

Last week I suggested—that Paul's primary goal within this chapter is to address the question—What about the Jews and What about the promises made to the nation—so far we have seen that the apostle's response has been to assert—that God's word to Israel did not fail—"for they are not all Israel who are of Israel"—that is—there was always an Israel within Israel—in whom God's promises are being fulfilled...

If you remember—he used two examples—Isaac and Jacob—both of which had siblings who were equally Hebrew—and yet—not the true sons of Abraham—Isaac was chosen over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau—Paul then began to assert that the ultimate cause behind these selections—was the sovereign, unmerited election of God...

Beginning with v14 through v24—the apostle now turns to address two anticipated and related objections, v14—"what shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?" and v19—"you will say to me then, Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"—he answers the first objection with two OT quotations (v15, and v17)—and the second with an extended illustration (vv21-23)...

Inevitably—whenever the subject of election is taught—two objections are raised—[1] it is not fair, and [2] it destroys human responsibility—I find it very interesting—that the apostle anticipates and answers both of these...

I want to address the first objection today (both this morning and evening)—leaving the second objection (vv19-24) until next week—I want to examine vv14-18 under these three headings—[1] Objection (v14), [2] Quotations (vv15-17), and [3] Conclusion (v18, which we will consider this evening)...

- I. Objection—v14
- II. Quotations—v15-17
- III. Conclusion—v18 [considered this evening]

I. An Objection—v14

1. Having stated the facts concerning God's sovereign election—the apostle now anticipates a likely objection...
2. V14—"what shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!"—does this make God unjust...
3. Paul's answer is quick and pointed—"Certainly not"—"God forbid"—"may it never be"—"perish the thought"...
4. The GK word rendered "unrighteousness" or "injustice" refers to the unrighteous or unjust behavior of a judge...
5. If God chose to love Jacob in way He did not love Esau—doesn't this make God unjust, unrighteous, or unfair...
6. Deut.32:4—"the Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He..."
7. He is righteous is His nature, word, and ways—everything He does is right—including election and rejection...
8. [1] Election—I defined election last week as—the eternal selection of God of individual people for salvation...
9. From eternity past—God chose a people out from the rest—to be saved in time and dwell with Him forever...
10. The only reason the Scripture gives for the basis of this choice—is that He loved them with a special love...
11. Election is unconditional—that is—there is no condition within the sinner that warrants or deserves His love...
12. From eternity past—He chose them in Christ—that is—He chose to put them into Christ by faith—in time...

13. It would be here—in Christ—that they would find mercy—for it's in Christ—that God is merciful to sinners...
14. Now—God was under no obligation to show them mercy—nor is He unjust—if He only shows them mercy...
15. For example—if I happen to come into some money—I am under no obligation to share that money with you...
16. Yet—let's say for various reasons I chose to share some with a few people—have I acted unjustly to others...
17. I was under no obligation or requirement to share that money with anyone—no one had any claim or right to it...
18. You see brethren—this gets to the very heart of the problem—we have this mindset—that we deserve everything...
19. Man thinks that God owes him something—that God is under obligation to give every man the same thing...
20. This of course has become very prominent in this county—we all think we deserve what everyone else has...
21. MH—"All God's reasons of mercy are taken from within himself. All the children of men being plunged alike into a state of sin and misery, equally under guilt and wrath, God, in a way of sovereignty, picks out some from this fallen apostatized race, to be vessels of grace and glory..."
22. [2] Rejection—God is not unrighteous to leave some men in their misery—this is in fact the essence of justice...
23. If you recall last week—I used the word "reprobation"—which is an older word that simply means—to reject...
24. Theologically—we use the word as the opposite of election to mean—God's choice of not giving mercy to others...
25. Perhaps it's best to call this the corollary of election—it is the necessary consequence or result of election...
26. The fact that God chose some to be in Christ and the recipients of His mercy—means He did not chose others...
27. Is God unjust because He chooses not to bestow mercy upon others—but instead—to leave them in their sins...
28. Here we must remember what I mentioned last week—and that is—election and rejection view man as fallen....
29. That is—from eternity past—God's eternal decree of election and rejection—concerned man as fallen and guilty...
30. He chose to create—allow the fall—and then from fallen humanity—show mercy on some and leave others...
31. Thus—those He left—those He rejected—or chose not to bestow mercy upon—are justly left in their sins...
32. Gill—"As God damns no man but for sin, so he has decreed to damn no man but for sin; and if it is no unrighteousness in him to damn men for sin, as to be sure it is not, so it can be no unrighteousness in him to decree to damn any for it..."
33. Let me illustrate—think of a bank whose owner graciously forgave the debts of one man but not another man...
34. Both men have foolishly mishandled their finances—they have bowered money—they are unable to repay...
35. Now—let me ask you—is it wrong for the bank to forgive the debt of one man and expect payment from another...
36. Now—this evening—I will attempt to make a necessary clarification—in the gospel God offers to forgive both men...
37. In the illustration—the banker forgives one man—and the other man—although he may ask—is not forgiven...
38. In reality—God chooses to forgive the one man—and even though He offers to pay the other man's debt—he refuses...

39. But this has to do with time and the free offer of forgiveness that is published abroad throughout the world...
40. Here—we are dealing with the situation from an eternal perspective—from eternity He left them in their sin...
41. Now—it is rather important to keep in mind—that the apostle actually answers the objection in v14 in vv15-18...
42. That is—he defends both acts of God—election and reprobation—by quoting a single OT text in support of both...

II. Two Quotations—v15

A. Exodus 33:19

1. In defence of God's sovereign right to bestow mercy upon whoever He desires—Paul quotes from the book of Exodus...
2. He then gives an inspired explanation in v16—notice [1] a quotation (v15), and the [2] an explanation (v16)...
3. [1] A quotation—v15—"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..."
4. [a] Mercy—mercy is best defined as God's love shown toward the miserable—wretched and guilty sinners...
5. [b] Compassion—compassion is best defined as—"the inner disposition—out from which—comes mercy"...
6. Compassion entails—a common feeling with those in misery—it's common passion—it's sympathy and pity...
7. Now—here we need to go back to the OT and briefly examine the historical context of this blessed quotation...
8. Ex.33:19—"then he said, I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion..."
9. These are the words of God to Moses—in response to Moses' question, v18—"please, show me Your glory..."
10. V19—has two parts—[a] His answer—"I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you..."
11. This He does in Ex.34:5—"now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD..."
12. [b] His reason—"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion..."
13. That is—I will reveal myself to whomever I desire—I will show myself to Moses in a way I will not to others...
14. Now—while I am convinced that these words have first application to Moses—they obviously apply to the nation...
15. The broader context—is Moses' mediation to God—on behalf of the idolatrous golden calf worshipping—Israelites...
16. Moses has been pleading to God on their behalf—begging that God would remove His presence from them...
17. In other Moses' petition is twofold—that God would not leave him—and the entire nation he's responsible for...
18. He answers by promising to show His glory to Moses—and thus by inference—to show mercy to the nation...
19. Ex.34:9—"then he said, If now I have found grace in Your sight, O LORD, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we are a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance..."
20. This passage sheds light upon Exodus 33:19—Moses' desire to see God's glory is related to his love for the nation...

21. [2] An explanation, v16—"so then it is not of him who wills [man's desire], nor of him who runs [man's effort], but of God who shows mercy..."
22. This is the apostle's application of Ex.33:19—"so then"—that is—in light of—in view of what was quoted...
23. To me—this is the clearest NT text—that teaches—salvation does not depend upon man's native desire or effort...
24. Matthew Poole—"This text wounds Pelagianism under the fifth rib"—and may I add—her daughter Arminianism as well...
25. [a] It does not depend on man's desire—it does not depend on man's will—salvation does not depend on man's will...
26. Now—this does not deny that in conversion man is made willing to come—but this is dependant on God's will...
27. [b] It does not depend on man's effort—salvation does not depend on man's doing—but on God's doing or effort...
28. Phil.2:12-13—"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure..."

B. Exodus 9:16

1. Having quoted Ex.33 to justify God with regards to election—Paul now quotes Ex.9 to address reprobation...
2. V17—"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..."
3. [1] Purpose—"for this very purpose I have raised you up"—that is—sustained through life and exalted as Pharaoh...
4. Prov.16:4—"the LORD has made all for Himself [for its own purpose], yes, even the wicked for the day of doom..."
5. That is—the reprobate (the non-elect) are made—they are born and sustained—to serve God's final purpose...
6. Now—some have complicated this text—by misunderstanding it as saying—"for this purpose I have created you..."
7. Yet—notice, this is not what the text says—"for this very purpose I have raised you up [i.e. to be pharaoh]..."
8. This is where some of the problem arises—we assume the text says—"Pharaoh was created to be damned"...
9. MLJ—"The danger is to assume that it means, For this purpose have I created you. But it does not mean that. There is no suggestion here of creation. The whole idea is of bringing on the scene of action at that particular point and juncture in history. So we must get rid of any notion that Pharaoh was made for this purpose..."
10. Ex.9:15-16—"now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. 16 But indeed for this 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..."
11. In v15—we find how to understand v16—at this point some of the plagues have passed—and Pharaoh yet lived...
12. He could have struck Pharaoh so as to kill him—to cut him off from the earth—yet—He obviously did not...
13. Why?—well v16 tells us—"but indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you..."
14. [2] Power—"that I may show My power in you [through you], and that My name may be declared in all the earth..."
15. The single purpose that God had for Pharaoh was to use him as a means through which to glorify His power...
16. That is—through the destruction of Egypt through the ten plagues—and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt...

17. If God was going to make known His justice, wrath, and power—He would need sin, rebellion, and captivity...
18. This is a preview of what's coming (vv19-24) and provides for us something of a reason behind reprobation...
19. Why did God chose a people—because He loved them and wanted to glorify His mercy and grace in them...
20. Why did God leave a people—because He wanted to glorify or make known—His righteousness and power...

III. Summary Lessons

A. The character of God

1. Let me put this plainly—those who deny the doctrine of election—fail to understand the character of God...
2. Now—I am not suggesting that—those who fail to believe in God's electing work—are not true Christians...
3. Yet—to deny it because it would render God unjust—betrays a lack of understanding concerning God's justice...
4. How foolish is man—that he would put God Himself on trial—and charge Him that His actions are unjust...
5. Native man would rather charge God with being unrighteous—then except the fact—that God is sovereign...
6. Calvin—"Monstrous surely is the madness of the human mind, that it is more disposed to charge God with unrighteousness than to blame itself for blindness..."
7. I would add—Man is so mad—that He would rather charge God with unrighteousness than admit He's sovereign...
8. This is one reason why the denial of election is so serious—it fails to give a full picture of the character of God...
9. I remember a man—soon after I was converted—an ordained minister within the Wesleyan—once say to me...
10. If the God of the Bible is the God of Calvinism—He is a hideous monster—and I want nothing to do with Him...
11. My friend—I hope you can see—that such a statement betrays a lack of understanding of who God really is...
12. The denial of God's sovereign right to bestow mercy upon whom He wills—is no small or secondary issue...

B. The authority of Scripture

1. I think it's highly instructive to notice—that in answering this objection Paul does no more than quote Scripture...
2. He does not enter into an elaborate and philosophical debate—he merely leans upon the authority of God's word...
3. In addressing both election (v15, 'for He says') and reprobation (v17, 'For the Scripture says')—he quotes Scripture...
4. Now—this is in my opinion—one of the reasons why the denial of election is such a large and serious crime...
5. To deny God's sovereignty in salvation is to simply ignore or misunderstand—no small portion of Scripture...
6. Furthermore—and here I don't intend to be impolite—He owes you and I no explanation other than Scripture...
7. The church needs to stop apologizing for God—the truth is the truth—God shows mercy to whom He wills...
8. That may run contrary to our American independence and pride—that may run contrary to our native arrogance...

9. My dear friend—it does NOT run contrary to the teaching of Scripture—neither the Old and New Testaments...
10. There was a time when I would be willing to argue and debate other professing Christians who denied this truth...
11. Now—I simply quote to them Scripture and leave it at that—if god's word isn't enough—I have nothing more...
12. Remember what Abraham told the rich man, Lk.16:29—"they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them...If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead..."

C. The graciousness of salvation

1. This is a lesson that is often overlooked—with all the talk of election and reprobation—salvation is ALL of grace...
2. Some might think that what we have considered about God's sovereign mercy—would discourage evangelism...
3. This simply contradicts the facts of history—the greatest missionaries and evangelists have all believed this...
4. For example—do you remember how this chapter began—it began with great sorrow and grief over lost sinners...
5. v3—"for I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh..."
6. That is—physical Israel—many of whom were not elect—were never chosen to be the objects of God's mercy...
7. Now—don't get me wrong—I'm not suggesting that election and reprobation are the gospel—they are not...
8. But the fact of God's sovereignty—and the various truths related to it—are not hidden or unclear in Scripture...
9. Now let me apply this last lesson to both sinner and saint—[1] sinner—that is—you who are not yet converted...
10. You now you are lost—furthermore—you know that you lack—both the will and ability to come to Christ...
11. You may even be saying within yourself—I've tried becoming a Christian—but it's simply too hard for me...
12. You know what—Jesus once told some unbelievers—You cannot come to Me unless My Father draw you...
13. Here is good news—God's mercy is so powerful—that it can raise you from the dead—and it can give you life...
14. Do you feel this inability—then cry out to Him as a weak, helpless sinner—Son of David, have mercy on me...
15. Rom.5:6—"for when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly"—weak and wicked...
16. Is this YOU—are you weak and wicked—is God teaching you this—is He showing you this from His word...
17. Do you feel as if you're unable to come to Christ?—let me tell you what to do—cry out to Him from where you're at...
18. Do you lack both the will and ability to come—then cry out to Him—that He (in His mercy) would come to you...
19. [2] Saint—here I want to speak to you who have been converted—to you who have experienced God's mercy...
20. Let us respond with the Palmist—"not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but to Your name give glory—because of YOUR mercy..."