"GOD'S SOVEREIGN SALVATION"

Romans 9:6-33
HRM - 11-9-2024

INTRODUCTION:

***God chooses whom He will save!**

I. If God does not choose everyone (all in Israel) to be saved: <u>Has God FAILED</u>? (v. 6-13)

(Answer: <u>No</u>! Because God never promised He would save all who are physically related to Abraham.)

[The <u>Illustration</u> of God's Sovereignty]

A. God's choosing was never based on <u>physical descent</u> (v. 6-9)
(Salvation has nothing to do with whom you are related to)

B. God's choosing was never based on <u>personal merit</u> (v. 10-13)
(Salvation has nothing to do with what you do)

II. If God does not choose everyone (all in Israel) to be saved: <u>Is God FAIR</u>? (V. 14-33)

(Answer: Yes! Because of four reasons.)

[The <u>Vindication</u> of God's Sovereignty]

A. God is fair in <u>showing mercy</u> to whomever He chooses (v. 15-18)
(God's <u>will</u> shows His righteous sovereignty)

B. God is fair in <u>molding vessels</u> for His own glory (v. 19-23)
(God's <u>workmanship</u> shows His righteous sovereignty)

C. God is fair in <u>redeeming a remnant</u> as He promised by His prophets (v. 24-29)
(God's <u>Word</u> shows His righteous sovereignty)

D. God is fair in <u>rejecting a people</u> who attempt to be saved by their works (v. 30-33)
(God's <u>way</u> [of salvation] shows His righteous sovereignty)

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A. God is fair in _____ to whomever He chooses (v. 15-18)
(God's will shows His righteous sovereignty)

B. God is fair in _____ for His own glory (v. 19-23)
(God's workmanship shows His righteous sovereignty)

C. God is fair in _____ as He promised by His prophets (v. 24-29)
(God's Word shows His righteous sovereignty)

D. God is fair in _____ who attempt to be saved by their works (v. 30-33)
(God's way [of salvation] shows His righteous sovereignty)

"GOD'S SOVEREIGN SALVATION"

Romans 9:6-33
5-17-2020

INTRODUCTION:

Romans 9 is often called "the most overlooked chapter in the Bible."

Because of its complexities and controversial content, many ignore it.

Peter said that some of Paul's writings were "hard to be understood" (II Pet. 3:16). This chapter is certainly among the more difficult.

The heresy of "universalism" teaches that all men will be saved.

The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that a minority will be saved, and that the majority will walk the wide road which leads to destruction (Mt. 7).

After describing the eternal blessings of our salvation in Christ (8:28-39), and lamenting over the fact that His own people (as a nation) are missing out on God's salvation, Paul now answers the question: Why?

Why cannot God save His own people Israel as a nation?

If this (Paul's) message is true, why did the Jews reject it?

The main thrust of Romans 9 (as a whole) does not describe personal election, but national election (God's choosing of Israel).

NOTE: However, the illustrations and applications given by Paul in this chapter do support the doctrine of personal election.

***God chooses whom He will save!**

A statement like this one prompts two immediate questions which we will seek to answer:

If God does not save everyone (particularly of Israel) -

1) Has He failed? &
2) Is He fair?

I. If God does not choose everyone (all in Israel) to be saved: Has God FAILED? (v. 6-13)

(Answer: No! Because God never promised He would save all who are physically related to Abraham.)

[The Illustration of God's Sovereignty]

A. God's choosing was never based on physical descent (v. 6-9)

(Salvation has nothing to do with whom you are related to)

V. 6

Did not God make promises to the nation (v. 4)? Did not He adopt them (v. 4)?

Has God's Word failed? (become of "none effect")

Literally: "Has God's Word fallen down from its exalted place and become of no enduring effect" (perfect tense)

Has God's Word, like a ship blown by the winds of circumstance, gone off its course?

God's answer is "No." For the simple reason that God never promised to save the entire nation from their sin.

Just because the nation of Israel in the Old Testament are called the "people of God" did not mean that they all knew God or that they were "saved" in the spiritual sense of the term.

As a whole the nation belonged to God, but not all of the people of the nation did.

Just because someone can trace his genealogy back to Israel does not make him a true Israelite.

V. 7

God never said that all those who physically proceeded from Abraham would be redeemed.

Abraham had two prominent sons - Ishmael and Isaac.

God in His sovereignty chose Isaac (Gen. 21:12).

Isaac was to be the "only begotten" (unique) son of Abraham (Heb. 11:18).

The blessings would flow through Isaac.

The Pharisees one day boasted to Jesus: "Abraham is our father"; to which Jesus replied: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (Jn. 8:39; cp. v. 44). (Cp. Romans 2:25-29)

V. 8

One does not become a child of God simply because he is born into a particular family or race.

V. 9

"At this time will I come" - It was Christ preincarnate as "the Messenger of YAHWEH" who made this statement (cp. Gen. 18:1, 10; with Jn. 8:56).

V. 7-9
"It is not what we get from our fathers and mothers that ensures our place in the family of God" (Denney cited by Thomas, p. 253).

The main point of vv. 6-9 is: Even when God was forming the nation, He was selective, so why would God be viewed as inconsistent for being selective at present (in Paul's day)?

In other words: Israel's unbelief does not contradict God's character or Word.

God is in no way inconsistent with His promises and prophecies. He has always been selective.

B. God's choosing was never based on personal merit
(v. 10-13)
(Salvation has nothing to do with what you do)

V. 10-13
God's choosing of Jacob over Esau is even stronger proof of divine election than that of Isaac over Ishmael because Jacob and Esau were both legitimate children (Ishmael was not); they were twin brothers of the same mother; Isaac and Ishmael were from different mothers (SEE Thomas, p. 251).

V. 13
"Esau have I hated" - Hatred does not mean "antagonism against" as it does today. It simply refers to someone who is not preferred above someone else. It is a comparative term which means to "love less"

(Cp. Lk. 14:26; Mt. 6:24 - where Jesus taught that to be His disciple, one had to "hate" even family. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" - Lk. 14:26)

The words :love and hate" in this context are not a matter of "personal feeling, but a deliberate decision in favor of one rather than the other" (Thomas, p. 252).

God choose to give the blessing (birthright) to Jacob (this is agapa love); He chose not to give it to Esau (this is all that is meant by the word "hate").

II. If God does not choose everyone (all in Israel) to be saved: Is God FAIR? (V. 14-33)

(Answer: Yes! Because of four reasons.)
[The Vindication of God's Sovereignty]

V. 14

Is God unrighteous for showing favoritism on Jacob (who did nothing good) over Esau (who did nothing evil)?

Is God unfair? unjust? wrong?

"God forbid" = May it never be!

A. God is fair in showing mercy to whomever He chooses

(v. 15-18)
(God's will shows His righteous sovereignty)

V. 15

It is God's character to be merciful and compassionate, but God is not obligated to be such to everyone. Especially since no one deserves it.
"Mercy" = the withholding of deserved punishment (to not give someone what he deserves).

No one deserves mercy. If it could be deserved, it would not be mercy.

God would be unrighteous if we deserved mercy and He did not give it to us. But the facts are that no one deserves mercy.

The very word "mercy" shows that the object of such mercy stands guilty and has not earned it.

ILLUS: Napoleon and the mother who begged mercy for her guilty son - Green #873.

ILLUS: If I have a dollar bill and choose to give it to _____ instead of _____, is there unrighteousness in me? No. I am free to give it to whomever I choose.

ILLUS: Picture in your mind:

--Someone who owns a leather coat manufacturing company in NYC.

--Outside his company are 100 homeless vandals who each had a part in breaking his windows, graffiti-ing his building, and cursing him as he left the factory each day.

--Despite what they did to him and his company property, the owner ironically displays up in front of his building a large sign which says: "FREE COAT - Just ring the bell and ask for it."

Everyone who walks by sees the sign but -

--Some couldn't read it, so they never came.
--Others were too proud to ask for a coat, so they never came.
--Others heard many lies and bad things about the coat company which turned them off.
--Some frankly didn't feel they needed a coat.

Since no one came, the compassionate owner went one step further. He went out into the streets and selected 10 unworthy and uninterested homeless vandals and took them by the hand one by one and led them to the coat company. He then gave them each a brand new coat.

--Is the owner <u>unfair</u> (unjust) because he didn't also give a coat to the 90 other homeless vandals? NO! Why? Because he was under no obligation to give them all one! Actually, no one deserved one! But because of his grace and mercy, he of his own will chose out 10.

V. 16
"Willeth" (Man's desire) . . . "runneth" (man's efforts).

Our reception of God's mercy and compassion had nothing to do with our desiring it or working for it; but it simply comes to us because of God's arbitrary choice to give it to us.

"Willeth...runneth" - Both words point to <u>human efforts</u> and "<u>human striving</u> and may reflect the symbol of an athletic contest" (Reinecker, citing Mitchel, p. 369).

God did not merely choose you because He knew you would choose Him, but in fact He had to choose you because He knew you wouldn't choose Him!

"There is none that seeketh after God" (Ro. 3:11)

Ps. 14:3 - "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

V. 17

"I raised thee up" - God, as it were, calls up the actors onto the stage of history (Reinecker, p. 369).

Pharaoh was not hardened for the mere sake of hardening, but that God would be glorified through it.

Pharaoh's hard heart allowed God to unleash all ten plagues on Egypt, and thus bring Israel out "with a high hand."

The plagues which should have had a softening effect on Pharaoh's heart actually hardened it.

"The same sunlight that melts the ice also hardens the clay."

V. 18

God showed mercy on Moses and Israel, but hardened Pharaoh.

Question: When God hardened Pharaoh, did He harden a heart that was previous <u>soft</u>? No!

[Actually, no man's heart is soft toward God (Rom. 3) unless God chooses to make it soft.]

When God hardened Pharaoh's heart, He was actually <u>keeping hard</u> that which was already hard.

He hardened his heart after Pharaoh himself hardened it [Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex. 8:15, 32; 9:34, 35); then God hardened it (Ex. 9:12, 10:1, 11:10). The hardening was only temporary (Ex. 9:16).]

If God can harden a hard-hearted Pharaoh (to which all Jews would have said "Amen"), cannot He also harden a hard-hearted nation? (SEE: Mt. 13:13-15; cp. Is. 6:10).

B. God is fair in <u>molding vessels</u> for His own glory (v. 19-23)
(God's <u>workmanship</u> shows His righteous sovereignty)

V. 19

The question is: Why does God blame me? (How can He condemn me?) . . . For who has ever stood against (and stopped) what He determined to be done (who ever thwarted God's purpose or intention?).

In other words, if we are nothing but puppets, if we are nothing but victims of divine choice, how could God condemn us?

V. 20

If v. 19 were a false assumption, Paul would have corrected it in v. 20, but he does not. Rather, he appeals to silence (MacArthur, tape).

"Repliest" = to "answer back"; to "talk back" in a reciprocal manner.

Paul is saying: "Who are you (you mere mortal) to talk back to God and question what He chooses to do?"

It is absurd to think that man could question God's integrity. Paul is saying: "How could you, O man with your small, puny, microscopic, pea brain; with your thimble-full of information; with your limited ability to know and your great ability to forget. . . How could you make God answerable to you? You don't have all the facts, and yet you would question God? (MacArthur, tape)
God is the potter. Is. 64:8 - "But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."

"Shall the thing molded say to the molder, 'Why did you make me this way?'"

This question is especially inappropriate when you consider the poor condition of the lump of clay before the potter even began to work on it.

V. 21

"The same lump" - depicting the same lump of depraved, sinful humanity.

"A potter can make of the same clay either a beautiful dish or a trash barrel" (MacArthur, tape)

God is not claiming the right to create damnable creatures in order to damn them, but He is claiming His right to deal with creatures who are <u>sinful already</u> as He wills.

He does not make men sinners (James 1), but He chooses the disposition of men who are sinners already (MacArthur tape)

The Bible does not teach that God creates occupants for hell. Hell was not made for man, nor man for hell.

Rather, the bible teaches that "everlasting fire was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41).

V. 22

God does not choose to make a person a candidate for hellfire, but He does have the prerogative to keep them that way.

By using the word "formed" (v. 20) rather than "created," Paul shows that he is not referring to original creation, but to spiritual destination. God is regarded as taking men as He finds them (in their present condition), just as the potter does not create the clay, but uses it (Thomas, p. 260).
"Fitted to destruction" = either a middle or passive participle. If it is passive, Paul is teaching that God is the one fitting (preparing) the vessels for destruction. If it is middle, the clay itself fits itself for destruction by hardening itself against the potter.

(SEE Jer. 18:1-8, which in verse 8 indicates that the condition of the clay will determine the outcome of the vessel)

The phrase "fitted to destruction" is best understood in the middle voice: meaning the vessels made themselves fitted unto destruction.

Proof:

1) God is seen as "enduring" (bearing with) such vessels with patience [in hopes of repentance, but knowing there will be none. Hence, "vessels of wrath"].

2) NOTE: The intended contrast of phrases grammatically: "Fitted for destruction" (middle voice) - "Prepared unto glory" (v. 23 - active voice)

[If God intended the fitting" to be done by Him, why did He not use the active voice, which would have been the most grammatically balanced way to demonstrate such a point?]

Why did God allow sin in the world?

1. So that He could show His wrath.

   God's holy wrath is as much a part of His nature as is His love, mercy, and grace.

   The entrance of sin in the world was necessary so that God could manifest His wrath, judgment, holy anger, and justice.

   God's wrath is one aspect of His nature that would go forever unseen if he had never allowed sin to enter the world.

2. So that He could show His power.

   a. God's power is seen in His ability to judge sin (cp. Revelation judgments)

   b. God's power is seen in His ability to redeem sinners

   "Men fit themselves for hell; but it is God that fits men for heaven (v. 23)" (Thomas, p. 261)

V. 23
The purpose of God saving us is so that He might display the riches of His glory.

C. God is fair in redeeming a remnant as He promised by His prophets (v. 24-29)
(God's Word shows His righteous sovereignty)

V. 25
"O see" - Hosea 1:9-10

V. 25/26
SEE Christ's illustration of the king and the marriage of His Son (Mt. 22:1-10)

V. 27
"Remnant" = that which is left; that which remains. In every age, God has always had a remnant of God-fearing people (EX: Noah, Abraham, Daniel and his 3 friends in Babylon; Elijah and the 7,000 who did not bow to Baal - I Ki. 19:18)

V. 28
"The work" - lit. "the Word" ("logos"). God will fulfill His Word in saving a remnant.

According to Isaiah 10:22-27, which Paul is quoting, the ultimate reference to the "remnant" is to the Jews who will be redeemed at the end of the Tribulation.

Verse 28 speaks of God's end-time salvation of His remnant which will occur with completeness (finality) and speed (quickness).

V. 29

cp. Isaiah 1:9

"A seed" = a godly remnant, genuine sons of God (cp. Ezra 9:2; Mal. 2:15).

Why was Sodom and Gomorrah so wicked? There were not even 10 righteous people in those cities (Gen. 18:22-33). Where there is no godly seed, a people (nation) will deteriorate to the likeness of Sodom and Gomorrah (SEE Is. 1:9).

When you think of Sodom and Gomorrah, two things come to mind:
1) gross wickedness
2) awesome judgment

Where there is no remnant:

1. Man's wickedness prevails

   Christians are the moral conscious of a society. Believers are a preserving influence (mt. 5:13-16 - "Salt and light")

   The presence of God's children has a sanctifying effect on others who are around them (EX: Joseph; Daniel; I Cor. 7:14 - saved spouse).

2. God's judgment falls

   SEE Is. 13:19

   Where there is no Godly remnant, there will be unrestrained wickedness; and where there is such sin that its stench reeks to the high heavens, judgment is soon to follow!

   Paul is quoting Isaiah is making this point: If it were not for God sovereignly choosing out a people for Himself (cp. I Pet. 2:9); if He did not select a remnant, mankind would have been destroyed by fire and brimstone long ago!

D. God is fair in <u>rejecting a people</u> who attempt to be saved by their works (v. 30-33)

(God's <u>way</u> [of salvation] shows His righteous sovereignty)

"What shall we say then?" = Is God fair for only choosing a remnant of Jews and Gentiles to be saved? Is He fair for not saving all of Israel? Yes!

Why? Because the nation as a whole (for the most part) sought their salvation by some other means than by God's sovereign plan.

They sought to be saved by works.

God in His sovereignty chose a <u>plan</u> of saving lost mankind, and no one will be saved outside of His plan (way of salvation).

V. 31

"Followed" - lit. to "hunt after," to seek something by pursuing it.

"The Law of righteousness" - a righteousness that Israel thought came by means of the Law [a "law-righteousness"]

"Israel...hath <u>not attained</u>" = did <u>not arrive</u> at meeting the Law's perfect demands. Since God is perfect, His Law demanded perfection, yet no one has kept it all. The Law demanded complete obedience (SEE: Rom. 10:5; cp. Gal. 5:3).

To break one law is to be guilty of breaking all of them (James 2:10)

Therefore, all of us stand guilty before God of breaking all of His Laws. None of us has reached His perfect standard. "For all have sinned (missed the mark) and come short of the glory of god." (Ro. 3:23).

V. 32

"Wherefore" = Why? Why didn't Israel gain righteousness with God? Because they didn't seek salvation God's way.

Like many today, Israel wanted the <u>right</u> thing ("righteousness") but she went about getting it the <u>wrong</u> way ("works"). They were looking for the right thing, in the wrong place!

No one will boast in Heaven: "I achieved righteousness according to my plan, my genius, my ingenuity! No one will say before God: "I did it my way."

God says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD, For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Is. 55:8, 9)

"Faith" - Has its eyes fixed on God (specifically, the Messiah - Christ, the Rock).

"Works" - Has its eyes fixed on self - human efforts and achievements.

Hence, those who see God's salvation through eyes of faith see their need of Christ. They don't trip over the rock, rather they stand upon it!

But those whose gaze is on themselves (on what they can dot o achieve salvation by works), they--looking at their own righteous efforts and self-achieved spiritual muscle--trip over the Stone in front of them.

If you seek salvation by works, you will never attain it; and god will not be unrighteous because He rejects you from entering His kingdom.

The Bible is clear on this issue: Tit. 3:5, Eph. 2:8, 9; Gal. 5:4

"Stumbling stone" - Christ is the stumbling stone (cp. Is. 8:14, 28:16; I Pet. 2:8).

Christ is called the "Rock" (I Cor. 10:4).

To the believer, He is our "foundation" Rock (I Cor. 3:11), and "Living stone" (I Pet. 2:4).

To the church, He is the "chief cornerstone" (Ps. 118:22; Eph. 2:20).

To God the Father, He is the chosen ("elect") and "precious" chief corner stone (I Pet. 2:6).

To the Jews who crucified Him, He is "the stone which the builders disallowed" (I Pet. 2:7).

And to all who are disobedient to the gospel, He is "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense" (I Pet. 2:8).

All who stumble over Christ fall into the fires of hell.

V. 33

The Father placed the Rock (Christ) in Sion (Mt. Zion in Jerusalem).

No one remains neutral about Christ. You are either for Him or against Him.

--You either stumble over him (stumbling stone),

--Or are offended at Him (rock of offense)

--Or you believe on Him.

"Whosoever" = includes anyone (all who believe are the elect of God).

"Believeth" - Not a head knowledge, but a continual, life-long trust (NOTE: present tense).

"on Him" = Not merely in Him (intellectual assent), but "on Him" = complete reliance.

"Shall not be ashamed" - will not be put to shame)passive verb).

No one who sincerely comes to christ will be let down or left "hanging"

God does not let His believing elect down.

Those who will be ashamed will be those who sincerely thought that works were God's means to attain eternal life. They will be surprised to find out that works had no part in attaining God's sovereign salvation.

CONCLUSION:

The believer's response to Romans 9 should be one of humility and thankfulness (gratitude).

Our salvation (like God's election of Israel) had nothing to do with any goodness or initiative of our own, but a sovereign God chose us out of the multitudes to be His own.

--We should be humble because we could do nothing to save ourselves - we needed God.

--We should be thankful because even though we deserved hellfire, God showered us with His grace.