

EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #35

Romans 9:6-20

When it comes to the matter of the sovereignty of God in salvation, many immature people actually become hostile, hateful and hold grudges against God and want to argue with Him. **Really when you get right down to it, the argument concerning God's sovereignty is this - can the will of man overtake or be more powerful than the will of God? If it comes down to a power struggle between the will of a human versus the will of God, who wins?**

This discussion contextually follows what we saw last time. God had given all of those wonderful promises and privileges to Israel, but Israel had rejected them and Paul's heart was very heavy. He knew that some misguided theologian would reason that God's program had ceased with Israel because of this and, therefore, His Word really doesn't mean much. Even though God had made those promises to Israel, since Israel rejected Him, His promises would have failed (**Romans 9:6a**). **The thinking was that God's sovereign will and Word had been thwarted by the rebellion of Israel.**

GOD'S WORD IS DOING EXACTLY WHAT GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL DETERMINES IN ELECTING PEOPLE TO SALVATION.

No nation and no individual can stop the sovereign will and work of God. Frankly, most of us have been guilty of elevating man when we should have been elevating God. God is God! He is the God of salvation and He is the God of sovereignty. **God is a God of election and it is time we let God be the God of the Bible, not the God of our sinful, finite minds!**

THEOLOGICAL PREMISE #1 – God sovereignly determines who will receive His blessings . **9:6-13**

The argument of **verse 6** goes something like this - “Well, being born a Jew naturally means you will receive the blessings of God.” Paul's answer is, “Oh no, boys, you are mistaken”; it is not just being born a Jew that is the issue, you must be a chosen Jew. You must be one elected by God to receive God's blessings. In fact, Paul says read the book of Genesis and you will see that very clearly.

Illustration #1 - God sovereignly determined blessings for Isaac . **9:7-9**

The story is taken from Genesis 21. Abraham was told by God that the one who would be blessed would be Isaac. Isaac would be the one who would receive the blessings and promises of God. It was not enough just to be a child of Abraham; one had to be the God-ordained and chosen child of Abraham.

Now, of course, the big question comes, who determined which son would be blessed? Who determined that Isaac would be born of Sarah and Ishmael to Hagar? Who sovereignly determines this? The answer is God!

Illustration #2 - God sovereignly determined blessings for Jacob . **9:10-13**

This story is taken from Genesis 25. God had promised Isaac that he would have a seed, but his wife Rebekah was barren. So Isaac prayed and God allowed Rebekah to conceive and bare two sons, Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:20ff.). God chose one and He did not choose the other.

Now Paul knew some fickle Arminian would say, “Well, God chose on the basis of what they would do or would become.” Notice **Romans 9:11!** Put your theological bias and opinions aside and simply look at the Bible and believe it. It was totally God’s Sovereign decision. He loved one and hated the other, which is a quote from Malachi 1:2-3. He determined that the younger would be served by the elder, something totally out of the norm of life at that time period.

Now the amazing reality of God’s choice of Jacob was that Jacob was the liar and trickster. Jacob was the crook and schemer. Esau was by far a better boy; in fact, his own dad, Isaac, loved Esau best because he was much more of a macho man and not a mamma’s boy (Genesis 25:27-28). Esau was an outdoor kind of guy who loved to hunt and Jacob wanted to hang around the kitchen.

God’s sovereign choice in election is not determined by the goodness of men. It is His sovereign work, it is His sovereign business. He chose Jacob!

THEOLOGICAL PREMISE #2 – God sovereignly determines who will receive His mercy .
9:14-18

Paul knew that some shallow, misguided individual would respond to this and reason something like this - “Well, if God is the one who sovereignly determines who receives His blessings, then God must be the source of injustice.”

Paul’s answer was simply, “May it never be (9:14)!” God is not unjust. **God has a legal right to send all people to hell because all have sinned against God and fallen short of His glory.** If God were interested in doing only the just thing, He would let every human being go to hell. **But God is also merciful.** In His mercy, He chooses some to save from the fires of hell.

Illustration #1 - God determined Israel would receive His mercy. **9:14-18**

Verse 15 is a partial quote from a conversation between God and Moses in Exodus 33:18. Moses was on Mount Sinai asking God to show him His glory. Now the reason Moses is asking God for this was not because he was just infatuated with the idea of seeing something spectacular, it was because Israel had blatantly rebelled time and time again against God and Moses wanted to see some sign that God was still on Israel’s side.

God’s answer to Moses is basically this - “My decision to grant mercy and compassion to Israel has never been based on her faithfulness but on My election.” He says, “I have mercy on whomever I want,” and the fact that He had mercy on Israel was never based on Israel’s faithfulness or lack of it.

Paul concludes in **9:16** - this is not of man's will or work, but it was totally God's elective decision. **The word "runs" is one that refers to man's own efforts to win God's mercy.** Paul is saying, man and his efforts have nothing to do with receiving God's mercy; it is solely and completely God's sovereign decision.

Illustration #2 - God determined Pharaoh would not receive His mercy. **9:17-18**

How is it that in view of overwhelming, miraculous evidence, that Pharaoh did not believe God? Paul's theological answer to this is that he was non-elect.

Now in Romans 9:17, we get a look at two important reasons why God does not elect to give His mercy to everyone: 1) To demonstrate His power ; 2) To spread a testimony of His sovereign power to the whole world.

In Exodus 3:19, God says He knows that the king of Egypt will not permit Israel to leave. Now the question is why? The answer is found in Exodus 4:21 - God would harden Pharaoh's heart. **Now Exodus 4:21 and Exodus 7:3 occur long before Pharaoh hardens his own heart (Exodus 8:32; 9:34).** When we read Exodus 9:12; 10:27; and 14:4, 8, and 17, it certainly would seem God is the one calling the shots. We must ask ourselves, does God want us to believe that Pharaoh is the one doing this or does He want us to believe that He is the one sovereignly in charge? Does not God say He turns a king's heart any way He wants (Proverbs 21:1)?

Some will say, "It is not fair, God is unjust."

In answer to you, **Romans 9:14** - May you never say or think that.

Some will say, "God is the guilty party and He has no right to find fault with any person since He is doing what He wants."

In answer to you, **Romans 9:20** - Who are you to dare talk back to the Living God.

Some will say, "Well, this is only for Israel."

In answer to you, **Romans 9:24** - This truth is for both Jews and Gentiles.

God is a sovereign God and His Word is doing exactly what He wants it to do in electing people to salvation and in bringing them to service!

What is the value of knowing this doctrine?

1. You may be absolutely certain God's Word and purposes have never failed.
2. You may have an understanding of why some people fall away from the faith.
3. You may truly grasp the fact that salvation can only be by God's grace.
4. You will glorify God because you exalt Him and not man.
5. A believer is able to bow before God, humbled and thankful for the fact that God chose him/her.