**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*Romans Series - Chapter 9*

***God’s Sovereignty***

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September 22nd 29th & October 6th In the Year of Our Lord 2019

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS text is quoted)

Romans 9 is a challenging chapter to understand. Paul, being a Pharisee of Pharisees, is pouring out his heart to his fellow Jews. This is no doubt “insider” information. Christians who have a good understanding of the Bible will be challenged to see the truths that Paul brings forth. Steeped in Jewish history and theology, Paul draws a picture of God’s redeeming character. We must keep in mind that the creation God designed came with the choice for love and therefore, the choice opposing love. God extends His grace and allows people to make a choice for Him. God’s grace and mercy are front and center in Romans 9.

Remembering these verses for today’s study:

Ecclesiastes 7:20 “Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.”

1 John 1:8-10 8 “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”

Ephesians 1:13-14

13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Romans 10:8-108 But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART "-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Romans 10:13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." Quote from Joel 2:32

Acts 2:21 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

1 Timothy 2:3-4 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

There is a saying that **Scripture supports Scripture**. Meaning that there aren’t any contradictions. Many times, we have challenges in understanding the context. It is safe to say that all the fundamental theological elements brought forth in the Bible do not contradict themselves.

**Case of Predestination?**

Romans 9 is viewed by some as a source in the Bible that outlines the case for God choosing some people to be with Him in His heaven while others won’t be simply because God did not choose them. This would mean that God created people in His image that were destined for hell. Those predetermined to go to hell haven’t any choice in surrendering to God and repenting of their sins. No need for evangelism or to send missionaries. This is fatalism just like the Muslims believe. Islam teaches that Allah can, at the last second of a person’s life, send a person to hell regardless of what they believed or how they lived. It is the will of Allah. What is the difference in Islam and the Calvinist who believe that God predestines people to heaven or hell? There isn’t any choice in either system. Acts 2:21, Romans 10:8-10,13 John 3:16 and 1 John 5:13 all become irrelevant as our witness that we have a choice to make (as Adam did in Genesis 2:17).

For the Calvinist, these scriptures and many more can be ripped from the Bible for they are against the teachings of John Calvin and his followers who murdered people that spoke against their teaching.

Anyone who teaches predestination, as presented by Calvin, has walked away from the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ. Calvinistic- Predestination in not Christianity. Classical Calvinists teach that people haven’t any choice to surrender to God’s Holy spirit conviction or that God purposely chooses certain people for salvation excluding others.

Romans 8:29 presents the *foreknowledge* of God and is applied to those who surrender to God and then are predestined for a number of things to happen to them. The most significant is that they are to be with God forever in His heaven. Romans 9 does not deviate from the teaching that God’s foreknowledge is applicable in understanding the context. Paul declares in Romans 9:6, “But it is not as though the word of God has failed.”

**Paul states his goal in the beginning of the chapter.** Paul is teaching the actual mechanism that makes a person a descendant of Abraham and thus, part of the promised covenant**. This mechanism is “faith.”** Paul has declared many times that “faith” is the mechanism that makes a person righteous to God. Examples in Romans 1:16-17, Ephesians 2:8. Faith is a gift from God.

**All the choice and ability we have to come to God, comes from God.** On their own, people are lost. God chose to take the first step toward people. This is why Paul declares God has revealed Himself through the creation from the beginning and people have no excuse in not responding to Him (Romans 1:18ff). God’s Holy Spirit convicts’ people of their sin (John 16:8) giving them the opportunity to surrender their hearts to Him. This is what took place in Acts 2:37.

The key spiritual saving act of God must not be missed in Acts 2:37. The people didn’t have any answer to Peter for their condition. They knew they were guilty but were powerless to raise themselves from their perdition. God is the only power to alleviate their lost condition. Through Peter, God speaks a clear salvation path for the lost. These had surrender to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. That is all man can do. The rest is God’s doing. Man does not know how to save himself. This is evident when the people called-out to Peter “what must we do.” Peter then tells them to “repent” which simply means to turn from their condition. This is a heart change. Lost people do not have the ability to turn their hearts unless they have surrendered to God’s Holy Spirit. They are powerless against sin as Paul declares in Romans 7. Freedom is declared in Romans 8:2, “*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.*” What can happen then in Acts 2? Their minds can become set on the spirit and not the flesh. Paul writes in **Romans 8:5-8.**

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

In Romans 9, Paul makes the case that God is the one who has the sovereign choice to make things happen in people’s lives. His first example are the sons of Isaac, being Jacob and Esau. In God’s foreknowledge, He knows people before they are born and the lives they are going to live. He knows who will surrender to him and who will not. God knew Cain would murder his brother, that people would become evil in the days of Noah, that Pharaoh would oppress His people and kill the male babies, that Herod would have John the Baptist beheaded and that Judas would betray Him as Jesus. All this God knew in advance, yet He went forward with His creation.

We continually recognize that God is love (1 John 4:8) and to experience love for billions of people through history is to God’s glory and fulfillment for the purpose of the creation. The only way to experience love is for there to exist the opposite of love. The power of love is in overcoming evil and thus the realization of the experience love places in our hearts takes place.

**Concerning Predestination and God’s Foreknowledge**

It is evident that since God knew men like Pharaoh, Herod and Judas would not accept His plan for their lives, God used them. God used them to fulfill events in history highlighting God’s purpose for people. God turned them over to their own desires and these men did not disappoint. They were more than predictable.

**God Interacts**

God is not static in relation to interacting with His creation. These accounts to which Paul points with Jacob and Esau direct us to see God’s hand shaping the lives of people and nations. In all of these lives, we can see God’s mercy and grace at work. God could have taken a hands-off approach and left people to their own vices. We always remember that God loved us first and took the first move toward us regarding salvation. God came to Adam and talked to Him and advised Adam what to do and what not to do. We know what happened, “The Fall.”

**Romans 9:1** I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

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

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises,

5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

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

7 nor are they all children because they are **Abraham's descendants**, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."

8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

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 there was Rebekah also,

when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac;

11 for though *the twins* were not yet born

and had not done anything good or bad,

so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand,

not because of works but because of Him who calls,

12 it was said to her, (Genesis 25:23)

This points to God’s sovereign election of Jacob to fulfill his covenant purpose as being the blood-line God chose for the Messiah to come. Jacob did not merit this assignment. Jacob’s mother, Rebekah, plotted a deceitful plan to trick Isaac into blessing him. Esau had nothing to do with this deceit other than to be a victim.

It is of note, that Isaac was chosen by God over his older brother Ismael who both received a blessing (Genesis 17:20; 25:5,11).

Before the twins Jacob and Esau were born, God told Rebekah that the older would serve the younger (Genesis 25:21ff). Again, this is not about sending a person to hell. It is about God’s sovereign plan for a person’s life. And God interaction with His choice for a bloodline to the Messiah.

There aren’t any Scriptures that identify Esau as a person who was bound for hell or that God sent him there. Romans 9 **is not** about God choosing to save some from Hell and not others. Or that God specifically created people in His image to go to hell. In God’s foreknowledge, He knew what Esau would do with his birth right. God did not make Esau trade his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew. God did choose the path and purpose for Esau’s life; that is, Esau would serve his younger brother and not be a part of the messianic blood-line. This assignment by God was not based on anything Esau did good or bad (Romans 9:11).

"THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER"

This is the same with Isaac and Ishmael. The younger (Isaac) received the blessing of the land covenant. However, like Esau, Ishmael was also blessed (Genesis 17:20).

13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

(see Malachi 1:1-3 written in about 450 B.C.)

Jacob and Esau lived about 1750 B.C. about 1300 years previously.

See also Hebrews 11:20 **for the blessing of Esau.**

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.

We must remember that Esau’s sin was that he sold his birthright to Jacob (Genesis 25:29ff). This is to what Malachi is pointing. Esau did not turn to God to sustain him, instead he sold his birthright. His mind was on things of the flesh. Thus, the strong words in Malachi, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

There are a number of things people do that God hates. I am sure that God was not pleased with Moses when he killed the Egyptian or with David for being a man of much bloodshed in his shedding of innocent blood (Uriah). God stated clearly in Proverbs 6:17 that He hates hands that shed innocent blood. This places Esau and David in the same category, sinners.

Proverbs 6:16-21 16 There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:

17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood,

18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil,

19 A false witness *who* utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.

20 My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;

21 Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck.

All of these actions can be forgiven because God came to be one of us going to the Cross to pay the price for our sins regardless of how offensive they were to God. The Cross of Christ is more powerful than any sin. The unpardonable act (rejection of God’s Holy Spirit unto death, Mark 3:29) is not surrendering to God by faith. This denial is unpardonable, but it is a person’s own choosing. God is always waiting with open arms.

Again, we must not forget that Esau **was not** totally left-out of a blessing. “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.” (Hebrews 11:20) This took place after Esau sold his birthright.

Isaac still blesses Esau after Esau pleads:

38 Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, *even* me also, O my father." So, Esau lifted his voice and wept.

39 Then Isaac his father answered and said to him, "Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, And away from the dew of heaven from above.

40 "By your sword you shall live, And your brother you shall serve; But it shall come about when you become restless, That you will break his yoke from your neck." (Genesis 27:38-40)

14 What shall we say then?

There is no injustice with God, is there**?** **May it never be!**

God chooses to have mercy on whom He chooses. Mercy in the contexts of Romans 9, in referencing Esau and Jacob, is about God applying judgement during temporal life and about a messianic lineage. Not about assigning a person to hell. Thus, Esau still received a blessing. They all deserve the consequences of their actions and thoughts, but God chooses, in His time, to place exact corrections and use people’s sin as examples to the rest of humanity. God is not picking who should be saved or not. God is choosing when to place accountability in this temporal world. These people have already sinned by their own choosing. God did not make them. God, in His perfect foreknowledge, knew the exact sin they would commit.

In the examples of Pharaoh, Herod and Judas, they had already made the decision within themselves to go against God’s intent. God, in His time, allowed or implemented judgement.

**Paul’s next example is Moses** during the Exodus. We must understand the historical setting to learn the correct teaching in Romans 9.

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." (quote from Exodus 33:19, at least 1300 years before Paul wrote)

To receive an accurate teaching from Roman 9:15, we must understand what took place during the Exodus. This is when God tells Moses that He will have mercy and compassion on the whom He will. The context is that the rebellious Hebrew people had sinned against God in many ways during the Exodus. In the previous chapter (Exodus 32), the great sin of building the Golden Calf took place. In the order of events presented in Exodus 32, Moses talks God out of total annihilation (Exodus 32: 9-14) of the people. Verse 14 literally states that God changed his mind. God chose to have mercy and withhold punishment. Moses then comes down from the mountain and sees the Golden calf and questions Aaron. Moses orders judgment right away. Moses asked the question, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me.” The sons of Levi step forward showing allegiance to God. Moses gave everyone a chance to turn from their sin. This is mercy and compassion. Moses could have rendered judgment without giving anyone the opportunity to repent. Moses then authorizes the sons of Levi to kill men from the remaining tribes that were involved. Three thousand were killed by the sword. The last verse in Exodus 32 details that God “smote” (NAS) the people. Obviously, this is some kind of judgement. This may refer back to the three thousand that lost their lives. God did not kill all of the Hebrews, because the account of the Exodus continues. It is noted that in verse 33, “*Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book”* (Exodus 32:33). Obviously, this means unconfessed sin. We have all sinned (Romans 3:10, Ecclesiastes 7:20). Note that names had to be in God’s book before they can be removed. This is the Book of Life that appears at the Great White Throne Judgment in Revelations 20. Like Adam, everyone started out with an “A” and their names were in the book of life.

The names in the Book of Life are those that have surrendered to God. Proof of their commitment is their ability to surrender and to stay with the Lord and overcome the world. Believers do not walk away as those did in John 6:63ff.

**The Predestination Cult also speaks of “Overcomers” and the “Elect**.” Note the biblical distinctions concerning Overcomers and the Elect that place them within God’s free will.

**Overcomers**

**Revelation 2:25-29**

25 'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.

26 'He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS;

27 AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received *authority* from My Father;

28 and I will give him the morning star.

29 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

**Revelation 2:7** "Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

**Psalm 2:8** Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance and the ends of the earth your possession.

**Matthew 10:22** You will be hated by everyone because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

**Revelation 3:21** "To the one who conquers I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

**Hebrews 3:6** But Christ was faithful as a Son over his household. And we are that household if we hold on to our confidence and the hope in which we boast.

First, these overcomers, exercising their free-will, called out to the name of God to be saved. (Romans 13:10). Remember, Believers, after freely surrendering to God, are sealed in Christ with the Holy Spirit of promise, (Ephesians 1:13). Proof of this sealing in Christ is that Believers overcome and hold on to the end of their lives. Thus, Believers endure to the end and are saved (Matthew 10:22). Believers have faith that produces works (James 2). With God’s Holy Spirit Indwelling Believers, they are conquerors over this life and will rule with God in His heaven. Believers eat from the tree of life. This is the same tree of life from which Adam and Eve were prevented to eat. They were expelled out of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22ff). God did not want them to eat from the tree of life and live in sin for an eternity. They had to surrender to God to regain their former status. We see this in Abel when he brought his firstling for a sacrifice.

**The Elect**

Matthew 24:22 "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

Mark 13:22 for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

This is Satan’s plan to mislead the Elect. But this is only a wish Satan has. This is not possible.

**Matthew 24:31** "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

**Mark 13:20** "Unless the Lord had shortened *those* days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

**Mark 13:27** "And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.

**Luke 18:7** now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?

**Romans 8:33** Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

**Who is the Elect?**

9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance **(2 Peter 3:9).**

**1 Timothy 2:1-4**

**1** First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,

2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

With these verses, we see that God desires that all people be saved. God calls all people to Him. This is the universal message of the Cross. This what is called General Atonement. God as Jesus, died on the Cross to pay the price for sin for all people who ever lived. The Cross is not selective. People are selective. The only limits on the Cross are man-made. Telling people that they do not have a choice to choose the Cross is placing limits on the Cross. Why did God give people a choice in John 3:16 and Romans 10:13, if people cannot freely choose to surrender to Him? The choice is that people have an opportunity to call out and respond to God.

The Elect are those that the Father gives Jesus.

**John 17:2** since you gave him authority over all flesh, so that he may give eternal life to everyone you have given him.

**John 17:6** "I have revealed your name to the people you gave me from the world. They were yours, you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

**John 17:9** "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world but for those you have given me, because they are yours.

**John 17:24** "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they will see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the world's foundation.

**John 10:28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.

**John 10:29** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

Of course, the understanding of the working of the Trinity is mandatory in receiving the truths of these scriptures. The assignment of “The Son” and “The Father” relationship is a reality of the oneness of God as Jesus. You have seen Me, you have seen the Father (John 14:9). God the Father did manifest Himself as Jesus Christ. This is evident in the Holy Spirit seed coming to Mary. This is a miracle just as the creation was in the beginning. The power that created our world and all life in the world has the power to make the incarnation happen.

Concerning the Elect, God the Father qualifies people. God sees in a person’s heart, into their soul, and knows their true condition. These are the ones in the Book of Life. It is obvious since the Book of Life has been in existence since the foundation of the world that God knows whose names are in His Book (Revelation 13:8). God knows who the real Believers are in contrast to those who walked away in John 6.

**John 6:63-66**

63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

64 "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

Those that walked away did not have their names in the Book of Life. They were pretenders by their own choosing. They were looking for an earthly Messiah, like a David or Moses, to defeat the enemies of Israel. They refused to surrender to God who came to die for the sins of the world. This is the main point and difference in Christianity as compared to other faiths. God chooses to deal with the sin nature in people at the Cross. God’s kingdom, like Jesus said, is not of this world. The Cross points to our eternal life. The Jews, and many others, demand an earthly Messiah. They are consumed by this fallen life and its offerings. Their sad reality is that the offerings of this life ends at physical death.

Simply stated, God knows who the Elect are and presents them to Jesus. This takes place at the Great White Throne Judgement (Revelation 20:11). Again, these are the ones that have chosen to surrender their heart to God. This pre-knowledge of God, concerning the Elect, frustrates fallen humanity.

God’s Holy Spirit convicts’ people of their sin giving them the opportunity to respond to God. God makes the sovereign choice to approach fallen humanity first. Never forget that God loved us first (John 4:19). With His love, God makes the first move towards fallen people. Without God making this first step, there wouldn’t be any hope for salvation for anyone. Once a person sins, the sin grows steadily in their lives. This is the point of total depravity. This is why Ecclesiastes 7:20 and Romans 3:10 declare that all people sin.

**John 6:39** This is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me but should raise them up on the last day.

We can see that God was patient with the Hebrews coming out of Egypt. They sinned many times. We see God change His mind and withhold judgement from them. When God did judge the Hebrews, He did not annihilate all of them. In the same chapter (32), we also see that God “smote” the people. Eventually, God declared that the leadership generation would die in the wilderness. It is in the next chapter (33) that we read the statement that “*I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion of whom I have compassion.*” These words from God are not in the context of picking who gets to go to heaven regardless of their repentance or unrepentant heart. The words “saved/ not saved” is not used in Romans 9 or in Exodus 32-33. God’s book is noted. The people’s names removed from God’s Book freely chose to sin, God did not make them.

**To Deliver, Brought Salvation:**

**Strong’s 03467** יָשַׁע *yasha* )446b(

**Meaning:** *to deliver* **Origin:** a prim. root

**Usage:** avenged(1), avenging(2), **brought salvation**(2), deliver(27), delivered(8), deliverer(3), deliverers(1), deliverers who delivered(1), delivers(2), endowed with salvation(1), gained the victory(1), help(9), helped(5), preserve(1), safe(1), save(85), saved(33), saves(5), savior(13), surely will not save(1), victorious(1).

**Notes:** Psa 1:1; Psa 32:1, Psa 32:2; Deu 4:32; 2Sa 7:23

c Gen 15:1; Psa 33:20; Psa 115:9-11; Psa 68:34; Psa 66:3

f Num 33:52

22 "Turn to Me and be **saved**, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. (Isa. 45:22 NAU)

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**To live**: Strong’s **02421a** חָיָה *chayah* )310d(

**Meaning:** *to live* **Origin:** a prim. root

**Usage:** alive(3), alive should not live(1), came to life(1), come to life(3), come alive(1), give life(2), gives me life(1), healed(1), keep(1), keep him alive(1), keep his alive(1), keep the alive(1), keep them alive(4), keep you alive(1), keep alive(3), keep...alive(2), kept me alive(1), kept alive(1), leave(2), leave alive(1), live(120), lived(42), lives(5), make alive(1), makes alive(1), nourished(1), preserve(3), preserve his life(1), preserve...alive(1), preserves the lives(1), raise(1), recover(4), recovered(1), recovery(1), remained alive(1), repaired(1), restored to life(4), revive(20), revived(6), save(2), save his life(1), saved(1), saved our lives(1), saving(1), spare(3), spared(2), stay alive(1), surely live(9), surely recover(2), survival(1), survive(2), survived(1).

**Notes:** 1 Lit *and my soul will live*

8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will **live**." **Numbers 21:8**

In the context of the Hebrews coming out of Egypt and their rebellion to God, Exodus 33:19 is about God withholding judgement due to a temporal sin. If the text would say, “I will choose some to go to heaven and the rest will go to hell” regardless of their “repentance status” then there would be clarity for the hardline Calvinist. We are all thankful for God’s mercy. The statement from God to Moses about mercy and compassion, which was spoken after the Golden Calf sin, is directly tied to God changing His mind about the certainty, timing, comprehensiveness and severity of judgement. It is very telling that God made the statement, “*I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion of whom I have compassion*” after the Golden Calf sin. Moses ordered judgement and God smote the people and God said that he would remove names from His Book. Even though all the people, save the sons of Levi, deserved judgement. In this context, mercy and compassion are applied to sinners for their wrong conduct that they chose to commit and not repenting. Remember, Moses asked for those who stood with God to step forward. God did not make the sons of Levi step forward, and God did not make the people sin. People repented on their own accord.

**Exodus 32:29-35**

29 Then Moses said, "Dedicate yourselves today to the LORD-- for every man has been against his son and against his brother-- in order that He may bestow a blessing upon you today."

30 On the next day Moses said to the people, "You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the LORD, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

31 Then Moses returned to the LORD, and said, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves.

32 "But now, if You will, forgive their sin-- and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!"

33 The LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.

34 "But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, My angel shall go before you; nevertheless in the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin."

35 Then the LORD smote (strike: reference to the 3000 killed) the people, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.

Aaron failed as a leader when the people turned to the Golden Calf, but God gave him mercy and compassion. We know that years later, God judged Aaron for his sinful leadership (Numbers 20). Aaron had three strikes: The Golden Calf, speaking against God’s choice for Moses’ wife and striking the rock. God then sent Aaron to sleep with his people. God told Moses and Aaron they would not enter the Promised Land due to their leadership failures. God instructed that Aaron go to Mount Hor, and Aaron would be *gathered to his people* there. Aaron would die on Mount Hor. [See Duet. 9:6 for another reference to Aaron’s death]. Later, Moses would go to Mount Nebo and was shown the Promised Land and died. Both men are reported to be instructed by God to go to a place to die. Moses was 120 y.o.a. and Aaron was 122 y.o.a. God showed mercy and compassion in both of their lives in that they served a long time, completed difficult tasks and made some major mistakes. God judged them, but they are not viewed as going to hell. They were judged and paid a price with their temporal lives. God applying judgement on a person does not automatically place them in hell for an eternity.

**The context** of “For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION."

**Gracious: Strong's 02603a>** חָנָן *chanan* )335d(

**Meaning:** *to show favor, be gracious*

**Origin:** a prim. root

**Usage:** begged(1), dealt graciously(1), favor(1), feel pity(1), finds...favor(1), give them to us voluntarily(1), gracious(45), graciously(1), graciously given(1), graciously grant(1), groan(1), implore(1), implore his favor(1), implore the compassion(1), implore the mercy(1), implored(1), made(1), made supplication(2), make supplication(5), pity(2), pleaded(2), show favor(1), show...favor(1), shown favor(1), sought his favor(1), surely be gracious(1).

**Notes:**Exo 34:6; Exo 34:7;Rom 9:15

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**Strong's compassion: 07355>** רָחַם *racham* )933c(

**Meaning:** *to love, have compassion*

**Origin:** denom. vb. from 7356

**Usage:** compassion(1), compassionate(1), find compassion(1), finds mercy(1), had(2), had compassion(2), has compassion(4), have compassion(20), have had compassion(1), have mercy(2), have pity(1), have...compassion(3), have...mercy(2), love(1), mercy(1), obtained compassion(1), Ruhamah(1), show compassion(2), surely have mercy(1).

**Notes:** Exo 34:6; Exo 34:7;Rom 9:15

Exodus 33:19 is about temporal judgement, the price people pay now. It may be with their life for the sins they commit. This verse is not about a person’s final destination in heaven or hell.

However, in the previous chapter, in Exodus 32:33, God said He would remove sinner’s names from His book in reference to the golden calf sin. This has to mean unrepentant sinners. If this statement is taken to mean every sinner, then all humanity would be removed. Aaron and the sons of Levi would have been “smote,” but they were given a chance, like all the people, to repent and stand with God.

26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, *come* to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him. (Exodus 32:26)

Moses offered for his name to be blotted out. But God showed mercy and chose to move His “Chosen People” through history to be His witness, good or bad. We know that Moses sinned by striking the rock instead of speaking to the rock for water to come out. God then prevented Moses God from entering the Promised Land (Numbers 20:6ff). However, there isn’t any text suggesting that Moses’ name was removed from God’s book.

Obviously, a person’s sinful life here, in the now, can give an indication of their final destination. Paul’s reference to Exodus 33:19 in Roman 9:15 is not about picking some to go to heaven and others to go to hell. It is an all-inclusive statement. Paul is making the point about God’s sovereignty. God chose to apply His grace and mercy to whom He will. In the Exodus, it is applied to temporal judgement and giving *all* people a chance to repent. God does not want to lose one person. But the door must be opened on our side. God’s Spirit has taken the first step by knocking on our door. People must open their ears to hear God’s voice calling to them (Revelations 3:19ff). This is how Believers overcome the world to the end.

In Romans 9, God’s mercy and compassion is applied to the Gentiles. It is about God including the Gentiles with the Jews in God’s covenant promise. This covenant is about mercy and compassion extended to all people so that they have an opportunity to surrender to God. Just like the Hebrews who sinned pursuing the Golden Calf, they all had a chance to repent and stand with God.

**Romans 14:8** That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

God’s covenant with Abraham was established on faith. Those that come to God by faith are made righteous by God. God is the creator of all things. God created faith to be implanted in people. God’s faith, working in Believers, reveals God’s righteousness. This is working inside the Gospel Message of God (Romans 1:1,13ff) to garner salvation for Greeks, Barbarians, the wise and the foolish and to the Jews. So, those who surrender to God by faith become descendants of Abraham.

**Romans 1:17** For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

**2 Peter 1:1** Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

God is fair and just. God is not arbitrary.

**Romans 9:14** What shall we say then?

There is no injustice with God, is there**?** **May it never be!**

This is consistent with Romans 1:18fff when God states that He has revealed himself through the creation from the beginning to everyone, and they are without excuse. God does not hold people responsible for what they have never experienced. But they have experienced God. God specifically points to the Jews.

Romans 10:18 But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? **Indeed they have; "**THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD." (Psalm 19:4)

**God is Fair and Just**

God did not choose some people to live sinless lives and others to live sinful lives. In fact, from the beginning, God desired for Adam and Eve to live sinless lives. However, they chose to sin. All people choose to sin. Thus, all the world is guilty. Some theologians apply predestination to all people regardless if they confess their sin or not. This leads to the teaching that regardless of a surrendered heart and repentance there still isn’t any hope for salvation simply because God did not elect a person. This is not what took place during the Exodus. Those in the Exodus freely chose to be rebellious and unrepentant.

We are held accountable for the sins we commit in this life. We can be forgiven concerning our eternal judgment (1 John 1:9). The criminal on the cross, beside Jesus, surrendered to God and confessed his sin. The criminal still died on the cross. The criminal’s coming to Jesus did not prevent his judgement of death for his sins.

Paul, being a transformed Pharisee, seemingly struggles with God’s mercy. He shares his views with his fellow countrymen in Rome. We must remember that God’s Holy Spirit had Paul write these thoughts. This highlights the human understanding. The legal view is to hammer them with judgement immediately. But God declares that He will withhold judgement to a time and method of His choosing. These people had already freely rebelled against God. God did not make them rebel. God did not choose for them to rebel or go to hell. People make their own decision to go to hell; they do not need God’s help.

16 So then it *does* not *depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

Verse 16, once again, demonstrates that God waits to apply judgement on a people that have freely chosen to rebel. This is about God’s timing, not on picking who goes to heaven.

Paul shifts next to Pharaoh as an example of who God also showed mercy by not killing him for all the hardships and unrighteous, oppressive acts he committed against the Hebrew people. God allowed Pharaoh to live so God could demonstrate (Raised you up) His power upon him. Pharaoh’s heart was already hard, and God turned him over to his own desires. Romans 1:24.

In context the words “Raised you up” mean ‘lifted up as an example,’ not ‘raised from birth.’ God held back judgement upon Pharaoh until the time was in God’s choosing. The plagues and Pharaoh’s army destroyed at the sea prove that it was in God’s timing that judgement came.

Understandably, for those of us raised in the Southern Bible belt in the U.S. to perceive the words “raised you up” applied to raising a child. This is not the biblical context. The biblical context is that God is placing Pharaoh on a visible pedestal for all the world to see for time and eternity. God judges in His time. God gave Pharaoh grace and mercy for years. Pharaoh had every opportunity to surrender to God.

Remember in Exodus 1, we receive the account of Pharaoh being very cruel to the Hebrews. He ordered that every male child be killed. Pharaoh’s heart was hard by his own choosing. So, in Exodus 4:21, God turned Pharaoh over to his own desires (Romans 1:24.26.28) and hardened his heart. When God allows a person to live a life alone, without His Holy Spirit’s voice of conviction reaching out to a person, that person falls deeper into the darkness. In one sense, they have passed the point of no return. We see this in the Exodus. God eventually gives up on the older generation of Hebrews and tells them they will die in the wilderness and not enter the Promise Land. (Numbers 32:13). In the Evangelical sense of the word “Lost,” Pharaoh was a “lost” person by his own choosing. God did not make Pharaoh rebel against Him. Only after Pharaoh, deliberately over time, repeatedly sinned against God, did God respond.

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh,

"FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP,

TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU,

AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires,

and He hardens whom He desires.

God chose the sinner, Pharaoh, to be an example to the rest of the world. In God’s sovereign will, He chooses the time and place to apply judgement. Until that time, God showed grace and mercy upon Pharaoh.

Paul then asks six questions in Romans 9:19-22. We need not fall into the trap of reading Scripture and receiving the “end-meaning” of a question as being contained within the question. We must analyze Paul’s response to the questions and, at the same time, keep in mind what he had previously written.

19 You will say to me then,

"Why does He still find fault**?**

For who resists His will**?"**

20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God**?**

The thing molded will not say to the molder,

"Why did you make me like this," will it**?**

21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay,

to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use [Hebrews] and another for common use (NAS, NIV) [Gentiles]**?**

**22 What if God,**

although willing to demonstrate His wrath

and to make His power known,

endured with much patience

vessels of wrath prepared for destruction**?**

Paul presents verse 22 in the form of a question. The sentence starts with “**What if?”** This is for illustration purposes. We can all understand that God is the potter, and we are the clay in verses 20-21. Even though God intends for all people to surrender to Him, we are all created possessing the attributes to rebel against God and thus are vessels prepared for destruction. At the same time, we are also prepared for eternal life. This is true for Jews and Gentiles. This is amplified when we all choose to rebel against God. We are truly then vessels prepared for destruction, but not of God’s wanting. It is our wanting, our choices that prepare us for destruction.

The contrast in the clay is honorable and common. Many English translations translate the Greek word “atimia” as “dishonor.” The NAS and NIV translate “atimia” in this verse “common.”

ἀτιμία atimia Strong’s 819 Meaning: dishonor Origin: from 820

Usage: common use (1), degrading (1), dishonor (4), shame(1).

We must not lose sight of Paul’s initial emphasis concerning Abraham. Romans 9:8 “That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.” So, in Paul’s pottery class, the Potter makes Jews and Gentiles, who are vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and both are endured by God with much patience. All the world is guilty; not one is right. But God offers people an opportunity to become **vessels of mercy.**

**Romans 3:9-18**

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks **are all under sin;**

10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";

14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS";

15 "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,

16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,

17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN."

18 "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

**[So, God’s crowning achievement:**

**We can all be saved.]**

**Continue in Romans 9**

**23 And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory**

**upon vessels of mercy,**

**which He prepared beforehand for glory,**

**24 *even* us, whom He also called,**

**not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.**

**AMEN**

25 As He says also in **Hosea, (2:23)**

"I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"

26 "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."

27 **Isaiah** cries out concerning Israel,

"THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;

(Isaiah 10:22)

28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY." (Isaiah 10:23)

29 And just as Isaiah foretold,

"UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY,

WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM,

AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

(Isaiah 1:9, 13:19)

30 What shall we say then?

That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness,

attained righteousness,

even the righteousness which is **by** **faith**;

31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness,

did not arrive at *that* law.

32 Why?

**Because *they did* not *pursue it* by faith,**

**but as though *it were* by works.**

They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

33 just as it is written,

"BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING

AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE,

**AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."**

Paul continues to drive God’s message that He included the Gentiles in His Faith-covenant outreach plan for salvation. We need to remember what God told Abraham in Genesis 12:3, that all the nations would be blessed through him. This covenant of faith is the same faith demonstrated by Abel, Noah, Enoch and all those listed in Hebrews 11. Old Testament Scripture clearly states Abram was made righteous by faith.

**Genesis 15:6** Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Paul states perfectly in Galatians 3 the truth of God’s faith to His righteousness plan.

**Galatians 3:5-9**

5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

6 Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU."

9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

In Romans 9, Paul quotes Hosea.

**Hosea 2:22 And the earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine and to the oil, And they will respond to Jezreel.**

**[God Sowing]**

**Hosea 2:23** "I will sow (scattered seed) her for Myself in the land.

I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion,

And I will say to those who were not My people, You are My people! And they will say, 'You are my God! "

Note that Hosea talks about God having “compassion on her who had not obtained compassion.” This passage in Hosea tells of a time that God restores through the covenant people, the Hebrews, His salvation plan through all the earth. Through the Hebrews, God spreads His seed to the Gentiles. This statement drives the point that other people, who are not Jewish, can benefit from the promised covenant and obtain compassion. God shows mercy and compassion on whom He wills (Exodus 33:19; Romans 9:15). In Hosea’s case, it was his wife, Gomer, the prostitute that was shown compassion.

The quote from Isaiah 10:22 is very condemning. Only a remnant of Israel will be saved. This is very cutting to the Jews. Considering the circumstances in which Isaiah preaches (Isaiah 10:22), we can see that the Jews missed God’s intended message. Isaiah points to their insincere lip service to Him as they went through the motions of ceremony in the Temple but lived decadent pagan lives. Isaiah lived from 762 to 680 B.C. and prophesied to the Southern Kingdom of Judah. In Isaiah’s lifetime, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. After Isaiah died, Judah was taken into the Babylonian Captivity. This process started in about 600 B.C. Isaiah’s prophecy concerning Cyrus as the ruler who would rebuild the Temple (Isaiah 44:25, 45:1) came true. In 538 B.C., Cyrus, King of Persia, who had defeated the Babylonians, issued a decree to let the Jews return (Ezra 1) and rebuild the Temple.

Understanding Isaiah and Hosea who prophesied in the Northern Kingdom (755- 710 B.C.) is critical in properly receiving the messages in Romans 9. Hosea demonstrates God’s unfailing love for His people even though they are rebellious and unfaithful. Thus, the account of Hosea marrying Gomer, a prostitute. Gomer represents Israel and her unfaithfulness, but God still pursues her and takes her back.

Obviously, the Jews pursuing justification through the Law only failed. Their hearts were not in the right place. They had no spiritual foundation in relationship to God. The individual did not surrender to the Lord. Obviously being classified as a Hebrew was not enough. Therefore, they failed at even keeping the Law, as their approach to God was only through ceremony. They were faithless functionaries. This is what happens to people who have not be reborn of spirit. Jesus witnessed to the Jewish leaders in Matthew 23 the truth of what they had become. The same as their fathers before them who killed the prophets (Luke 11:47).

God always has a remnant. The remnant is always justified by faith to God.

**AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."**

God chose the Hebrew people to be a light to the rest of the world. This is the goal; salvation for all.

**Isaiah 49:6** He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

**AMEN**