

**All Citizens Christian Church Calgary**

**Bible Study:** Tuesday, July 29th, 2025. **Topic: THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS 9**

**GOD'S SOVEREIGN CHOICE AND ISRAEL'S PLACE**

**INTRODUCTION:** This is again one of Apostle Paul’s Chapter that does not lend itself to easy understanding. The Jews were beginning to have issues with the fact that God has offered salvation to the Gentiles. They were beginning to wonder if God’s acceptance of the Gentiles means God has abandoned the Jews. Chapter 9 focuses on the sovereignty of God and His right to exercise His sovereign power. As we think of the sovereign power of God, we must realise that God is a just God and so even in exercising His sovereign power, He will be just. This chapter shows where the sovereignty of God meets the responsibility of man

Some of the areas might look contradictory but the Apostle did His best to explain those seeming contradictory areas. For instance, he answered the question if God was unjust**.** Apostle Paul’s sincere desire is that Israel would be saved. In Chapter 9, the Apostle showed that not all the children of Abraham were chosen, and not all the children of Isaac were chosen. He went further to show that the choice made by God is determined by God alone, and His criteria for His choice is also known to Him alone. And that when He chooses a person, He also determines what He would do with that person giving examples with Pharaoh. He also mentioned that God’s choice is not limited to the Jews but that His choice covers the entire world.

**I. Introduction: Paul's Anguish Over Israel (Romans 9:1-5)**

* **A. Paul's Deep Sorrow and Assurance:**
* What is the source of Paul's great sorrow and unceasing anguish? (v. 1-3) and
  + What is his wish and how does he emphasize the genuineness of his feelings? (v.1-3, "I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; **my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit**")
  + Do you ever have any pain when you see people not walking the path of righteousness?
* **B. Israel's Privileges and Covenantal Blessings:**
  + List the specific privileges Paul mentions that belong to Israel. (v. 4-5) **Deuteronomy 7:6, Exodus 4:22, Romans 3:1-2, Genesis 12:1-3, Exodus 25:8-9**
  + How does the mention of Christ's descent from Israel (v. 5) connect to God's faithfulness to His promises? **Micah 5:2, Gen 49:10**

**II. God's Sovereign Choice and the Nature of True Israel (Romans 9:6-13)**

* **A. The Word of God Has Not Failed:**
  + What is the apparent contradiction Paul is addressing in verse 6?
  + How does he resolve it by distinguishing between "Israel" and "children of the promise"? (v. 6b-7)
    - **Galatians 3:29, Romans 2:28-29.**
* **B. The Examples of Isaac and Ishmael (v. 7-9):**
  + What is the key point Paul makes using the example of Isaac and Ishmael? (It's not about natural descent, but God's promise)
  + What promise is reiterated here? (v. 9) - Ishmael is not part of the promise
* **C. The Examples of Jacob and Esau (v. 10-13):**
  + What makes the example of Jacob and Esau even stronger in demonstrating God's sovereign choice? (They were twins, born of the same parents, before they had done anything good or bad)
  + What is the purpose of God's choice in this instance? (v. 11, "in order that God's purpose of election might stand, not because of works but because of him who calls")
  + What does the phrase "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" mean in this context? (A contrast of choice and preference, not necessarily personal animosity in the modern sense)- Check Amplified. The word hated is miseo (to love less)
    - **Malachi 1:2-3, Deuteronomy 7:7-8**

**III. God's Justice and Mercy: The Potter and the Clay (Romans 9:14-23)**

* **A. Addressing the Objection: Is God Unjust? (v. 14)**
  + How does Paul immediately answer this objection? "By no means!"
* **B. God's Sovereign Right to Show Mercy (v. 15-16):**
  + To whom does God show mercy? (v. 15, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.")
  + What is the implication for human will and effort? (v. 16, "So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.")
    - * **Exodus 33:19, Ephesians 2:8-9**, **Phil 2:13**
* **C. God's Sovereign Right to Harden or do anything (v. 17-18):**
  + What was God's ultimate purpose in raising up Pharaoh and hardening his heart? (v. 17, "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.”)
  + What is the summary statement about God's hardening and mercy? (v. 18, Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.)
    - * **Exodus 9:16, John 12:39-40**, **John 9: 1-3**
* **D. The Potter and the Clay Analogy (v. 19-23):**
  + What is the next objection Paul anticipates? (v. 19, "Why then does He still find fault? For who can resist his will?")
  + How does Paul respond using the imagery of the potter and the clay? (v. 20-21)
  + What are the "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction" and "vessels of mercy, prepared beforehand for glory"? (v. 22-23)
    - * **Isaiah 29:16, Jeremiah 18:3-6, Daniel 4:35**, **Prov. 16:4, 2 Timothy 2:20-21**.

**IV. God's Call to Both Jews and Gentiles (Romans 9:24-29)**

* **A. Calling Not Only from Jews but also from Gentiles: V. 24**
* **B. Old Testament Prophecies Confirming Gentile Inclusion:**
  + How does Hosea's prophecy (v. 25-26) support the inclusion of Gentiles? ("Those who were not my people I will call ‘My people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘Beloved.’")
    - * **Hosea 2:23, Rom 10:12**, **Gal 3:28**
  + Isaiah's prophecy (v. 27-28) says not all Israel will be saved.
    - * **Isaiah 10:22, Isaiah 1:9**

**V. Conclusion: Israel's Stumbling and the Righteousness of Faith (Romans 9:30-33)**

* **A. The Pursuit of Righteousness:**
  + What did the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, obtain? (v. 30, "righteousness that is by faith")
  + What did Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, fail to reach? (v. 31, "They did not succeed in fulfilling the law.")
* **B. The Stumbling Stone:**
  + Why did Israel stumble? (v. 32, "Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works.")
  + Who is the "stumbling stone and rock of offense"? (v. 33, referring to Christ)
    - * **Isaiah 8:14, Isaiah 28:16,  1 Peter 2:6-8**

**VI. Application and Discussion Questions:**

* How does Romans 9 challenge our understanding of fairness and justice from a human perspective?
* What is the difference between God's sovereign election and human free will? How do these concepts relate, and where do they seem to diverge?
* How should we understand God's "hardening" of hearts in light of His love and mercy?
* What comfort can we draw from God's unchanging purposes, even when we don't fully understand them?
* How does Romans 9 help us understand the relationship between Israel and the Church today?
* What is the practical implication of pursuing righteousness by faith rather than by works in our own lives?