

# *Right in God's Sight*

## Studies from the Book of Romans

### Lesson 13

#### Romans 9:1–33

#### **Romans 9:1–13**

#### **God's Sovereignty**

Chapter 9 begins a three chapter departure from the subject inserted between Paul's sharing of the Good News and his instructions on practical Christian living (chapters 12–15). He begins with issues he personally wrestled with: the fact that many Jews had not responded to the Gospel message and why they didn't recognize it as God's truth.

Read Romans 9:1–33.

Paul has just finished sharing about the power of God's love for His people. He will now lay bare his own heart in these next verses, displaying his agony of spirit for his fellow Jews who did not believe in the Messiah.

1. Can you sense the anguish of Paul's soul in verses 1–5? What does Paul reveal about himself? Who validates his concern? vv. 1–2
  - a. To what extent would he be willing to go on behalf of his fellow Jews? v. 3
  - b. What regard does Paul show for God's chosen people? What role were they privileged to have? v. 4

Paul states that Christ Himself was a Jew (v. 5) and was over the Jews; yet they failed to respond to the One who had singled them out and blessed them forever! Paul was once among the most zealous persecutors of Christians but he had experienced a personal transformation other Jews had not. He knew that God's Word had not failed His people but at the same time the Jews were blinded, putting their Messiah to a horrible death!



- Romans 9:21; 2 Timothy 2:20
  
- Ephesians 1:11
  
- Ephesians 3:11
  
- 2 Timothy 1:9

*Memory Verse:* “As He says also in Hosea, ‘I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved.’” Romans 9:25

***Word Wealth:***

Using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.), write a definition for the words below.

**accursed** (9:3) \_\_\_\_\_

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**remnant** (9:27) \_\_\_\_\_

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**stumbled** (9:32) \_\_\_\_\_

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*“If God were compelled to be merciful by some cause outside himself, not only would his mercy be so much less mercy, but he himself would be so much the less God.”*

F.F. Bruce

## Romans 9:14–29

## God's Justice

Critics of Paul earlier argued that God was unjust to condemn sinners (Romans 3:5); now we find the complaint that God is unjust for saving them! Herein lays one of the fundamental problems with human beings: we resist His judgment and we resist His salvation. But we are all at His mercy because none are righteous; all seek our own way and do not understand His ways.

Read Romans 9:14–29.

Paul realized that some would question the fairness of God choosing some people and not others (v.14). Paul answers that we do not sit in judgment of God; He sits in judgment of us, but His judgment is more than fair.

1. In speaking with Moses, what one word sums up the basis of God's dealing with man? vv. 15–16
  
2. Paul uses Pharaoh as the example of God's longsuffering and mercy (v. 17). Read Exodus 9:13–17 to answer the following . . .
  - a. What was God's determined purpose for His chosen people?
  
  - b. What action could God have taken against Pharaoh and the Egyptians for not letting His people go?
  
  - c. Instead God was merciful, targeting Pharaoh's hard heart with the reality of who He is. What was God's purpose for Pharaoh who continued to resist?
  
  - d. As Pharaoh exalted himself against God's people, who was he actually rebelling against?
  
  - e. Briefly summarize the mercy of God that is evident in this passage.

There are passages throughout the book of Exodus that speak of Pharaoh hardening his own heart and other instances where it says God hardened Pharaoh's heart. To put it simply, God only further established what was already in Pharaoh's heart—his unwillingness to submit to God. As a result, God let Pharaoh's arrogance and evil run its full course. We saw this same action on God's part carried out in Romans 1: "*He gave them over . . . to do what ought not to be done.*"

3. What is God, therefore, justified in doing? v. 18

Paul goes on in verse 19 to make one more assertion about God's right to choose. He is not speaking here about someone who asks out of genuine concern, but rather to answer the critical defiant challenge of a skeptic: "*Why does He still find fault?*" Paul answers that it is inappropriate to talk back to God, to object to His sovereign will.

4. In order to illustrate this inappropriateness, Paul uses an Old Testament example of the potter and the clay (vv. 20–21). What does the creator have every right to do with the creation?

It is not the vessels right to complain or question; it is completely within reason for God to take what is common clay and turn it into something that is a vessel of honor. He has made each of us unique and for a purpose, which is to glorify Him.

5. Paul then says that God can choose to endure with great longsuffering the objects of His wrath? Why would He do this? vv. 22

- a. What merciful reason does 2 Peter 3:9 reveal about God's nature?

6. Contrast the objects of God's wrath, which are doomed for destruction with those that are the objects of His mercy. vv. 23–24

- a. What does He want to make known to them? Give an example.

- b. When did He prepare these blessings?

- c. Whom does this include?

The word *called* in verse 24 literally means *chosen*. God sovereignly chose the Jews and He sovereignly chose the Gentiles—us—to inherit His salvation. There is no room for pride in this, just humility. Paul here is emphasizing the fact that predestination should stir up gratitude in the hearts of God's people, reminding us of how indebted we are to Him for choosing us.

To back up his point, in verses 25–29, Paul quotes from the Old Testament prophets. The first is from Hosea 2:23 (v. 25) and Hosea 1:10 (v. 26). When Israel turned away from God, no longer wanting to be His, He would turn to the Gentiles to become His beloved chosen ones. Christ would open the door for many more to come.

Paul then quotes from the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 10:22–23 (v. 27–28) and Isaiah 1:9 (v. 29), speaking of the fact that the Jews would be in number *like the sand of the sea*, but that only a small remnant of them would be saved. God reserved a remnant for himself to be saved by grace. Israel deserved destruction and would have met the same fate as Sodom and Gomorrah if God did not reserve a remnant through which the Messiah would come.

(Note: In Romans 11, Paul will speak further regarding this remnant of God’s people, the Jews, who ultimately will be saved.)

## **Romans 9:30–33**                      Israel’s Current Unbelief

Read Romans 9:30–33 several times through.

Paul appears to be in deep water at this point—entering into an in-depth discussion on God’s sovereignty while also expanding on Israel’s current position of unbelief. We must be reminded that underlying Paul’s explanation is his own calling and purpose: he was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles—to take God’s blessing of salvation to all people of the earth. Israel had lost sight of their calling to be God’s light among the godless. They had failed and that failure had resulted in spiritual blindness and unbelief. Paul understood that God’s grace had not only given him back physical sight, but also spiritual sight. He was now to help the spiritually blind to see the truth. It was this passion that guided him and burdened his heart for those who did not know their Messiah.

1. Summarize Paul’s point about each of the following . . .
  - a. The Gentiles did not know God and were not trying to be righteous by the law, yet what did they attain? v. 30
  - b. Israel tried to attain righteousness by following the letter of the law but what happened? v. 31
  - c. Why were the Jews unable to attain it? v. 32
2. Paul says the Jews stumbled over the “stumbling stone.” Read 1 Peter 2:4–10.
  - a. Who is this “chief cornerstone” rejected by men but chosen and precious to God?
  - b. What happens to those who believe on Him?
  - c. What happens to those who do not believe on Him?
  - d. Since you are a believer, what do verses 9–10 of this passage have to say about *you* and *your calling*?

# *My Romans Road*

Listen . . . Learn . . . Live . . . God's Truth!

Take a look back at this week's lesson. Briefly recap what you learned this week and how you intend to live it out.

1. What lesson in your study became real to you this week?

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2. How do you intend to apply this lesson to your daily life?

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## *Memory Verse:*

Write down what you learned about God from this week's memory verse.

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Write out the verse from memory.

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## *Prayer Request:*

Write out your most earnest prayer request and lift it to the Lord.

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