

ROMANS 9:6-20

God's Elective Purpose:

*God's past dealings with Israel were based on His sovereignty and His wisdom. We find in the following verses that God knows His elected people and though all are His, not all are true Israel.

*Apostle Paul now faces the problem that if God made promises to Israel as His chosen people, then how can this rejection of Christ by the majority of the Jews allow the promises to stand. Paul begins to address this problem starting in Romans 9:6.

1. Paul is saying the Word of God had not failed. Paul insists that there has not been any breach of promise

Romans 9:6 - Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:

on God's part in the first part of this verse. The problem was not all of Israel were true Israelites.

2. God has always had a sovereign election process upon the promise, and the number of those who are "of Israel" are not determined by a lineal natural descent.

*Just because one was related to Abraham did not automatically make one counted as the spiritual seed of Abraham. This was done by God's wisdom.

3. Natural birth was not enough, or even of human effort. The descendents of Abraham also had to have a spiritual birth - a faith like Abraham.

John 3:6-7 - That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

*Paul now gives us two examples in the next three verses to show that birth into the patriarchal family did not, in itself, automatically confirm your spiritual privilege. Being a true child of Israel didn't mean all were true Israel.

1. These verses show that not all descendants of Abraham are part of the promise of God. Abraham had two sons: one by Hagar - Sarah's handmaid and one by Sarah - Abraham's wife.

Romans 9:7-9 - Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. Rom. 9:8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. Rom. 9:9 For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.

- a. Hagar birthed Ishmael - to be known as "the children of the flesh" and became not the children of God. (These are the unbelieving Jews and Arabs.)
- b. Sarah birthed Isaac - to be "the children of promise" and are God's seed. (These are the Jews of faith and followed Abraham's spiritual life.)

Genesis 17:19-21 - And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him. Gen. 17:20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. Gen. 17:21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

- c. Physically, they were both Abraham's children. But in the spiritual realm, God chose only one of his sons (Isaac) to be the one to receive His promises: the seed, the land, and eventually the throne.
 - d. Paul uses this to show Ishmael's birth was natural; whereas, Isaac's birth was supernatural.
2. The wisdom of God chose Isaac and rejected Ishmael. God chose the second son, just like He chose Abel over Cain.

Romans 9:10-13 - And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac; Rom. 9:11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) Rom. 9:12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. Rom. 9:13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

1. Paul now gives us his second example, showing God's purpose. Abraham's son, Isaac (the one chosen to represent true Israel), had two sons (twins) with Rebecca. These boys were of the same family, yet one was chosen to represent the true nation of Israel. These twins were Esau and Jacob.
2. Here again, we see that God chose the second (younger) son over the elder (first) son. Esau was certainly favored by his father, Isaac. Jacob was favored by his mother, Rebecca.

Genesis 25:23 - And the LORD said unto her, Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

3. The choice was made before the sons were born and before they had done any good or evil. God is under no obligation to explain His ways to men. God is sovereign and on the basis of God's election, choice is not of works - it is God's decision.

Romans 9:10-11 - And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac; Rom. 9:11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

4. Paul's point is that not all who are descended from Israel are Israel - like Ishmael & Esau. Esau became Edom, Israel's bitter neighbor.
 - a. Within Israel, there is a special group known as the elect-chosen Israel - the true believing Israel.
 - b. Paul was pointing out the principle that two nations would descend from these two men - one natural and the true spiritual one - the remnant of Israel.

5. God's choice is based upon His superior wisdom and not upon the merit of a given individual. The two rejected men were born in the patriarchal family, and in each case, the parent wished to see the first born inherit the promise.

*Paul is expressing that God has the wisdom to select who would be counted as the "children of the promise".

6. Application for us today: Those who believe in Christ (His D.B.R.) are the seed-children of Abraham. Abraham is the father of all believers, whether Jew or Gentile. Believing Gentiles today are the spiritual descendants of Abraham, but not physical descendants.
 - a. Believing Jews, under the Prophecy Program - were the physical and spiritual descendants of Abraham. They had a special favored status.

- b. The unbelieving Jews were physical descendants of Abraham, but not spiritual descendants.
7. In the next verses, we will see that the Jew is saying this is not fair as to whom God shows mercy and compassion or does not show mercy to.

Romans 9:14-16 - What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid. Rom. 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Rom 9:16 So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

1. Paul anticipates that his teaching on God's sovereign election would stir up all kinds of objections. Here are some of them:
 - a. How can God love one nation, or person, and hate the others?
 - b. How can God elect/choose one over another?
 - c. Isn't God being unfair and even unrighteous?

2. But Paul says, "God forbid", because there is no unrighteousness with God. Paul is saying, "Don't even think that thought."

3. Paul gives us an illustration from Israel's rebellion in the wilderness. Paul uses the example of Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai with the tablets of stone from God. When Moses returned to the camp, he found many of his Jewish people dancing around the golden calf committing apostasy. God could have killed them all, but He chose to show mercy on them (Israel).

Exodus 33:19 - And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

4. It does not depend on man's desire or will, but it was God's own choice to choose mercy - this was Paul's conclusion. The nation of Israel had forfeited all rights to the blessing, but yet, God showed mercy.

*We will see Paul's second illustration of God's mercy in verses 17 and 18, showing the hardening of Pharaoh and the punishment given unto him.

1. God's sovereignty is seen not only in showing mercy to some, but also showing a hardening in others. Paul gives us another example with Pharaoh, showing God's right to give mercy to whom He wishes.

Romans 9:17-18 - For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Rom. 9:18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

2. Moses confronts Pharaoh to let His people leave Egypt in Exodus 7.

Exodus 7:2-5 - Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. Exo. 7:3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. Exo. 7:4 But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, *and* my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. Exo. 7:5 And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

*"harden" by definition means: to make hard or insensible; to make heavy or to make firm. God had hardened Pharaoh's heart many times.

3. God used a hard, cruel, unsaved man to reveal and demonstrate God's power and His name. This was to help Israel show the other nations and cause them to hear of their great God. Egypt was a very powerful kingdom, militarily and economically, at that time.
4. God could have destroyed him instantly, but God kept him alive in order that God might display His power over him. God would be known worldwide.

Exodus 9:16 - And in very deed for this *cause* have I raised thee up, for to shew *in* thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

- a. Pharaoh repeatedly hardened his own heart. After each of these times, God additionally hardened his heart as a judgment upon Pharaoh.
 - b. God has the right to show mercy to whomever He wishes and to harden whomever He wishes. But because He is God, He never acts unjustly.
5. God was glorified in Pharaoh's ultimate defeat. God used a Gentile to glorify God Himself in the earth.

Exodus 14:4 - And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD. And they did so.

*We have seen the sovereignty of God's will and now we are given an explanation of that sovereign will in verses 19 & 20.

1. There seems to be some irritation on the part of the Jewish objector here in verse 19. "Why does God find fault with man if God hardens whom He will?"

Romans 9:19-20 - Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Rom. 9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus?

- a. Paul turns on the objector and reminds him that he is only man and that God is God. He has no right to argue against God, or even criticize the Creator of all things in verse 20.
 - b. Paul's insistence on God's right to do what He pleases is telling the objector to stop talking back to God!
2. A great lesson to learn for the Jews, or for anyone, is that God owes no man anything.

*Finite man, that is loaded with sin and ignorance in his weak state, is in no position to talk back or question God - His wisdom - or His judgments. God is all-knowing.

Daniel 4:35 - And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Isaiah 46:9-10 - Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; *I am* God, and *there is* none like me, Isaiah 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

In Closing: Here we can see a dispensational principle of God's plan unfolding (in periods of dispensations). God has halted the Prophetic Program to accomplish another purpose, that was not known by the prophets of Israel.

This is showing another demonstration of God's mercy by delaying the wrath coming to Israel within the Prophetic Program. In this Dispensation of Grace period now, the individual Jew is not separate and distinct from the Gentile. For him, salvation and eternal life are available apart from Israel's national program.