

# Romans 9:19-33 “God’s Chosen People” Part 2

## Pastor Bruce Zachary

**Thesis:** My dad was an observant Jew, who practiced our religion faithfully, but who likely never received Jesus as the Messiah (Christ). If that is so, he will likely be separated from God eternally. On the other hand, someone who lived their life apart from God, and at the end submitted to Jesus and His gospel is going to be in heaven. Is God unfair in who is chosen?

The theology of Jesus’ gospel, and who will be saved is never simply an intellectual issue. There is an emotional and spiritual layer to be navigated to get to a healthy destination. Let’s discover insights about God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility to help produce a healthy understanding of this tension so that we and others we influence can better navigate life.

**Subject:** God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility

**Object:** Go to Christ, grow in Christ, and know you’re chosen.

**Context:** God chose the Jews, but Jews rejected Christ as Messiah. Does that rejection void God’s promises to Israel? No! God has not forgotten the Jews and has a plan to restore. The church does not replace Israel. Romans 9-11 reveal God’s plans for Israel while pouring out His love on the Church which is primarily Gentiles.

**6 truths about God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility**

## 1. God's sovereignty does not excuse man's responsibility for choices [19]

*You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"*

One might argue that since God is completely Sovereign, and His will shall be accomplished, how can He find us at fault for our decisions regarding salvation in Christ? Man is truly a freewill moral agent. While Adam's rebellion in the Garden of Eden did not surprise God, it was a real choice. So, the Jews, and each of us, are responsible for rejecting or receiving Jesus. The Bible teaches both God's Sovereignty, and man's freewill (a paradox). Thus, it is not wise to emphasize one to the exclusion of the other.

## 2. God has the right to exercise authority over His creation [20-21]

*But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?*

Just as the potter has the right to form the clay as He chooses, God has the right to exercise authority as He chooses over His Creation [20, Jer. 18:1-6]. From the same lump of clay, a potter can make a beautiful vase, or utilitarian ashtray [21]. **"O Lord, you are our Father: we are clay, and you are our potter, and we are the work of your hand" [Is. 64:8].**

In John 9, the disciples encountered a blind man, and wondered whether his blindness was related to his sin or his parents. Jesus explained neither, but to display God's glory. Then Jesus restored his

vision, and the man received Jesus and eternal salvation. So, what at first appeared to be a burden was later a blessing and honor as part of God's plan. I'm in no position to question God's choices. Furthermore, I don't need to worry about God's choices, because He proved His love at the cross, and the perfection of His redemption plan.

**3. God has the right to judge, but shows mercy [22-23]** *What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup> and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory.*

God never condemns people who deserve salvation. God endures *with much longsuffering* or great patience those who deserve judgement [Rom. 3:23, 6:23]. God has every right to judge, but is patient even with those who have rejected, and will reject Him [22]. **God has not delayed judgment because He's a slacker, but because He doesn't want any to perish, but all to come to repentance [2Peter 3:9].** God's mercy is magnified when people who deserve God's judgment receive forgiveness and eternal life [23].

**4. God has the right to show mercy to Jews and Gentiles alike [24-26]**

*Even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup> As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved."<sup>26</sup> "And it*

*shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."*

The Church is comprised of Jews and Gentiles [24]. Both receive grace to show God's mercy.

In the Old Testament, Gentiles needed to convert to Judaism to enter a covenant relationship with God. Thus, Jews might object to God's mercy to Gentiles. However, in the New Testament (Covenant), Jews and Gentiles alike receive God's mercy on the same terms.

God's plan to love those who were previously outside of His covenant (Gentiles) was hinted through the Old Testament prophet Hosea. God told Hosea to name his son, Lo Ammi meaning "Not my people" but promised to call those who were not God's, "His people" [25-26, quoting Hosea 2:23, 1:10].

God has the right to offer salvation to people that are a surprise to us.

### **5. God will preserve a remnant of Israel and is faithful as promised [27-29]**

*Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. <sup>28</sup> For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth." <sup>29</sup> And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah."*

Here, Paul quotes Is. 10:22-23. God preserved a remnant from the Assyrian judgment, and will preserve a remnant until Christ returns [27]. Only a remnant was preserved, being Jewish did not guarantee deliverance from Assyria. The preserved remnant is evidence of God's grace and His hope and plan of restoration, God will *finish the work and cut it short in righteousness* [28].

*Unless the LORD of Sabaoth (Lord of Hosts) had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah.*" Unlike Sodom and Gomorrah that were totally destroyed, God has preserved a remnant of the Jewish people, and will be faithful to finish the work of restoring the Jewish people to Himself in righteousness [28].

God has preserved the Jews despite persecution unlike any other people group [cf. Rev. 12]

## **6. God can offer righteousness through faith to whomever he chooses [30-33]**

*What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; <sup>31</sup> but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. <sup>32</sup> Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. <sup>33</sup> As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."*

**You are made right with God through faith in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile [30-33]**

Gentiles, who were previously separated from God, can be right with God through faith in Christ, despite not seeking to be right by the Mosaic law [30]. On the other hand, Jews who tried to be right through performance of commandments apart from Christ did not attain a right standing with God [31]. *Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law* [32]. No one is able to measure up to God's moral perfection [Rom. 3:23, Ac. 15:10].

The Jews *stumbled at that stumbling stone*. <sup>33</sup> *As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense* [32-33] [Is. 28:16; 1Cor. 1:23-24; Ps. 118:22; Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45]. Jesus is the stumbling stone, and His gospel is an offense, because it declares that no one is holy or moral enough to deserve life with God. It offends the proud, self-righteous moralist whether Jew or Gentile [32-33]. Israel was to build upon Jesus, but instead stumbled at His gospel. Similarly, the gospel's exclusivity is an offense, because Jesus declared He is the only way to God [Jn. 14:6].

**You can know that you are chosen and secure in Christ [33]** *And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame*. We either fall upon the Rock (i.e. humble yourself before God), and build upon Christ (Matt. 7:24-27), or the rock falls upon you in judgment. God is Sovereign and offers grace and mercy but you choose whether to submit. All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved [Rom. 10:13].

**Go to Christ, grow in Christ, and know you're chosen.**

## Study Guide Qs

*Q1. Have you or anyone you know ever felt that God was being unfair? What were the circumstances?*

*Q2. What did you learn in this study (or what were you reminded of) that helps you better understand God's Sovereignty and rightness?*

*Q3. What are some ways that Jesus' gospel offends humanity?*

*Q4. What are some ways that Jesus' gospel shows God's amazing love, grace and mercy?*

### Digging Deeper

1. Here is an interesting article on why most Jews reject Jesus as Messiah: [https://](https://www.gotquestions.org/Jews-reject-Jesus.html)

[www.gotquestions.org/Jews-reject-Jesus.html](https://www.gotquestions.org/Jews-reject-Jesus.html)

2. Here is an article providing an overview of the unparalleled persecution of Jews, and by

implication God's remarkable preservation: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution\\_of\\_Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Jews)