

Romans 9:1-13

God chose some for salvation and rejected others according to His purpose.

1) Some people even among the covenant community are lamentably lost (9:1-5).

- a) 8:35-39 Context which raises a question regarding unbelieving Jews
- b) 9:1-2—Paul swears with God as His witness that he laments the rejection of the majority of the Jews.
- c) 9:3—Paul sincerely desires to take their place under the wrath of God.
- d) 9:4-5—Paul explains why their rejection causes him particular anguish.
 - i) Personal: They are his brothers/kinsmen according to the flesh.
 - ii) Theological: They are Israelites who have all the privileges of God’s special revelation and covenantal heritage. The Jews who reject Jesus are no longer the covenant people of God (11:20), but Paul considers them here under their OT privileges.
- e) **Application:**
 - i) How strongly do you feel for the lost condition of your family and friends?
 - ii) How strongly do you feel for the glory of God among the nations?

2) God’s choice distinguishes between saved and lost even in the covenant community (9:6-8).

- a) Has God failed to keep His promise to the Jews?
- b) Must distinguish between visible and invisible church/Israel:
 - i) 9:6—“Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.” First use of Israel refers to biological descent and external covenant benefits (National Election). Second use of Israel refers to God’s elect (Personal Election).
 - ii) 9:7a—“Not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring.” Usually “children” and “offspring” are synonymous. Here “children of Abraham” refers to those who are related to God as Abraham is, while “his offspring” refers to merely biological relationship to Abraham.
- c) God’s word of promise actualizes the choice that God has made to save some.
 - i) 9:7b—“Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” Ishmael was already born, and as the elder son would have inherited the right of primogeniture (the privileges of the firstborn son), including God’s covenant with Abraham. Yet, God excluded Ishmael and indicated His choice of Isaac by this word of promise.
 - ii) 9:8a—“This means that . . .”—Paul interprets Genesis 21:12 in light of God’s purpose of election.
 - (1) 9:8b—“it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God”—Physical descent from Abraham did not mean that Ishmael was chosen for salvation, nor does physical descent from Abraham mean that Jews in Paul’s day (or ours) were chosen for salvation.
 - (2) 9:8c—“but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.” Just as Isaac’s election was distinguished in time by God’s word of promise, so are all of God’s elect distinguished by God’s word of promise.
 - iii) Matthew 3:9 “And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.”
- d) **Application:**
 - i) Do not allow covenant privileges to foster presumption in covenant children.
 - ii) There are not two peoples of God Israel and the Gentile Church. There is one Israel of God in Christ Jesus made up of Jews and Gentiles.

3) God’s choice is based solely upon His purpose (9:9-13).

- a) God’s promise is spoken (and His choice made) prior to human willing or action.

- i) 9:9—“For this is what the promise said: ‘About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.’”—Before Isaac was born God had rejected Ishmael and chosen Isaac (Gen. 17:15-19; 18:9-15)
 - ii) 9:10-11a, 12—“And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad . . . she was told, ‘The older will serve the younger.’”—Before either Jacob or Esau were born, or had done anything good or bad, God had rejected Esau and chosen Jacob. Of course God knew what each would be like—both morally corrupt and undeserving; the point is that God’s choice was not based on anything in the brothers.
 - iii) 9:13—“As it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’”—God’s hatred of Esau must be understood in the ultimate sense of exclusion from salvation in the covenant of grace, and not to mere historical circumstances, for historically God showed Esau the same love that He shows to all of His enemies (cf. Matt. 5:45), until He visited Edom in “Day of the Lord” judgment (Malachi 1).
- b) God’s saving promise is based solely upon God’s purpose of election (9:11b).
- i) “not because of works but because of Him who calls”—Unconditional Election
 - ii) “in order that God’s purpose of election might continue”
 - (1) “purpose”—set plan; decree
 - (a) Purpose flows from God’s holy will (Eph. 1:5b)
 - (b) Purpose is accomplished in Christ (Eph. 1:9b)
 - (c) Purpose is cosmic order under Christ (Eph. 1:10)
 - (d) Purpose is redemptive (Rom. 11:11-15)
 - (e) Purpose is ethnically robust (Rom. 11:11-15; Rev. 7:9-10; 21:26)
 - (f) Purpose is to glorify God (Rom. 11:33-36; Eph. 1:6, 12, 14)
 - (g) Purpose is eternal (Eph. 1:4; Titus 1:2)
 - (2) “election”—choice; in context, the positive choice unto salvation, although the text includes also the concept of reprobation, and thus double predestination
 - (3) “might continue”—that is, come into historical fulfillment; God’s decree of election in eternity is always followed up by God’s effectual call in history
 - iii) Ephesians 1:3-14— Paul tells us what we have from God and upon what basis we have it
 - iv) What about foreknowledge? Did God foresee our faith and upon that basis choose us?
 - (1) Romans 8:29 “For those whom He foreknew He also predestined . . .”
 - (2) 1 Peter 1:1-2 “elect . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father”
 - (3) “knowledge” here is not the impersonal knowledge of facts; this knowledge is personal—“whom He foreknew” not “what He foreknew”
 - (4) “knowing” in such contexts connotes love and choice
 - (a) Amos 3:2 “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” NIV “chosen”
 - (b) Matthew 7:23 “I never knew you”
- c) **Application:**
- i) Humility; Gratitude; Praise
 - ii) Evangelistic impetus

Doxology: Now to the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.—1 Timothy 1:17