

# Romans 9:1-18 “God’s Chosen People”

## pt. 1

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**Thesis:** God chose Israel, but Jews generally rejected Jesus as Messiah, how will this work out? In Romans 9-11 we will discover God’s righteousness and Israel’s restoration.

Here, we see God’s sovereign redemption plan shall be fulfilled. Since God’s promises to Israel are sure, you can be secure in *your* salvation [8:39]. The Bible teaches both the sovereignty of God and the free will of man, “All the Father gives me will come to me (*sovereign*) and the one who comes (*free will*) I will by no means cast out” [Jn.6:37]. The concepts of God’s sovereignty and man’s free will are a paradox, and it appears wise not to overemphasize one to the exclusion of the other. Before seeking to resolve tension, it may be good to remember that we need not reconcile friends - man’s free will and God’s sovereignty are not enemies.

**Subject:** God’s chosen people

**Object:** Come to Christ and be secure in God’s choice

## 1. The problem of Israel's rejection [1-5]: God's desire to see the Jews saved.

*I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, <sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; <sup>5</sup> of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.*

Paul shares his *great sorrow and continual grief* [2]. Despite repeated opposition from Jews, Paul's heart ached for them. Paul's sorrow and sacrifice is the heart of Jesus [Mk. 6:34, Lu. 19:10, Lu. 19:41]. For whom do you sorrow and grieve to be saved? Paul was willing to experience personal **sacrifice** to see others saved [3]. Paul was willing to be *accursed* (i.e. go to hell) [3] so they could be saved. Jesus declared, "Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" [Jn. 15:13].

It makes me consider, what sacrifices am I willing to make to see others saved?

Paul expressed **sympathy** and compassion for their condition. Despite Gods' manifold blessings [4-5] the Jews had rejected their Messiah. In verses 4-5, he notes: they were *Israelites governed by God, the adoption as God chose the Jews to be His own* [Ex. 4:22, Ex. 6:6-7, Dt. 7:6-8], *the glory* as witnesses to the manifestation of God's Presence as a pillar of cloud or fire in wilderness, then filled the tabernacle [Ex. 40:34] and temple [1Ki. 8], *the covenants* or sacred promises to Abraham [Gen. 12,15], David [2Sam. 7], New Testament [Jer.31:34] the *giving of the law* referring to the Mosaic law to guide, direct, reveal and convict. The great privilege of *the service of God* an act of worship. God chose the Patriarchs and Jews so Jesus could come as God in the flesh through a people set-apart to Him to demonstrate the way to God for all [5] *of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.*

Similarly, despite countless blessings, and a rich Christian heritage, many in the United States reject Jesus as Lord and Savior. That dynamic can either move you to compassion or anger. God's heart for His lost people is compassion [Luke 15].

## 2. The promise of Israel's redemption [6-13]: God is faithful.

*6 But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, 7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. 9 For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son." 10 And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."*

God is and will be faithful to fulfill His promises. **Who are the chosen people and why were they chosen?** Israel's rejection of Christ will not void God's promise [6]. Although God is pouring out His grace on the Church, primarily Gentiles, God has not forgotten Israel and He has a plan to reach and restore Israel. The Church does not replace Israel in God's redemptive plan. **The promise is made to Israel, or those governed by**

**God [6]. Not all of Abraham's physical descendants are God's chosen people [7].**

Jesus made clear that Abraham's true children hear God and submit to Him as Abraham did [Jn. 8:33-39]. Those who rejected Jesus were not Abraham's spiritual descendants.

**Isaac and Ishmael were Abraham's offspring but God chose Isaac [7-9].**

Ishmael was the firstborn of Abraham and thus would generally have birthrights or special standing before God; however Abraham's seed or descendants follow Isaac's line, *but, In Isaac your seed shall be called* [7].

Ishmael was the offspring of Abraham and Hagar, and was *of the flesh* [8] or a picture of man's efforts. Ishmael did not regard God's commands.

Isaac was the *child of promise* [8-9], *For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son* [9]. Despite the fact that Abraham and Sarah were well past the age of being able to conceive, God promised a child through Sarah. Thus, Isaac is the child of promise [9, Gen. 21:12], and God views Isaac as Abraham's only son [Gen. 22].

Why did God choose Isaac and not Ishmael? It may relate to God's foreknowledge that Isaac will choose to follow and worship God, while Ishmael's life was dominated by the flesh; and it may simply be that the Sovereign God chose Isaac and not Ishmael.

## Jacob & Esau were Abraham's offspring but God chose Jacob [10-13]

*And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac <sup>11</sup> (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), <sup>12</sup> it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." <sup>13</sup> As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."*

God *elects* or chose Jacob before they were born, thus before either did any good or evil [10-11, Gen. 25:23]. Again, Esau as the firstborn would generally have birthrights or special standing before God, but God foretold that Esau would serve Jacob [12].

Why did God choose Jacob rather than Esau? Perhaps it is related to God's foreknowledge that Jacob will value the blessings of God, while Esau was willing to trade his birthright for a bowl of stew [Gen. 25], or it simply serves the Sovereign God's purpose. He can give His blessing to whomever He chooses. Paul quotes Malachi 1:2-3 in verse 13, "*Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.*" This is a relative term of comparison to show the extent of God's preference for Jacob (i.e. God loves Jacob and Esau, but hates Esau's disregard of God).

### C. The paradox of Israel's redemption [14-18]: God is just.

*14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! 15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." 16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." 18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.*

Does God's decision to choose one and not another make Him unrighteous? [14]. Paul responds, *Certainly not!* [14]. God is just, or always does what is right.

### God has the right to show mercy and compassion as He chooses

**[15-16].** We all deserve God's judgment [Rom. 3:23, 6:23]. *For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." 16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.* The context is Exodus 33 following the golden calf incident. God was prepared to judge the whole assembly who engaged in this idolatry,

but God was merciful and compassionate. Yet, God did judge 3,000 that day. God's mercy is not related to our intentions [*he who wills*] nor actions [*he who runs*] but is related to God's nature to show mercy and compassion, while remaining just.

**God displays mercy, compassion, and authority for His Sovereign purpose [17-18].**

*For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." 18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.*

Why did God choose Moses and not Pharaoh? Moses and Pharaoh were sinners and murderers, both were given authority by God, and both saw miracles. Yet, Moses yielded to God, and Pharaoh refused to yield and God gave Pharaoh his desire. Pharaoh rejected God and God rejected him. God raised up Pharaoh not judge him, but knowing the choices Pharaoh would make, God's power and glory were revealed [17, Ex. 9:16]. Ten times in the Exodus narrative we read that Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and ten times that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. In essence, God gives people over to their own decision.



Come to Christ, grow in Him, and be secure in God's choice. God's promises are effective for those who believe, and the way to know that you were chosen is to believe. "All the Father gives me will come to me *[sovereign]* and the one who comes *[free will]* I will by no means cast out" [Jn.6:37].

### Study Guide Qs

*Q1. For whom do you have a burden to see saved? What sacrifices might you make on their behalf?*

*Q2. Consider an example of how people may struggle to conclude that God is faithful and just regarding who is chosen or saved. How might you respond?*

*Q3. What are two or three promises of God that comfort you in this season? Write out the verses below.*

*Q4. How does God's faithfulness impact your comfort regarding His promises? And how does your belief or unbelief impact your sense of hope?*

## Digging Deeper

1. Here is a helpful read on the Jews as God's chosen people: [https://  
www.gotquestions.org/Gods-chosen-people.html](https://www.gotquestions.org/Gods-chosen-people.html)
2. Here is an illuminating article on the elect of God: [https://  
www.gotquestions.org/elect-of-God.html](https://www.gotquestions.org/elect-of-God.html)