with God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who created it, “Why have you made me like this?” **21** When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn’t he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into? **22** In the same way, even though God has the right to show his anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his anger falls, who are destined for destruction. **23** He does this to make the riches of his glory shine even brighter on those to whom he shows mercy, who were prepared in advance for glory. **24** And we are among those whom he selected, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles.

25 Concerning the Gentiles, God says in the prophecy of Hosea,
“Those who were not my people,
I will now call my people.
And I will love those
whom I did not love before.”

26 And,
“Then, at the place where they were told,
‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called
‘children of the living God.’”

27 And concerning Israel, Isaiah the prophet cried out,
“Though the people of Israel are as numerous as the sand of the seashore,
only a remnant will be saved.

28 For the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth
quickly and with finality.”

29 And Isaiah said the same thing in another place:
“If the Lord of Heaven’s Armies
had not spared a few of our children,
we would have been wiped out like Sodom,
destroyed like Gomorrah.”

IV. TRUST THE LORD WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART!

ROMANS 9:30-33

30 What does all this mean? Even though the Gentiles were not trying to follow God's standards, they were made right with God. And it was by faith that this took place.

31 But the people of Israel, who tried so hard to get right with God by keeping the law, never succeeded. **32** Why not? Because **they were trying to get right with God by keeping the law instead of by trusting in him.** They stumbled over the great rock in their path. **33** God warned them of this in the Scriptures when he said,

"I am placing a stone in Jerusalem that makes people stumble,
a rock that makes them fall.

But anyone who trusts in him
will never be disgraced."

LIFE APPLICATION SERMON GUIDE

1. Why does Paul feel great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart? What does this reveal about his feelings toward his fellow Israelites? Verses 1-5
2. What does Paul mean when he says, "not all who are born into the nation of Israel are truly members of God's people!"? How does he distinguish between physical descent and spiritual heritage? Verses 6-9
3. How does Paul use the examples of Isaac and Jacob to illustrate God's purpose in election? What point is he making about God's sovereignty? Verses 10-13
4. How does Paul respond to the potential objection that God is unjust? What does he say about God's mercy? Verses 14-16
5. What does Paul mean when he says God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden? How does the example of Pharaoh illustrate this? Verses 17-18
6. How does Paul address the question of human responsibility in relation to God's sovereignty? What analogy does he use to explain God's authority over creation? Verses 19-21

7. What does Paul say about the purpose of God's wrath and mercy? How does this relate to both Jews and Gentiles? Verses 22-24

8. How does Paul use Hosea's prophecy to support his argument? What does this imply about the inclusion of the Gentiles? Verses 25-26

9. What is the significance of Paul's reference to Isaiah's prophecy about the remnant of Israel? Verses 27-29

10. What contrast does Paul draw between the righteousness pursued by faith and the righteousness pursued by works? How does he explain the stumbling of Israel over the "stumbling stone"? Verses 30-33

11. **PRAY:** Thank the Lord for His grace and mercy in salvation. Ask the Lord to guide and strengthen your complete trust of His sovereign will. Seek the Lord's help as you communicate His truth to others.