

ROMANS: The Gospel of God

Chapter 9

Simple Outline:

- 1-5 Introduction and wise opening to calm the Jews
- 6 Statement of election/reprobation in Israel
- 7-13 Illustrated from families of patriarchs
- 14-24 Proved from theology
- 25-29 Proved from scripture
- 30-33 Conclusion of response to the gospel

Introduction:

1. Paul wrote Romans to address Jewish and Gentile believers, who trusted the Law and national privilege.
2. The theme of this chapter is God's sovereign election to eternal life included only some Jews and Gentiles, the limited election within the nation of Israel being the hardest fact for that part of his audience to hear.
3. Chapters 9-11 comprise an independent lesson about Jews and Gentiles in God's redemptive plan, with the emphasis on their respective past, present, and future (from Paul's perspective) relationships to the gospel.
 - a. Chapters 1-8 give a soteriological treatise on the subject of justification by grace through faith in Christ.
 - b. Chapters 12-16 give miscellaneous practical instructions for sanctification and then personal greetings.
 - c. Chapter 9 is necessary for a right understanding of 10-11, since there is a tight connection among them.
4. Paul had previously denied salvation to the Jews based on natural or national privileges (2:25-29; 3:9-20), and he had strongly affirmed salvation to the Gentiles regardless of their history (1:16; 3:29-30; 4:13-17).
 - a. He will go much further in this chapter, with personal illustrations and powerful statements about Israel.
 - b. He will go so far to say that natural branches of Israelites had been cut off for wild branches of Gentiles!
5. Paul had exceptional knowledge of the Jew/Gentile questions in the churches (Gal 4:21-31; Eph 3:1-7).
 - a. The church at Rome had Jews and Gentiles, both groups influenced and threatened by Jewish legalism.
 - b. He fought Jewish legalism in his epistles (Rom 2-8; II Cor 3; Gal 1-6; Eph 2-3; Phil 3; Heb 1-13; etc.).
 - c. His emphasis was the unifying effect of Christ's death and the vanity of Moses' law for justification.
 - d. These three chapters, beginning with nine, are different – they are historical, descriptive, and prophetic.
6. Romans 9 is generally forgotten, neglected, or corrupted by most Christians, for it denies their assumptions.
 - a. It clearly demands a division among the Israelites, for the term must be divided (Rom 9:6; I Cor 10:18).
 - b. It exalts the will of God over the will of man like no other, putting man in the dust (or bucket of clay!).
 - c. It teaches election and predestination in strongest of terms, without emphasizing the terms themselves.
7. The chapter begins with a preface that takes up the first five verses and ends with an Amen of conclusion.
 - a. Paul, by the Holy Ghost, wisely introduced the hard lessons to follow with a very gentle and kind intro.
 - b. It is our goal to understand the overall sense, the individual role of verses, and any lessons for ourselves.
8. There are about five lessons to be recalled from earlier in the epistle to help you understand this chapter.
 - a. Paul clearly identified a spiritual Israel within national Israel earlier by reference (2:25-29).
 - b. Paul identified the word of God as the chief blessing that separated Israel from others (3:1-2).
 - c. He further explained that the disbelief of some did not alter the integrity of God's religion (3:3-4).
 - d. He reduced the skepticism against God using our sin for His glory to absurdity (3:5-6).
 - e. He reduced the antagonism against God using a man for His glory to damnation (3:7-8).

1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

I say the truth in Christ.

- A. Paul introduced his subject gently and benevolently, and he prudently protected his own character.
1. The subject matter he was to present would be hard for Jews to hear and receive, for he would describe an election within the nation that excluded many Jews from salvation (Rom 9:6-24).

2. Paul had to take special precautions and compromise his greater knowledge to placate the Jews.
 - a. When Paul chose Timothy, he circumcised him to help his reputation (Acts 16:1-3), even though Paul and Silas were delivering an anti-circumcision ruling from Jerusalem (16:4-5)!
 - b. He would wisely compromise for others wherever he could (I Cor 6:12; 9:19-23; 10:23-24).
 - c. The apostles requested Paul to carefully defend himself from anti-Israel and anti-Law charges by the Jews (Acts 21:17-26), which he agreed to do for the benefit of the Jews.
3. For several reasons, even believing Israelites might question Paul's national fairness to Israel.
 - a. Paul was sent as a teacher to the Gentiles and thus resented by his own nation (Acts 22:22).
 - b. Paul rejected national privilege and saw Jews and Gentiles as one (Rom 2:25-29; 3:9-19).
 - c. Paul taught plainly that the Gentiles had obtained the gracious favor of God (Rom 3:29-30).
 - d. Paul had a very different spirit about Jewish approval than Peter (Gal 2:1-10 cp 2:11-21).
 - e. Paul said at Antioch the Jews judged themselves unworthy of eternal life (Acts 13:46-48).
 - f. Thus when he wrote Hebrews to the Jews of Judea, he did not identify himself as the writer.
4. There is wisdom here we should learn – the discretion of knowing how to say difficult things.
 - a. Without wisdom, Paul could have started with verse six, declaring reprobation in Israel.
 - b. A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in until appropriate (Prov 29:11).
 - c. A word fitly spoken is beautiful (Prov 25:11), and Paul's emotional testimony is beautiful!
 - d. Paul was a master at combining authority with emotional appeals and pity. Read Philemon!
 - e. You can call this manipulation if you want, but it was godly (Matthew 10:16; II Cor 12:16).
 - f. Paul will say such great things about Israel that his preface will have its own Amen (9:5).
- B. Paul opened this section with obvious oaths to affirm his feelings toward the people of Israel.
 1. Swearing is obvious here by (a) Christ's name and (b) using the Holy Ghost as his witness.
 2. Swearing is godly when it is (a) done soberly and honestly, (b) for important matters of controversy, (c) only in the Lord's name, and (d) performed as stated regardless of cost.
 3. The purpose of swearing is to confirm your witness, often in court (Heb 6:16; Ex 22:8-15; Lev 5:1; Num 5:16-28; Deut 21:1-9; I Kgs 8:31-32; 22:16; Prov 29:24; Matt 26:63-64).
 4. Paul proved his tender regard for the Israelites by using oaths for what he was about to declare.
 5. To add credibility to the intimate, passionate declaration he would give next, Paul swore to it.
 6. Swearing is using God's person or name to confirm your character or testimony, and Paul does it often, including elsewhere in this epistle (1:9; II Cor 1:23; 11:31; Gal 1:20; etc.).
 7. Swearing is an act of worship, if done in God's name, for a just and important cause, that you fully perform (Deut 10:20; Eccl 5:1-7; Jer 4:2; 5:2; Isaiah 65:16; etc.).
 8. God Himself has sworn and explained it once for your benefit (Num 14:23,28-30; Deut 1:34-35; Ps 95:11; Heb 3:11,18; 4:3; 6:13-18).
 9. In other words, swearing frivolously for small things, or by any object other than God, or without intent or action to keep it, or without true religion, is swearing condemned by scripture.
 10. Jesus and James condemned the swearing of the Pharisees. Compare Matthew 5:33-37 and James 5:12 with Matthew 23:16-22, which is a great and useful lesson in Bible interpretation.
 11. We deny as heretics the Mennonites, Quakers, and Jehovah's Witnesses for rejecting all oaths.
 12. For swearing and oaths in general ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/swearing-and-oaths.pdf>.
 13. For swearing in the Sermon on the Mount ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/sermon-mountain-6.pdf>.
- C. Let us as believers follow the holy example of Paul and only speak the truth in all our dealings.
 1. The armor of God to stand against the wiles of the devil includes girding with truth (Eph 6:14).
 2. When we speak the truth, we should do so in love for the edification of all hearers (Eph 4:15).
 3. Let us keep the feast of the New Testament – the communion supper – with truth (I Cor 5:8).
 4. We should be known so much for truth that no one attacks, doubts, or questions our words.
 5. Being in Christ should result in us speaking the truth without any guile at all (Revelation 14:5).

I lie not.

- A. Paul affirmed and asserted the truth of his forthcoming declaration by stating he was not lying.
- B. The repetition or redundancy of the phrases in this first verse was his wisdom to enhance the point.
- C. You should be able to easily imagine trying to convince someone of something hard to believe by repetitively rephrasing your honesty and truth in the matter while also rejecting any deceit or lying.
- D. Let us follow the holy example of Paul and put away all lying and speak only the truth (Eph 4:25).
- E. You do little more like the devil than when you lie, for he is the father of lies and lying (John 8:44).

My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.

- A. Paul affirmed and asserted the truth of his forthcoming declaration by calling forth two witnesses!
 - 1. He declared that his conscience, the candle of the Lord, confirmed his groanings (Pr 20:27).
 - 2. His conscience was in total agreement with the Holy Ghost, for Whom he spoke here.
 - 3. When God is witness to your righteousness, there are benefits that will follow (Ps 18:20-27).
 - 4. But you better be righteous before you call on Him to witness your life (Ps 139:23-24; 26:1-5).
- B. The repetition or redundancy of the phrases in this first verse was his wisdom to enhance the point.
- C. Paul had a pure conscience by zealous godliness (Acts 23:1; 24:16; II Cor 1:12; II Timothy 1:3).
- D. Consider your baptism as an oath to living for Christ by a good conscience (I Pet 3:21; Rom 6:3-5).
- E. For more about the conscience and using it for godliness: http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/20_27.htm.
- F. A seared conscience leading to hypocritical lies is a trait of Roman Catholicism (I Timothy 4:2).
- G. Obey your conscience, or you will sear it, for it will become dull and ineffectual to warn you.

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

That I have great heaviness.

- A. Here is where he begins the declaration of his sentiments toward Israelites that required the oaths.
- B. Paul's sincerity cannot be doubted: he had a great and constant burden for the conversion of Israel.
 - 1. The matter caused great heaviness, which is a caring heart weighed down by a heavy burden.
 - 2. He will mention his heart's desire and prayer for Israel's salvation in the next chapter (10:1).
 - 3. No people were offered more than Israel, but many of them could not see Christ over animals!
 - 4. Consider Paul's unique view Israel and their unique heritage when considering his great grief.
- C. How much heaviness do you have for others' conversion? We cannot escape by God's sovereignty.
 - 1. If we follow Paul as we should, we should first have a heart's desire and then prayers by it.
 - 2. Yes, we believe in the sovereign predetermination of all things, but God includes use of means.

And continual sorrow in my heart.

- A. The matter caused him continual sorrow, for he saw and felt blinded Jews wherever he traveled.
- B. As a Jew, from a Jewish family, and preaching in Jewish synagogues, he saw their blindness often.
- C. Your love for family members, especially those having heard the truth, should move your heart.
- D. It is our godly compassion to earnestly beg God for the conversion of our children and others'.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

For I could wish.

- A. Paul did not wish for this exchange – his conversion or eternity for others – the verse is subjunctive in mood, expressing a hypothetical desire, not indicative in mood, declaring a definite fact.
- B. Paul had sufficient affection and concern for those considered to be compatible with such an idea.

- C. This kind of language is not new, as the great leader Moses spoke very similarly (Ex 32:30-35).
- D. It was subjunctive mood for several reasons that should be somewhat apparent to Bible readers.
 - 1. It would not be effective, for no man can redeem another (Ps 49:6-9; John 1:13; Rom 9:16).
 - 2. It would not be proper or right, for God did not call men to such actions to compete with Him.
 - 3. It would not be proper or right, for godly men moved by the Spirit did not oppose God's will in matters of salvation, for conversion and election both require God's will (II Tim 2:25-26).
 - 4. It was stated, not necessarily as hyperbole, but as the grandest expression possible of concern.
- E. Though we shall choose a practical cursing to understand here, in either case it is only hypothetical.

That myself were accursed from Christ.

- A. How did Paul wish he could be accursed from Christ for the sake of some of his national kinsmen?
- B. We understand **accursed from Christ** as rejection from the practical phase of fellowship in Christ.
 - 1. This would be a castaway, which was something Paul strongly feared and avoided (I Cor 9:27), the best illustration of which in the Bible might be King Saul and his latter reprobate life.
 - 2. False brethren or teachers were accursed, or excluded, by the churches (Gal 1:8-9; I Cor 16:22).
 - 3. Jesus Christ's churches are known in scripture as Christ Himself (I Cor 12:12 of Eph 1:22-23).
 - 4. Exclusion put them outside the church and under God's judgment (I Cor 5:5; I Tim 1:19-20).
 - 5. When Paul sought to reach beyond exclusion, he spoke of physical death (Gal 5:12; Ac 5:1-11).
 - 6. It is not the prerogative of men to curse or consign other men to eternal torment (Matt 7:21-23).
 - 7. There is a difference between being accursed from Christ or cursed by Christ (Matthew 7:23).
 - 8. Many at Corinth were under damnation, not in the lake of fire, but physically (I Cor 11:29-32).
 - 9. The matter was gospel conversion, not election or glorification, as we shall see (Rom 10:1-5).
 - 10. If it were more than that – election to glorification – then we have Paul fighting God's will, which he shortly declares to be righteous (9:14-18) and beyond questioning (9:19-21).
 - 11. If it were more than that – election to glorification – then Paul should have wept for Gentiles, but instead he endured all things for the sakes of the Gentile elect (II Tim 2:10).
- C. We do not understand **accursed from Christ** as condemnation to the lake of fire in the final phase.
 - 1. For Paul to consider such a thing, we must make the issue at hand eternal life, which it was not.
 - 2. We do not give Paul the credit for having love for souls equal to God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 3. We do not slander Paul by putting him in a posture of opposing God's electing grace and will.
 - 4. We do not give Paul the credit for having love for Israelites greater than Moses their champion.
 - 5. Moses offered his own practical judgment by God when interceding for Israel (Ex 32:30-35).
 - a. It is impossible for God to blot any out of the book of life of the Lamb slain, for that would overthrow the preservation of the elect unto eternal life (John 6:38-39; Rom 8:38-39; etc.).
 - b. God revealed the book referred to by Moses was of practical judgment, not eternal torment (Ex 32:33-35 cp Deut 9:14; 29:20-21; Num 11:15; II Kings 14:27; I Chron 21:17; Ps 56:8; 69:28; 139:16; Isaiah 4:3; Ezekiel 13:9; Mal 3:16-18; I Cor 11:29-32).
 - c. If Moses intended the Lamb's book of life, then he used impossible hyperbole to reason with the Lord; but the Lord's answer indicates a book in which names may be blotted out.

For my brethren.

- A. Paul was of the family of Israel and addressed Israelites as brethren (Acts 13:26 cp Acts 15:7,13).
- B. When doing so with a pure audience, there was no allusion to proselytes (Acts 23:1,6; 28:17).
- C. Look ahead to the first clause of 9:4 for details regarding the objects of Paul's great affection.

My kinsmen according to the flesh.

- A. Paul was an Israelite in the flesh, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin (11:1,12-14).
- B. He specifically appealed to this fleshly fact in condemning the Jewish legalists (Philippians 3:4-6).
- C. Look ahead to the first clause of 9:4 for details regarding the objects of Paul's great affection.

4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

Who are Israelites.

- A. This is the first time in the epistle Paul used the beloved title for God's nation, rather than Jews.
- B. For whom was Paul so vexed that he expressed such deep and constant concern and grief for them?
 - 1. They were clearly his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh – national Israelites (9:3).
 - 2. They were Israelites - either the physical nation in general or the true elect Jews of that nation.
 - a. Remember – Paul had already identified true elect Jews from mere national Jews (2:28-29).
 - b. Remember – there were Israelites indeed (John 1:47) and of God (Gal 6:16) in the nation.
 - c. Zacchaeus, like Nathaniel, was a true child of Abraham and of God (Luke 19:1-10).
 - d. These were the elect Israelites Paul desired and prayed for their conversion (10:1; 11:28).
- C. Paul could not possibly have grieved for those rejected by God and mere children of the flesh, or he fretted against God, opposed the rest of his chapter, and involved himself in hopeless grief.
 - 1. Did Paul grieve for an Israel different than God's Israel and against His will (9:6-8,22-24)?
 - 2. Did Paul grieve for those Jesus called children of the devil and not of God (John 8:39-47)?
 - 3. We know Paul endured all things for the elects' sakes (II Tim 2:10), not for mere reprobates.
- D. At this point in the chapter, Paul is not being clear or precise about all Israel or only elect Israel.
 - 1. He will make the clear and obvious distinction in 9:6; then he will clearly illustrate it (9:7-24).
 - 2. His grief must be limited in the way we have above, lest he be chafing against God Himself.
 - 3. The things he listed in favor of Israel applied generally and loosely to the nation, as indicated by the opening sentence of 9:6, where Paul corrects any idea of total national rejection (11:1-5).
 - 4. His particular concern, shown by his grief, was for elect Israelites rejecting the gospel, which was a horrible travesty in light of their privileges as Israelites (3:1-2; 10:1-5; Ps 147:19-20).

To whom pertaineth.

- A. The nation of Israel, and particularly the elect within it, had enormous privileges granted by God.
- B. It was hard to imagine, even for the gifted apostle, to see his nation reject their promised Messiah.
- C. In spite of fantastic privileges above any other nation, they would not believe the kingdom gospel.
- D. With so many divine privileges, as he would not enumerate, it is hard to comprehend their unbelief.
- E. By the separation from other people, and Paul's relationship to them, we understand his great grief.

The adoption.

- A. They were adopted by God as His particular people, or His children (Exodus 4:22-23; Hosea 11:1).
- B. Adoption here is not that as spiritual/eternal sons of God (Rom 8:14-17; Eph 1:3-6; I John 3:1-3).

And the glory.

- A. They witnessed Jehovah's glory, shaming all other gods (Ex 16:7,10; 24:16-17; 33:18,22; 40:34-35; Lev 9:6,23; Num 14:10; 16:19,42; Deut 5:24; I Kgs 8:10-11; etc., etc.).
- B. They had God's glory in another way, the Ark of the Covenant (I Sam 4:21-22; 6:5; Ps 78:59-66).

And the covenants.

- A. Jehovah made various covenants with them (Gen 15:17-21; 17:1-10; Ex 19:5-6; Deut 4:12-13; 9:5).
- B. Some of the promises or covenants extended into the future to the New Testament (Jer 31:31-34).
- C. Though we think poorly of circumcision by its legal vanity, it was indeed a blessing (Rom 3:1-2).

And the giving of the law.

- A. The word of God was a fabulous blessing that set them apart from all other nations, as Paul had already indicated (3:1-2; Deut 4:5-8; 6:24-25; 29:29; 32:45-47; Ps 147:19-20).
- B. They received the law by God's finger, Moses, and angels (Ex 31:18; Jn 7:19; Ac 7:53; Gal 3:19)!
- C. This is the law that David praised so highly in the book of Psalms (1:1-3; 19:7-11; 119:1-176)!

And the service of God.

- A. Jehovah gave His form of worship to Israel only – no other nation knew how to worship Jehovah.
- B. Ordinances of divine service and a priesthood were prescribed for them (Lev 1:1-2; Heb 9:1-10).
- C. When later immigrants had trouble with lions, they added some proper worship (II Kgs 17:24-33).

And the promises.

- A. Jehovah made many promises through His prophets to this nation for the future (Jer 31:35-40).
- B. They had the promises of God, from Abraham to Malachi? (I Kings 8:56; Psalm 105:42; Gal 3:16).

5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Whose are the fathers.

- A. The patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – were their nation's fathers (Deut 9:5; Acts 3:13).
- B. Paul will refer to election flowing from promises to these men as he concludes (Rom 11:28).

And of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came.

- A. As Paul indicated earlier in the epistle, Jesus Christ was made of David's seed in the flesh (1:3).
- B. They had the Messiah of God come as promised (Deut 18:15; Matt 1:1). What a great blessing!
- C. He came according to a prophetic timetable written down by Daniel that could be easily counted.

Who is over all.

- A. Jesus Christ is over all (Ps 8:5-6; Heb 2:7-8; Matt 28:18; Heb 8:1-12; I Cor 15:24-28).
- B. He is reigning and ruling now (Ps 89:3-4, 26-27, 34-37; Eph 1:19-22; I Tim 6:13-16; Rev 2:26-27)!
- C. We are not looking for a King sometime in the future – we have a glorious king right now.
- D. We may argue from the present tense verb to be in this clause as Jesus did from that in Ex 3:6!

God blessed for ever.

- A. Jesus is God, blessed forever! He is not God-blessed forever! Do you understand the difference?
- B. He is the Word of God, Who was God (John 1:1-2; 8:58; Ex 3:14; I Tim 3:16; Col 2:9; Heb 1:8).
- C. He is the creator God, who is blessed for ever (Rom 1:25; I Chron 16:36; II Cor 11:31; I Tim 6:15).

Amen.

- A. It is so in truth.
- B. Believest thou this?

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Not.

- A. Paul had not yet identified the danger facing Israel – it was only implied, and that implied vaguely.
 - 1. This is not timidity on the part of the apostle, but rather a further aspect of wisdom and grace.
 - 2. Rather than bluntly declare Israel's judgment, his introduction warmed readers to his doctrine.
 - 3. Before stating election within Israel leaving many rejected, Paul answered a Jewish objection.
 - 4. Did Paul's grief for Israel to whom God had promised great things mean His word had failed?
- B. Paul used *not* to modify or explain his great grief and continual sorrow by limiting the problem.
 - 1. To this point, the entirety of his introduction or preface (9:1-5), he did not identify the problem.
 - 2. Thus far we have his truthful confession and hypothetical wish to suffer for some cause (9:1-3).
 - 3. Thus far we have a list of carnal and spiritual blessings that came to and through Israel (9:4-5).
 - 4. The implication is of a dire situation, which he assuaged as well as possible, but now limits it.
 - 5. Whatever concerned Paul in his preface is not as bad as a reading of his preface might imply.
- C. Paul's doctrine of God's rejection of Israel, which he had just implied and would now explain, did not contradict or overthrow the covenant promises of God to Israel to make God a liar or failure.

As though the word of God.

- A. What is the word of God here? There are some options to this blunt counterargument to his preface.
 - 1. Is it God's O.T. covenant promises to Israel that appear to have failed by Paul's fear for Israel?
 - 2. Is it the N.T. gospel and its lack of reception by the nation of Israel, which he shall soon show?
 - 3. Is it God's unconditional promise to Abram and his seed of salvation and eternal inheritance?
- B. We choose the unconditional promises made to Abraham and his seed for the following reasons.
 - 1. The context before included special *covenants, giving of the law, promises, and fathers* (9:4-5).
 - 2. The context following takes up God's promises to *the seed of Abram, namely Isaac* (9:7-8).
 - 3. The connected context deals with the *word of promise*, or the word of God, to Abraham (9:9).
 - 4. Israel's greatest trust was in God's promises to Abraham, which they considered absolute and unconditional to the whole nation for blessing in this life and in the next (Josh 24:1-3; II Chr 20:7; Neh 9:7-8; Psalm 47:9; 105:42; Isaiah 29:22; 41:8; 51:2; Ezek 33:24; Matt 1:1; 3:9; Luke 1:55,73; 13:16; 16:22; 19:9; John 8:33,39,53,56; Acts 3:25; 7:1-2; 13:26; Rom 4:1,13-16; 11:1; II Cor 11:22; Gal 3:16,29; 4:21-31; Heb 6:13; 7:4).
 - 5. God's promises to Abraham were first of their kind and greatest of their kind, which extended right into heaven, Abraham's bosom (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 17:1-8; 22:15-18; Heb 11:8-16).
 - 6. Our choice here cannot fully exclude general reference to the Old Testament scripture (3:1-4).

Hath taken none effect.

- A. The covenants and promises to Abraham and through Moses should have a great effect on Israel, for it was to that biological and national people that they were principally sent and intended.
- B. If Paul's fear and grief was unlimited, that is all of Israel had been rejected, then God's promises to Abraham had failed of being effectual, making God a liar and unwilling or unable to perform.
- C. But we know God's word is always effectual, for God is true and omnipotent (Num 23:19; Isaiah 55:10-11; Matt 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; I Thess 2:13; II Tim 2:13; Heb 6:17-18).
- D. Paul handled a similar argument earlier in Romans in dialogistically refuting Jewish claims (3:3-4).
 - 1. The Jews assumed some Israelites not believing could not make God's promises ineffectual, for they were confident their whole nation and all its people would be saved regardless of unbelief.
 - 2. Paul rebuked their heresy by declaring God's complete integrity and truthfulness and the universal sin of all Jews, which left God righteously as Judge over a people rejecting His word.

- E. Paul will show in the coming chapters and verses that God's promises were effectual (Ro 11:1-2), when the right object of those promises is considered – the elect and foreknown portion of Israel.
- F. The issue here is not proportional of how many did or did not believe Paul's N.T. gospel, but rather it is the Jews' error of salvation of the entire nation being refuted by Paul's grief for many Jews.
 - 1. The Jews assumed God's covenants and promises were unconditional and unlimited to Israel.
 - 2. Therefore, Paul's grief for Israel implied a loss of some, few or many, which would fault God.
 - 3. However, God's unconditional promises were never intended for the nation, but for the elect.
 - 4. The language is the word of God taking effect, not God's word being received, as in the gospel.
 - 5. God's word to Abraham took perfect effect and was perfectly fulfilled – in one of seven sons!

For they are not all Israel.

- A. We must choose – not all are elect Israel that are of national ... or not all national Israel are elect?
 - 1. We already know the conclusion – God elected only some of national Israel for the promises.
 - 2. We already know the conclusion – the superset is national Israel; the subset is elect Israel.
 - 3. We shall let the contextual order of 9:7-8 choose for us ... not all ethnic Israelites are elect.
 - 4. The true Israel of God, the only one we should care about, is the small elect part of the nation.
 - 5. Throughout the Bible, but especially here in Romans 9-11, any use of *Israel* must be identified by some adjective to indicate whether we understand and intend elect or merely national Israel.
- B. The coordinating conjunction reconciles the reprobation of some Israelites and God's faithfulness.
 - 1. God's word has not failed, if promised to Abraham or Moses, for it was only for some of Israel.
 - 2. God is yet true, and His word is inviolate, for His promises are realized in the elect of Israel.
- C. Gentiles are not included here at all, though they are viewed as the Israel of God in various senses elsewhere in the New Testament (Gal 6:16; Acts 15:12-18; Gal 3:28-29; 4:26-28).
- D. Though ethnic Israel appeared as God's people by national privilege, only the elect were truly so.

Which are of Israel.

- A. We understand this Israel to be elect Israel, comprised of only part of ethnic Israel. See above.
- B. Here is a profound statement, not altogether new, that establishes two Israel's for the 9-11 lesson.
 - 1. Any reference to Israel, especially in chapters 9-11, must be identified as either ethnic or elect.
 - 2. This distinction is crucial and must always be remembered, especially in this part of Romans.
 - 3. God hereby revealed that an elect, spiritual portion of Israel was the real object of His mercy.
 - 4. Election had already been introduced (8:28-33), but now it is applied specifically to Israel.
 - 5. Paul had also already introduced a difference among Jews by inward circumcision (2:28-29).
 - 6. This election of a small remnant within the nation had been described before (Isaiah 1:9 cp Rom 9:29; Isaiah 10:20-23 cp Rom 9:27-28; I Kings 19:18 cp Rom 11:2-5; Isaiah 17:6; 24:13-15; 37:31-32; Ezek 6:8-10; 14:21-23; Joel 2:32; Zeph 3:8-20; Zech 13:7-9).
 - 7. Isaiah was troubled like Paul, but the Spirit explained the small elect remnant (Isaiah 6:9-13).
- C. Any usage by Paul, especially in this context, to Israel must identify whether ethnic or elect Israel.
 - 1. Looking backward, his grief must be for elect Israel, not merely reprobate, ethnic Israel (9:1-5).
 - 2. Looking forward, his desire and prayer for Israel's salvation can only be elect Israel (10:1-5).
 - a. He could not have possibly desired and prayed for God's mercy on those God had rejected.
 - b. If he desired and prayed for elect Israel, then there was obvious blindness in elect Israel.
- D. Any Bible reference to Israel must be checked as to whether elect or ethnic Israel is the object.
 - 1. Jesus identified a difference among Jews of His time regarding the gospel (John 8:37,43,47), which He further explained as the difference between elect sheep and goats (John 10:26-29).
 - 2. Whether O.T. promises or N.T. gospel, either was only for the elect Israel of God (II Tim 2:10).
 - 3. There is Israel after the flesh (I Cor 10:18), and there is the Israel of God – Gentiles (Gal 6:16).
 - 4. Jesus identified Nathanael as an Israelite indeed, marking a distinction (John 1:47; Psalm 73:1).

5. Jesus also identified Zacchaeus a son of Abraham, surely implying an elect Israelite (Lu 19:9).
- E. References to Israel by Dispensationalists, Hal Lindsay, or Tim LaHaye groupies must be checked.
 1. If they talk about Israel, which they love to do, are they talking about the fleshly nation of so-called biological descent from Abraham or the elect, spiritual children of God chosen out of it?
 2. If they talk about Jerusalem, which they love to do, is it the cursed city here on earth or the one above, which Abraham loved (Gal 4:25-26; Heb 11:10; 12:22-24; 13:14; Rev 3:12; 21:2,10)?
 3. For more about the Israel of God ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/true-israel.pdf>.
- F. Jewish fables are as alive and popular today as they were when Paul warned Titus (Titus 1:10-14).
 1. Storytellers like C.I. Scofield have popularized unconditional, earthly promises to the Jews, such as the land, which promises the Bible declares repeatedly were fulfilled (Nehemiah 9:6-8).
 2. For more about the land ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/heresies/what-about-the-land.htm>.
 3. Storybooks like the NKJV have popularized the fleshly, biological descendants of Abraham as the seed of Abraham and heirs of promises, though the Bible denies this heresy (Gal 3:16,29).
 4. For more about Abraham's seed ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/prophecy/who-is-the-seed-of-abraham.pdf>.
 5. Jesus called fleshly Israel the children of the devil in various ways (John 8:44; Rev 2:9; 3:9).
- G. Let every sober and wise reader consider whether he is called or chosen (Matt 22:8-14; 7:21-23).

7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Neither.

- A. Neither indicates that two subject matters are under consideration, with the first already mentioned.
- B. Paul had stated a distinction to be observed within the nation of Israel – only part of it was elect.
- C. Now he will illustrate this point of God's choice – unconditional election – in Abraham's children.
- D. The Jews assumed they were Abraham's seed (Matt 3:7-12; John 8:33-47), and they were in a limited sense – by flesh and nature only, so Paul by the Spirit illustrated by his immediate children.
- E. If the whole nation of Israel were to be saved by their relationship to Abraham, then all the sons of Abraham, eight in number, by three wives, should also all be his seed and heirs of great promises.

Because they are the seed of Abraham.

- A. Be careful and rightly divide (II Tim 2:15), for Paul used *seed* here for reprobates and then elect!
- B. Here in this phrase Paul used *seed* to name Abraham's biological, fleshly, first-generation *children*, but he will use the same word *seed* in the last clause of the verse for the elect child of promise.
- C. Reproductive generation by Abraham made any son his fleshly seed and child, but not God's son; though Abraham had eight that were truly his seed and children, they were not the children of God.
- D. Great promises were made to Abraham about him and his seed when he was 75, though the heir of promise was not born for another 25 years (Gen 12:4,7; 17:17; 24:7; Rom 4:19; etc.).
- E. Abraham had eight sons altogether, all which were his fleshly *seed* by reproductive generation.
 1. First, Abraham and Sarah used Hagar to help get the seed (Gen 16:1-4,15-16; 17:15-21), but the result was a mere son named Ishmael that was later rejected with his mother (Gen 21:8-14).
 2. Note that even in Genesis 21:12-13 we have these two different senses of *seed* used by God, which provide another example of many of the importance of II Tim 2:15 and its KJV words.
 3. Note that the Muslims claim to be descendants of Ishmael, who was rejected by Jehovah God.
 4. As the child of the flesh mocked the child of promise (Gen 21:9), so it is in the N.T. (Gal 4:29).
 6. Second, Abraham married Keturah after Sarah died, who gave him six sons, whom he sent away to the east of Canaan and gave them minor gifts in compensation (Gen 23:1-3; 25:1-6).
 7. All these eight children were the seed of Abraham, seven by concubines (Gen 25:6), of which Ishmael was the most noted in scripture and remains so today as the antagonist of the elect.

Are they all children.

- A. Wait a minute, Paul! If they are Abraham's *seed* (or children), then they certainly are his *children*!
- B. Note Paul's distinction between seed and seed, and children and children, just like Israel and Israel.
- C. The Lord Jesus Christ made a similar double use of words in John 8:37 (seed) and 8:39 (children).
- D. But the word *children* was used here for elect children, children of promise, and *children of God*.
- E. The next verse will clarify exactly what the Holy Spirit intended by the example – *children of God*!
 - 1. The definitions coming next are important, for those hating election make this national only.
 - 2. The issue here and throughout these chapters is not mere national blessings or privilege, but rather salvation, for the context includes God's compassion or hatred, eternal destruction, vessels of mercy for glory, gospel reception, relation to God's kingdom, and related matters.
 - 3. Those claiming "national privileges" as the issue are lying or ignorant, since (a) the whole argument is refuting any birth or national advantage with God, (b) the "the children of God" are plainly stated, (c) the following context of 9:22-24 will further confirm eternal life, and (d) the resulting Jew-Gentile multitude for eternal blessings is without racial or national distinction.
- F. Note the mess that results from seeking children of God by fleshly means, just as the Arminians do with their manmade, free-will doctrine of synergistic regeneration (Abraham and Hagar)!
 - 1. First, the ideas generated by modern evangelistic thinking for saving the lost are perverse and worldly, just as Abraham sleeping with Sarah's servant woman while Sarah crocheted outside!
 - 2. Second, the results stink, for carnal means of modern Christians cannot regenerate any, as the results of Finney's preaching, Graham's crusades, youth rallies, etc. all show., which is identical to the rejected fruit of Hagar's and Keturah's wombs, producing nothing spiritual.
 - 3. Third, the numerous results, seeming so effortless and efficient, lead to arrogant despite and persecution of the truth and its followers, just as with Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 16:4-5; 21:9).
 - 4. Fourth, even Abraham and Sarah, the ministers of God, were impotent to help (Romans 4:19).
 - 5. Fifth, we trust God's promise and power without question to produce God's sons (Ro 4:20-21).
 - 6. Sixth, though nearly foolish to suggest, Isaac could not help himself at all become the child.
 - 7. Seventh, as this one was thought up by a woman, so have women corrupted much truth today.
 - 8. If you think this metaphorical side lesson is going too far, read and consider Galatians 4:21-31.

But.

- A. The holy disjunctive here serves to interrupt the eight sons confusion and identify the elect son.
- B. Not all eight sons were alike, because only one was by promise, by God, and through Sarah.
- C. It did not matter that Abraham begged for Ishmael to be it, God had rejected him (Gen 17:18-19).

In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

- A. God declared that Abraham would father a son by Sarah to be named Isaac (Genesis 17:15-19).
- B. It did not matter what Abraham did with Hagar or Keturah; the son God loved and would bless with spiritual blessings infinitely greater than Ishmael or the others was Isaac, and only Isaac.
- C. Abraham's seed, as far as earth was considered came through Isaac, as far as heaven, Jesus Christ.
- D. God's blessing progressed from Abram to others, even Gentiles, by Isaac and Christ (Gal 3:16).
- E. God named the child of promise, and no believing, crying, or corrupting can change the matter.

8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

That is.

- A. These precious words are the Holy Spirit indicating He will explain and interpret the topic at hand.
- B. Though eight were Abram's fleshly seed and children, only Isaac was the true seed and son of God.

C. Paul had more than just Isaac and Ishmael at stake here – there was the election in present Israel.

They which are the children of the flesh.

- A. Human efforts, not matter how well intentioned or applied, can never substitute for a divine work of grace – they will only result in a fleshly outcome that will bring and cause further trouble.
- B. Abraham and Hagar and Abraham and Keturah only produced children of the flesh, mere boys.
- C. Key. Recall Paul's original argument, not all of national Israel is elect, so that we may see clearly enough that Paul ruled out any racial or national basis, even for Jews, God's favor in salvation.
- D. It did not matter anymore to be of Abraham's stock in Paul's day than it did to be of Hagar or Keturah's in Abraham's day, which was a devastating blow to Jewish fables (Gal 4:21-31).
- E. John blew away all confidence in the flesh by rejecting any fleshly help for regeneration (Jn 1:13).
- F. Jesus blew away the same false confidence in the flesh by His demand for spiritual birth (Jn 3:6-8).

These are not the children of God.

- A. No matter some may look like children of God, think they are the children of God, some senses of the terminology of children of God may apply, or others preach that they are the children of God ... only the ones God identifies as such are truly His children.
- B. The issue here and throughout these chapters is not national blessings or privilege, but rather salvation, for the context includes God's compassion or hatred, eternal destruction, vessels of mercy for glory, gospel reception, relationship to God's kingdom, and related matters.
- C. Those claiming "national privileges" as the issue are lying or ignorant, since (a) the whole argument is refuting any birth or national advantage with God, (b) the "the children of God" are plainly stated, (c) the following context of 9:22-24 will further confirm eternal life, and (d) the resulting Jew-Gentile multitude for eternal blessings is without racial or national distinction.

But the children of the promise.

- A. God promised a seed to Abraham that He knew He would bring from Sarah's womb (Gen 15:1-4), though He did not do so before her menopause, and though they foolishly used Hagar (16:1-4).
 - 1. God promised this seed to Abraham first, though Abraham did not believe him (Gen 17:15-19).
 - 2. God promised this seed to Abraham in Sarah's hearing, and she did not believe (Gen 18:9-15).
 - 3. Abraham soon believed, and his faith in God's promise and power is precious (Rom 4:17-22).
 - 4. When God promises to do something by His power, human means are quite irrelevant, thus our dependence on holy scripture to know or believe anything, for all depends on His power.
- B. The promise was God's powerful operation (I will come) and by His means (infertile Sarah).
- C. There is more than just Isaac considered here, for we have the plural *children* rather than child.
 - 1. Isaac was the first child of promise, and then there was Jacob, thus the beginning of *children*.
 - 2. The children of promise are like Isaac, by God's choice, but they run through all family lines.
 - 3. Even Gentiles are also Abraham's children (Acts 15:12-18; Gal 3:7-9,16,26-29; 4:21-31; 6:16).
 - 4. Descendants of Esau also made it into Abraham's elect seed by God's election (Amos 9:11-12).
- D. There is more than family inheritance or national blessings here – eternal life is coming (9:22-24).
 - 1. Children of God are by promise in many different ways, even before the world began (Tit 1:2).
 - 2. God devised, purposed, and promised salvation in Christ before the world began (Eph 1:3-14).
 - 3. Adoption, or the obtaining of a son, is never by the choice of the adopted, by rather the adopter.

Are counted for the seed.

- A. Any promises by God to Abraham, his seed, or Israel must be applied to the elect seed God counts.
- B. God identified the child of promise, Isaac, and no crying or corrupting can change this true seed.
- C. We are the children of God by the same process of God exercising His will and promise for us.
- D. If you think such thoughts leave Paul's path, you err not knowing the scriptures (Galatians 4:28)!

9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.
For this is the word of promise.

- A. This particular promise is the one God made to Abraham in Sarah's hearing found in Gen 18:9-15, especially verse 10, where the language is most similar between Moses and Paul.
- B. The existence of Ishmael and the future existence of the six sons of Keturah had no meaning at all.
- C. God's promises, especially in this case, allow Him to alter verb tenses (Rom 4:17 cp Gen 17:4-6).

At this time will I come.

- A. God had told Abraham that he would have a son by Sarah a year from the promise (Gen 17:21).
- B. When God promised in Sarah's hearing, it was then only nine months to his birth (Gen 18:10,14).
- C. The words, *time of life*, are the time of gestation, approximately nine months (II Kings 4:16-17).
- D. This event occurred: Sarah conceived, carried, and delivered a son by Abraham on time (Ge 21:2).

And Sara shall have a son.

- A. Forget Hagar, Abraham. As I promised three months ago, your barren and ancient wife shall bear.
- B. This event occurred: Sarah conceived, carried, and delivered a son by Abraham on time (Ge 21:2).

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

And not only this.

- A. Paul justified and proved election within Israel (9:6) by examples – Isaac of Abraham's eight sons.
 - 1. For Jews to put stock in being Abraham's seed or children, they overlooked seven other sons!
 - 2. Out of the eight sons that were truly Abraham's seed and children, 88% were rejected by God.
 - 3. Paul's first illustration was a profound and powerful rebuke to their trust in biological descent.
 - 4. Though this example was very weighty, Paul did not stop there but rather raised another one.
 - 5. We could say that he was piling on, and rightfully so, for the Jews were arrogant in Abraham.
- B. Now he gave another example – God chose between the twin sons of Rebecca conceived by Isaac.
 - 1. This is profound wisdom for Paul to justify 60 A.D. election in the families of the patriarchs.
 - 2. Dealing with Abraham's children and then Isaac's children was as sacred as children could go.
 - 3. If God made determinate choices among sons of these great men, He could easily in Paul's day.
- C. These argumentative illustrations for election are powerful, if you consider the nature of children.
 - 1. The tender relationship of parent to children is not considered by God's choice among them.
 - 2. Every parent, especially these patriarchs, would want the very best for each of their children.
 - 3. Every parent knows the fear and risk of making big differences between or among children.
 - 4. Though Abraham had eight sons, and loved Ishmael the most, God chose Isaac against the rest.
 - 5. Though Isaac fathered twins by Rebekah (same father, same mother), God chose only Jacob.

But when Rebecca also had conceived.

- A. Since Paul had used Sarah's miraculous conception, a use of Rebecca's conception calls for *also*.
- B. In the very next generation, in Abraham's family tree, another election occurred between children.
- C. Conception was important to Jews, especially that involving their patriarchal fathers and mothers.
- D. This second example provided another convicting election in the families of the Jewish patriarchs.
- E. It was after the twins' conception, when they wrestled in her womb, that God told her His choice.

By one.

- A. Paul by inspiration tightened the example down by the children having the same father and mother.
 - 1. Isaac's election could be excused or justified by him being the only and unique child of Sarah.
 - 2. But in Jacob's case, fraternal twins were conceived by the same parents and at the same time.
 - 3. If election extends to cases even like this, God's will in election is clearly of total sovereignty.
 - 4. How can election be exalted any higher than God's choice between twins of a godly marriage?
- B. Those holding salvation by race have a real problem here – God chose one and rejected the other.

Even by our father Isaac.

- A. The Jews knew that Rebekah's conception was by Isaac, but naming the patriarch adds weight.
- B. There was no circumstantial difference between the twins – they had the same father and mother.
 - 1. Their father was the chosen seed of promise of Abraham and a patriarch of the nation of Israel.
 - 2. Though this example of election involved the patriarch Isaac, God chose between his sons.
- C. Paul took the first father of the Jews and showed God's election choosing one and rejecting seven.
- D. Paul took the Jews' second father and showed God's election choosing one and rejecting his twin.
- E. By the nature of a parenthetical insertion, it may be left out initially to follow the line of reasoning.

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

For the children being not yet born.

- A. Parenthetical insertions like this one may be left out initially to follow the main line of reasoning; but now we may deal with this wonderful explanation given by Paul of the nature of God's choice.
- B. Rather than short quotations from the O.T., Paul gave an inspired explanation of personal election.
- C. Paul did not deal with nations or peoples, regardless of what Moses (Gen 25:19-23) or Malachi (Mal 1:1-5) were dealing with, for he specifically and clearly identified two definite children here.
- D. He argued for an election within Israel of children of God and vessels of mercy (Ro 9:6b,8,22-24).

Neither having done any good or evil.

- A. God's elective choice was before good or bad works – thus it is clearly unconditional election.
- B. Both boys were guilty of Adam's sin, but that is ignored here for their own sins: Paul's argument is to prove that God's elective purpose is unconditionally based on His own will (Rom 9:15-16).

That the purpose of God.

- A. Election is according to God's purpose, as are all His acts (Ac 15:18; Ro 8:28; Ep 1:11; II Ti 1:9).
- B. The LORD made all things for Himself, and get this, even the wicked for the day of evil (Pr 16:4).

According to election.

- A. Election is a choice. God's purpose included the election of one twin and rejection of the other.
- B. What election? Paul argued against national privileges and for spiritual blessings and promises.

Might stand.

- A. There is no way around this text in its plain and extreme description of God's sovereign will.
- B. There is no person or power in heaven, earth, or hell that can hinder God's sovereign choices.
- C. It is the zeal of the Lord of hosts that will perform all His purposes for every individual person.
- D. The basis of everything that happens – those events that stand – are by God's choice and purpose.

Not of works.

- A. God's election, or choice, is not because of man's works, but by His grace (Rom 11:6; II Tim 1:9).
- B. God's elective choice was before good or bad works – thus it is clearly unconditional election.
- C. God does not elect those who choose Him and obedience, or they elect God rather than He them!

But of him that calleth.

- A. The whole matter of individual and personal salvation as the children of God depends and turns on the sovereign will of the one and only sovereign God – the Potter with full power over the clay.
- B. There is no other will or effort involved in His compassion and mercy, as stated (Romans 9:15-16).

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

It was said unto her.

- A. By the nature of a parenthetical insertion, it may be left out initially to follow the line of reasoning.
- B. Refer back to verse 10, where we read that God spoke this to her when (after) she had conceived.
- C. God revealed His choice of Isaac over Ishmael to Abraham (9:9), and He did the same to Rebekah.
- D. The circumstances of God's revelation to Rebekah about her twins are found in Genesis 25:19-23.
- E. When God declares a matter, and the Bible is full of His declarations, we should believe them all.

The elder shall serve the younger.

- A. By nature and human tradition, the eldest should receive the greater blessing and preeminence.
- B. In this declaration of service, there is obviously more included than just the twins' relationship.
 - 1. God had declared two nations and peoples in her womb, and the one surely did serve the other.
 - 2. The words of God through Malachi also include God's dealings with nations as well as persons.
 - 3. During the actual personal lives of Jacob and Esau, we do not see much of Esau serving Jacob.
 - 4. The greater and larger matter of nations shows God's favor on one and rejection of the other.
- C. We do not take the corporate/national view of this election due to context demanding otherwise.
 - 1. Many reduce the election of Romans 9:10-13 to mere national privilege over Edom, and all the ingenuity of man has been applied to this end, since most hate personal, unconditional election.
 - 2. Paul's argument began in 9:6b, where he divided between a national and spiritual Israel, where the larger group that was rejected had all the national privileges that Paul enumerated (9:4-5).
 - 3. Paul's argument will conclude in 9:22-24 where he distinguished vessels of mercy and wrath, God calling only some of the privileged Jews to be His vessels of mercy prepared for glory.
 - 4. In between this beginning and conclusion, Paul clearly identified the issue as the children of God (9:8), for his argument is against fleshly, natural privilege and for spiritual blessing.
 - 5. Paul's grief and willingness for rejection from Christ (9:1-3) were not for national privileges for Israel, for they already had them, and he did not care enough for them to be so affected!

6. The proposed question and its dogmatic answer and explanation that follow (9:14-16) indicate much more than national privilege, for the Jews knew God's choices of nations (Deut 7:6-8).
 7. The issue at hand that required Paul's gentle and sensitive introduction was a spiritual election within Israel that was contrary to their thinking, and Paul established it by patriarchal election.
- D. God did not merely declare a future fact to Rebekah, for the next verse proves it was His choice.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

As it is written.

- A. Paul identified the basis, origin, or source of God's choice of Jacob over his older twin brother.
- B. This quotation is taken from Malachi 1:1-5, where nations are considered, but the cause is the key.
 1. No doubt the issue of Malachi's words are a rebuke for Israel not appreciating national favor.
 2. However, the basis or source of this national preference was God's personal election of men.
 3. We do not interpret O.T. quotations in the N.T. by their O.T. context, but rather by their N.T. application, where the inspired writer gives us the more spiritual and relevant interpretation.

Jacob have I loved.

- A. God spoke in Malachi 1:1-5, and this is a very personal statement, like God to Pharaoh (Rom 9:17).
- B. This fact is far more staggering and astonishing than hatred of Esau, for how could He love Jacob?

But Esau have I hated.

- A. Here we introduce the hatred of God, which is even less known and less popular than reprobation.
 1. Most reject God's hatred for Esau or for human rebels due to their perverse, self-loving hearts.
 2. Most reject God's hatred for Esau or for human rebels due to their gross ignorance of scripture.
 3. While many are shocked and angered by God hating anyone, we are amazed He loved anyone.
- B. God's hatred of sinners is an expressly declared and revealed fact about God found in the Bible.
 1. The feminine concept that God hates the sin but loves the sinner is not found in the Bible at all.
 2. The Bible declares that God hates sinners (Psalm 5:4-6; 11:4-7; Prov 6:16-19), but these verses are ignored, glossed over, or rejected by those who think John 3:16 is the extent of revelation.
 3. God is holy, and He must hate sin and sinners, no matter how good and loving – this is an easy concept (Hab 1:3; Ps 22:1-3; 34:16; Prov 3:32; 11:20; 16:5; 17:15; Isaiah 6:1-5; Rev 21:27); the only way He can love sinners is to choose them in Christ Jesus, which exalts our salvation.
 4. God can and does love only holy objects, so sinners must be in Christ Jesus to be holy and without blame, where He chose them before the foundation of the world (Hab 1:13; Eph 1:4).
 5. By saying He never knew the workers of iniquity, He declares He never loved them (Mat 7:23).
 6. Though God is love (I John 4:16), He does not love everything (Pr 6:16-19; Zec 8:17; Heb 1:9).
 7. God hates bastards (reprobates), for He never shows them the proof of His love (Heb 12:5-8).
 8. God's holy law demands indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish on sinners (Rom 2:8-9).
 9. What about unbelievers? The wrath of God abideth on them (John 3:36). Where is His love?
 10. What about the inseparable nature of God's love (Rom 8:39)? Are any separated? Is it on all?
 11. God is angry with the wicked every day, so shall we assign love or hate to them (Psalm 7:11)?
 12. For quotations of others admitting God's hatred ... <http://www.cprf.co.uk/quotes/hatredreprobate.htm>.

- C. God's hatred of sinners is an obvious and logical extension of His acts in history and in the future.
 - 1. Why do God-loves-everybody heretics leave Satan out of God's love? He is greater than they!
 - 2. Look at Eden! Tell me God does not hate sinners, when He consigned their race to eternal hell!
 - 3. Look at the Flood! Tell me God does not hate sinners, when He drowned every kind of human!
 - 4. Look at Calvary! What did God pour out on Jesus for the elect? What remains on the wicked?
 - 5. Why is salvation called reconciliation, if God loves the sinner? Does He love them as enemies?
 - 6. Look at the lake of fire! What do you see? God's love for the wicked, or His hatred of them?
- D. God's hatred of sinners is an obvious and logical extension of various other scriptural arguments.
 - 1. God's man David hated sinners, so God must even more (Ps 26:5; 31:6; 139:21-22; II Sa 5:8).
 - 2. That God hates the devil no one denies or questions, but what of his seed (John 8:44; Eph 2:3)?
 - 3. Paul taught a hard doctrine most would question, so he questioned it for them (Rom 9:14-16).
- E. Hatred can definitely be relative in the Bible (Gen 29:30-31; Luke 14:26), but not here; it should only be considered relative when context and Scripture force it to be so, as in the provided texts.
 - 1. If God loved both boys, Jacob a little more than Esau, how is only one of them a child of God?
 - 2. If God loved both boys, Jacob a little more than Esau, how does this justify vessels of wrath?
 - 3. If God loved both boys, Jacob a little more than Esau, why was Paul so concerned about some?
 - 4. If God loved both boys, Jacob a little more than Esau, does God hate any workers of iniquity?
 - 5. If God loved both boys, Jacob a little more than Esau, is this the difference of heaven and hell?
- E. For more about God not loving all men ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/does-god-love-everybody.pdf>.
- F. For more about God hating all sinners, see the author's, "Bible Proof that God Hates Sinners."

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

What shall we say then.

- A. Paul asked and answered questions his readers might raise; he himself did not question election.
 - 1. He had done this already in the epistle, and he will do it again (Rom 3:1,3,5,7; 6:1; 7:7; 9:30).
 - 2. He used this rhetorical device in other places to enhance his arguments (I Cor 11:22; He 11:32).
 - 3. There is more than election in general considered here – it is unconditional election (9:11,16)!
- B. The posed question however indicates that what he had just taught is contrary to human thought.
 - 1. His posed questions may positively confirm a great point (8:31), not answer objections as here.
 - 2. Natural man hates election of any kind – God's choices affecting him, rather than he being god.
 - 3. Here God's election is in Israel (9:6b), Abraham's sons (9:7-9), and Rebekah's sons (10:10-13).
 - 4. The three examples are all true, for scripture (9:15-18) and God's nature (9:20-21) prove it so.
 - 5. The dominion of God over angels and men is too much for most (Pr 16:4; Re 4:11; Is 45:9-10).
 - 6. They think it unfair, unethical, and politically incorrect for God to choose without permission.
 - 7. They are totally drunk on the fermented dregs of their various brands of existential humanism.
 - 8. For more about the dominion of God ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/dominion-of-god.pdf>.
 - 9. For more about the fairness of election ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/is-election-fair.pdf>.
 - 10. For more about the nature of election ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/what-if-election-is-true.pdf>.
- C. The questions raised by proud, scornful, and skeptical men against election are Legion (Mark 5:9).
 - 1. Paul quickly answered those who question the righteousness, justice, or fairness of His election.
 - 2. If God chooses one and rejects another, does that not make Him a respecter of persons? Hardly! Election, choosing or rejecting by His counsel and will for His own glory, is the opposite of respecting persons, which alters justice by honoring one over another by circumstantial factors, prior relationship, or benefits (Lev 19:15; Deut 1:17; 16:19; Ps 82:1-8; Pr 18:5; Jas 2:1-9).
 - 3. If God chooses one over another, does it matter how we live? Of course! Good works please God and prove election (Eph 2:10; I Thes 1:2-4). Your question begs damnation (Rom 3:7-8)!

4. If God chooses one over another, how does man have a choice? He had it in Eden, friend! If the truth be told, he has a choice every day, but every man sins every day, proving his guilt daily.
- D. Election is a very unpopular doctrine as scripture and experience prove to those who will believe it.
 1. The residents of His hometown of Nazareth tried to kill Jesus for suggesting it (Luke 4:16-30).
 2. Heresies like man's inherent goodness, God's universal love of all men, man's free will, universal salvation, decisional regeneration, no hell, baptismal regeneration, and such like are all invented heresies in order to avoid, deny, or reject God's election of men to salvation.

Is there unrighteousness with God.

- A. Abraham asked a similar question while reasoning well with the LORD over Sodom (Gen 18:25).
- B. The first and common objection against election is that it makes God bad, evil, hateful, or wicked.
 1. This opinion arises from man's basic love of himself, fear of punishment, and hatred of God.
 2. Furthermore, his ideas of fairness, justice, and righteousness are all corrupted by his sin nature.
 3. Men presume what God must be like, but their deceitful hearts are desperately wicked; He warns them to forget their ideas of Him, or He will tear them in pieces (Ps 50:21-23; Job 11:7).
 4. They want God watching from a distance, not making choices for their lives (Ps 10:11-13; 64:5; 73:11; 94:7-10; Ezek 8:12; 9:9; Zep 1:12; Is 29:15; Mal 3:14-15; II Pet 3:4; etc.).
 5. These pompous, proud scorners will say, If God is like that, then I do not want to go to heaven.
- C. An axiom of truth and of the nature of Jehovah is His perfect justice and righteousness (De 32:4).
 1. There is never any unrighteousness with Him, in Him, or by Him, for He is the antithesis of sin, iniquity, or wickedness (Job 34:10; Ps 92:15; Hab 1:13; Jas 1:13; I Pet 1:15-16).
 2. All He has done, is doing, or will do is perfectly holy and righteous (Matthew 5:48; Jas 1:17).
 3. We could say, "God forbid," on this basis alone; but Paul will provide direct election support.
- D. The only intelligent reason this question is posed is due to man's natural perspective on election.
 1. Paul was not silly. He did not pose and answer a question unrelated to the express topic at hand.
 2. These words, along with all other words in the Bible, are inspired by divine wisdom of heaven.
 3. Election does not seem fair at all to a race presuming they are important, valuable, and loved.
 4. They can only see themselves with the right to choose, for they demand the right to elect God.
 5. For more of God's will and man's will ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/gods-will-or-free-will.pdf>.
- E. As Elihu, let us speak on behalf of our Maker to ascribe and defend His righteousness (Job 36:1-4).
 1. How can it be unrighteous to pardon some condemned rebels by a perfect, legal Substitute?
 2. How can it be unrighteous to punish other condemned rebels for their own, voluntary sins?
 3. If God must forgive and pardon all condemned criminals, should the president do the same?
 4. If God must forgive and pardon all condemned criminals, should He forgive and pardon Satan?
 5. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" (Matt 20:15). This is our Lord's perfect answer to those questioning His choices among men.
 6. God would be unrighteous ... for saving Jacob, not for rejecting Esau, except for Jesus Christ!
 7. Rather than look at election as unfair, look at election as far better than fair, even great mercy!
 8. If you were to correctly measure election by fairness, then no one should be elected or saved!
 9. Total depravity is key, because if it were not for election, none would be saved (Ps 14:1-3)!
 10. If God saved none, He would be perfectly righteous, but He is also gracious to whom He will.
- F. Can you sing with Isaac Watts, "Show Pity, Lord," a spiritual song most Christians would reject.
 1. Find its words by a 17th century preacher here ... <http://www.musicanet.org/robokopp/english/showpity.htm>.
 2. For example: *Should sudden vengeance seize my breath, I must pronounce thee just in death; And if my soul were sent to hell, Thy righteous law approves it well.*

God forbid.

- A. The response to such rebel objections or questions is short and sweet – your thoughts are rejected!
 - 1. This is Paul's very concise rejection and revulsion of their rebel objection or false suggestion.
 - 2. Rather than forbidding such ideas himself, Paul appealed to the truth and righteousness of God.
 - 3. Paul used this expression ten times in the book of Romans and only four times elsewhere.
- B. Paul made no effort to modify the doctrine of election; he declared it, proved it, and defended it.
 - 1. He did not use a single word to make election more acceptable, palatable, or reasonable to men.
 - 2. He did not worry the doctrine as stated might lead to such thoughts – he rejected the thoughts.
 - 3. He did not apologize to hearers or seek to explain himself better – truth must not be varnished.
 - 4. The Lord dealt similarly with such objections by unbelievers (Matt 15:10-14; John 6:60-69).

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

For he saith to Moses.

- A. The defense of any doctrine and the answer of any question or objection must be by the scriptures.
 - 1. We do not fall into the trap of reasoning doctrine out from feelings, opinions, or apparent facts.
 - 2. Truth requires God's revelation; rationalization depends on deceitful lies of the human heart.
 - 3. It is common dealing with election to hear about feelings, opinions, sentiment, emotion, etc.
 - 4. Do not allow any to reject or ridicule the method; we fully trust Ps 119:128 and II Tim 3:16-17.
- B. If the Bible declares a fact, we may respond, "God forbid," to questions or objections, especially those from skeptics (Isaiah 8:20; I Tim 1:4; 4:7; II Tim 2:14,16,23; I Tim 6:3-5,20-21; Titus 3:9).
- C. To answer a posed objection, Paul did not modify or excuse election, but defended it by scripture.
 - 1. Election had been declared to Moses in these words about 1500 years earlier (Exodus 33:19).
 - 2. When Moses sought to see the glory of God – God declared election to him (Ex 33:18; 34:5-7)!
 - 3. Even the apostle, with divine authority to declare truth, used the scriptures to prove his point.
- D. Though you may think it obscure in Exodus, Paul brought it forward by the Spirit as Bible proof.

I will have mercy.

- A. Mercy is forgiveness, freedom, or favor granted by one having the perfect right to punish another.
 - 1. God rightly has the power to punish men with death in several senses by their choice in Eden.
 - 2. God rightly has the power to punish men with death in several senses by their choices in life.
 - 3. God rightly has the power to withhold blessings or favor of any kind in this life or in the next.
 - 4. When God chooses to save or to bestow any kind of blessing, it is a show of mercy by Him.
- B. Mercy requires the choice of the will of the one holding the rightful authority and power to punish.
 - 1. For any man to obtain God's forgiveness, freedom, or favor – God must choose to not punish.
 - 2. Mercy is not a right – never! If a right, then it denies any binding offence, and it is not mercy.
 - 3. God's choice to bestow mercy on any is contrary to justice and holiness (Ex 34:7; Nahum 1:3).
 - 4. So He devised by infinite wisdom the substitution of Jesus Christ for their punishment (3:26).

On whom I will have mercy.

- A. The objects of God's mercy are only by the free choice of His will and no other. Let God be true!
- B. Ephesians 1:3-6 ascribes election to salvation to God the Father's will for the praise of His grace.
- C. There can be no doubt of the absolute nature of God's will in showing mercy, for 9:16 confirms it.
- D. God's choices among men is by what seems good to Him, regardless of them, unless we accept that those who think they deserve it get the least of it (Matt 11:25-27; 20:15-16; I Cor 1:26-29; Jas 2:5).

And I will have compassion.

- A. **Compassion.** The feeling or emotion, when a person is moved by the suffering or distress of another, and by the desire to relive it; pity that inclines one to spare or to succour.
 - 1. This definition requires compassion on the part of a superior that is free from the object's pain.
 - 2. It is similar and related to mercy (Ps 78:38; 86:15; 145:8; Lam 3:32; Mic 7:19; Matt 18:27,33).
- B. Bible examples include Jesus toward the widow of Nain (Lu 7:11-13), Pharaoh's daughter toward Moses (Ex 2:6), God toward sinful Israel (Ps 78:38), mothers toward nursing children (Is 49:15).
- C. God must have compassion in order to bless or save, for all deserve temporal and eternal wrath.
- D. Compassion in God is a choice, which requires an act of His will in agreement with His nature.
 - 1. He is not moved by human feelings as men due to same nature, similar circumstances, or fear.
 - 2. Since His justice, holiness, and righteousness demand punishment, He does not pity by nature.
 - 3. He has chosen to have compassion on some only for a display of His own glory to the universe.

On whom I will have compassion.

- A. God chooses to love any that He does love, as in the case of Israel of old (Deut 7:6-8; 9:4-5; etc.).
- B. He chose to love the elect by His will, and He chose them in Christ so He could love (Eph 1:3-6).

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

So then.

- A. These inspired words, *so then*, create a summarizing phrase drawing a conclusion (Ro 8:8; 14:12).
- B. The conclusion being drawn regards the purpose of God according to election found in 9:6-15.
- C. What we would expect the conclusion to be from God's absolute dominion is the conclusion.
- D. There is no leap of logic here at all; Paul had stated and illustrated election, and now he proved it.
- E. Based on the fact of Israel (9:6b), illustration in two families (9:7-13), inspired narrative (9:11), and scriptural defense of the truth (9:14-15), the conclusion is obvious, profound, and final.

It is not of him that willeth.

- A. What is "it"? What conclusion does the context lead to? The mercy of God in the election of men.
 - 1. The main lesson in the preceding context was God's purpose in election, choosing Jacob (9:11).
 - 2. The contextual lesson that follows is God's purpose to reject and harden Pharaoh (9:17-18).
 - 3. This verse (9:16) ascribes the issue to God's mercy – His mercy to elect one over another.
- B. God's mercy in salvation, as in regeneration for example, excludes man's will (John 1:13; 3:8).
- C. The wicked will have a very active will in the Day of Judgment, but to no good effect (Matt 7:23).
- D. Therefore, we conclude that the gift of eternal life is according to God's will and not man's will.

Nor of him that runneth.

- A. As in the previous clause, the issue at stake is God's purpose to show mercy in the election of men.
- B. God's mercy in salvation, as in regeneration for example, excludes man's works for it (Titus 3:5).
- C. When illustrating God's electing mercy, Paul denied any good or evil actions by the twins (9:11).
- D. Therefore, we conclude that the gift of eternal life is according to God's will and not man's actions.

But of God that sheweth mercy.

- A. As seen earlier in the chapter, the context dictates that salvation, not national favors, is by mercy.
- B. The personal aspect of God's choices among men is further confirmed by example of Pharaoh next.
- C. Therefore, we conclude eternal life is an unconditional gift by the will of God through Jesus Christ.

- D. For more of unconditional salvation ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/salvation/unconditional/seven-proofs.htm>.
- E. To reconcile faith and good works ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/salvation/when-were-you-saved.htm>.
- F. To reconcile faith and good works ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/salvation-by-works.pdf>.

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh.

- A. Paul continued to defend election against man's foolish charge of unrighteousness with God (9:14).
 - 1. In election, there is a choice to bless and favor one group and a choice to reject another group.
 - 2. You cannot have election without reprobation, though the latter is ignored by many or most.
 - 3. In the case of Jacob and Esau, the difference in God's elective purpose is called love and hate.
 - 4. Paul defended the positive side of election in 9:14-16 with a positive quotation from Ex 33:19.
 - 5. He here defended the negative side of election in 9:17-18 with a negative quote from Ex 9:16, for in addition to God's elective rejection of Esau, He also electively rejected Pharaoh.
 - 6. When answering objections or questions about truth, quotations from scripture are enough.
 - 7. In the matter of righteousness, Paul presumed it true of God and only quoted scripture to prove that God actually did choose to have mercy and compassion on some and to harden others.
- B. Scripture cannot literally speak, for it is a book of written words, but we accept it as God speaking.
 - 1. In 9:15 the inspired history is that God spake to Moses, but here the scripture spake to Pharaoh.
 - 2. The lesson is God's reminder that scripture is Him speaking, and we should value it as such.
 - 3. God's minister (Moses) speaking to a man (Pharaoh) and recorded (Exodus) is God speaking.
- C. Pharaoh was the ruler of the greatest nation on earth (or that part of the earth God cared about).
 - 1. He is the third personal illustration of election after Abraham's sons and Rebekah's twins.
 - 2. He was humanly esteemed, prominent, successful, and powerful as any, but God rejected him.
 - 3. By nature he was no different or worse than the Israelites living in his nation as servants.
- D. Moses brought a very sober message from the true and living God to Pharaoh (Exodus 9:13-19).
 - 1. Those that feared Jehovah by this point (plague #7) got their servants and cattle under shelter.
 - 2. And Moses declared to Pharaoh's face what Jehovah thought of him and would do to him.

Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up.

- A. We believe, teach, and defend God's sovereign right and choice to glorify Himself (Proverbs 16:4).
 - 1. This text is a fundamental axiom about our existence as God's creatures. Humble yourself.
 - 2. It declares so much, even the extreme case, of His sovereignty. Teach it to your children.
- B. From conception to death, especially his death, God had made Pharaoh for His pleasure (Rev 4:11).
 - 1. There is no mention of Pharaoh's pleasure, though he had plenty to know Jehovah (Ac 14:17).
 - 2. All the blessing or favor in his life to make it to the throne of Egypt was to be finally destroyed.
- C. The world's most popular tract says, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life."
 - 1. Bill Bright never had a clue about the Word of God or the God of the Word. What a disgrace!
 - 2. Did Moses give this evangelistic work of man out to Pharaoh and his court before the Exodus?
 - 3. Did Noah use a smiley face with this cliché for the effeminate humanists of his generation?
 - 4. Did Rebekah color a crib mobile with this sound bite to save Esau from an inferiority complex?
- D. Nebuchadnezzar, an even greater monarch than Pharaoh, learned the same lesson. Read Daniel 4!
- E. The purpose of God in this text, as with all His purposes, was certainly fulfilled (Is 46:9-11; etc.).

That I might shew my power in thee.

- A. God's purpose in the life of Pharaoh was to reveal His power against the world's greatest king.
 - 1. He is King of kings for a reason – He repeatedly defeated and destroyed the world's kings!
 - 2. See "King of kings" here: <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/king-of-kings.pdf>.
- B. We want to understand this motive and purpose clearly, for we shall soon see it again (9:22).
- C. God looked through the cloud at the Egyptians (14:24-25).

And that my name might be declared.

- A. Pharaoh's name would only be declared and known in the earth as the object of God's judgment.
- B. God had told Moses that he would have a great story for his sons and his grandsons (Ex 10:1-2).
- C. God explained to Moses He would get honor upon Pharaoh and his whole military (Ex 14:17-18).
- D. He told Moses further that the nations in and around Canaan would fear them (Ex 15:14-15).
- E. When Jethro visited Moses, his testimony was of this great defeat of Pharaoh (Exodus 18:10-11).

Throughout all the earth.

- A. Did God get Himself glory by raising this man up to great power and then horribly destroying him?
 - 1. I wrote and preached this outline. I glorified God by this precise event in 2011 in the U.S.A.
 - 2. You either heard or read this outline. Did you glorify God by this specific event in your place?
 - 3. Consider these texts that fulfill this phrase: Exodus 18:11; Num 23:22; Josh 2:10-11; I Sam 4:8.
 - 4. Consider where the word of God has gone the last 3500 years. Everyone knows about Pharaoh!
- B. Nehemiah prayed in a similar vein for deliverance from Sennacherib (Isaiah 37:20).

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Therefore hath he mercy.

- A. The use of *therefore* concludes that the scriptures in Exodus fully prove God's elective purpose.
 - 1. Exodus 33:19, quoted by Paul in 9:15, fully proved that God shows mercy to whom He will.
 - 2. Exodus 9:16, quoted by Paul in 9:17, fully proved that God electively hardens whom He will.
 - 3. The scriptures are sufficient evidence without any rationalization for concluding absolute truth.
- B. The humanist-crushing, and Arminian-ridiculing revelation of this text should be esteemed by all.
 - 1. Pharaoh is just one example in the Bible; God has hardened and used the sins of many men.
 - 2. For more about God's dominion of men ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/dominion-of-god.pdf>.

On whom he will have mercy.

- A. As we learned in 9:14-16, God's mercy is a choice entirely of His own to bestow on His chosen.
- B. The mercy of God, as in regeneration, is entirely a result of the elective choice of God (Titus 3:5).

And whom he will.

- A. For every choice of election to bestow favor (mercy and compassion), there is an opposite choice.
- B. God is not bound to choose any, and He does wrong to no man, and He does choose to reject some.

He hardeneth.

- A. Because of *therefore* opening this verse, we know Pharaoh is an example of God hardening men.
- B. We need not fear nor fumble in our Bibles to explain away the Holy Spirit's choice of *harden* here.

- C. Pharaoh is a perfect case study of God hardening men as a result of His elective choice for them.
 - 1. God told Moses He would harden Pharaoh's heart before He ever sent Moses to him (Ex 4:21).
 - 2. God gives men up to their own minds and the perverseness naturally there (Ro 1:21,24,26,28).
 - 3. If men reject Him, God may withhold understanding from them (Ex 14:17; Isaiah 44:18-20).
 - 4. If men reject Him, God may provoke a man to further irritate him (Exodus 8:3; I Kings 22:15).
- D. God is never the author of sin as the active agent in causing it either directly or indirectly.
 - 1. God does not, nor does He need to, infuse evil into men, for they have plenty (James 1:13-16).
 - 2. Man is fully responsible for what he does, even when God uses his sins (Ex 9:34; Acts 2:23).
 - 3. God gets the glory for wisdom on the part of any man or woman (Acts 16:14; I Cor 15:10).
- E. God hardens reprobates in general (Deuteronomy 2:30; Joshua 11:20; Romans 1:21-28).
- F. God hardened Jews He had rejected (I Samuel 2:25; I Kings 22:22; Acts 7:42; Isaiah 6:10; Matt 13:13-14; John 12:37-41; Acts 28:25-29).
- G. God may harden His disobedient children (Ps 106:13-15; II Sam 24:1; I Chr 21:1; Luke 22:31-32).
- H. For a thorough study of God's sovereignty ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/dominion-of-god.pdf>.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Thou wilt say then unto me.

- A. Man at his best is rebellious by nature, so he continues to question God's fairness or righteousness.
 - 1. Paul posed another question on behalf of any readers balking at sound doctrine – note the *then*.
 - 2. Paul knew the humanistic response to a sovereign God that serves His own will and pleasure.
 - 3. His first question was direct, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" Paul answered, God forbid.
 - 4. His first question was in regard to the declaration and illustration of election (9:6b,7-9,10-13).
 - 5. His second question is similar, though less obvious, for evil man still questions God's integrity.
 - 6. Having declared God's will as supreme in mercy or hardening, man does not think such fair.
 - 7. It is one thing for a fool to come to grips with election, but reprobation is much harder for him.
- B. This is the usual, typical scorner's or skeptic's question, "What about the responsibility of man?"
 - 1. Men arrogantly think that God's sovereignty must be reconciled with man's responsibility, for they cannot imagine a Creator God with the sovereign authority that the Bible plainly teaches.
 - 2. Man can only think, "What about me? You must consider me in your decisions affecting me."
 - 3. The two are reconciled one way – by unconditional eternal life confirmed and proven by man's works, which they reject, for it involves both God's sovereign election and man's performance.

Why doth he yet find fault.

- A. Man presumes that God's will controlling mercy or hardening relieves man of any responsibility.
- B. Man thinks, "If God chooses mercy or judgment and gets glory from both, it is not fair for Him to hold man responsible."
- C. Paul had already dealt with very similar questions earlier in this epistle from the Jews (Rom 3:5-8).
 - 1. Is God unrighteous, if His righteousness is commended by the unrighteousness of men (3:5-6)?
 - 2. Or in other words, If God benefits by our so-called unrighteousness, how can He judge us?
 - 3. Sinful man, rather than examine and hate his sins, tries to find fault with God for judging him.

For who hath resisted his will.

- A. God's will was stated six times in 9:15 and 9:18, controlling both His mercy and His hardening.
- B. The Jews also knew the O.T. scriptures, which plainly reveal God's will in mercy and hardening.

- C. We believe God has two wills – His secret will and His revealed will – the one that will occur, and the one we should do (Deut 29:29). For more ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/dominion-of-god.pdf>.
1. We do not play games with God and allow Him to will some things but be resisted by others.
 2. No evil is outside God's controlling rule, and He restrains any evil not to His praise (Ps 76:10).

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Nay but, O man.

- A. The sense of the words are, "No way, mere man! Who do you think you are to question God?"
- B. Instead of "God forbid," Paul did not even acknowledge that they deserved that sort of an answer!
- C. Paul strongly and strictly rebukes such objections and questions as not being fit for flesh and blood.
- D. Man was taken from the dust of the earth, and the last thing he should do is argue with His Creator.
- E. Those that like to question should consider who they are and that they will never have all answers.
- F. Remember Solomon's, Jesus', and Paul's repeated thoughts about wasting time and risking faith on foolish and unlearned questions (Pr 23:9; Matt 7:6; II Tim 2:23; etc., etc.).

Who art thou that repliest against God.

- A. As Solomon wrote, God is in heaven, and you are on earth, so let your words be few (Eccl 5:2).
- B. Rather than answering the question directly, Paul blew off the questioner and his question (9:20).
- C. God called men potsherd (broken pottery), and they should only argue with each other (Is 45:9).
- D. God is greater than man, as Elihu told the great Job, lest God killed him (Job 33:12; 36:16-18)!
- E. When scripture is presented and applied, as Paul had done (9:7-18), men should shut their mouths; there is no purpose, profit, or right to rationalize revelation. We humbly before God's declarations.
- F. If the Bible says it, we believe it, and that settles it. Why do you need more? For there is no more to give you, and the perverse spirit that wants more will trouble you for life.

Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it.

- A. This logic is simple enough – should things made argue with their Maker? Dust with the Creator?
 1. Shall a creature question its own Creator as to the way it was made, or how, or to what end?
 2. Paul did not spend a single word softening the doctrine or trying to make election more palatable.
- B. Paul emphatically denied man the position, privilege, or right to even raise such foolish questions.
- C. Questions of this sort reply against God or against personal effects of birth parents (Isaiah 45:9-10).

Why hast thou made me thus.

- A. A thing made has no authority, privilege, or right to question any of its construction by the Maker.
- B. Though he took seven years in graduate school, Nebuchadnezzar rejected this question (Dan 4:35).

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Hath not the potter power over the clay.

- A. Paul did not waste any time trying to explain such high matters to such a profane objector, but instead he denied man the privilege or right to ask, and then he simply defended God's sovereignty.
- B. The Jews knew this passage of scripture, so Paul by the Holy Spirit used it against their objections.
 1. He did not have to provide a direct quotation, they knew the principle he used from Isaiah 45:9.
 2. The metaphor should be understood first in its simple lesson of defending God's prerogative.

3. The application of the Potter's work among men in salvation is laid out in the next three verses.
- C. The sovereignty of God in election is proved from theology – the nature and authority of God.

Of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour.

- A. The *same lump* includes our common state of condemnation in Adam (Rom 5:12-19; I Co 15:22).
1. Though Paul does not raise this point or any other here to soften his blow against the question.
 2. The granting of mercy to vessels of mercy assumes those vessels needed and required mercy.
 3. We consider Romans 5:8 and others like it to indicate God viewed us as condemned sinners.
- B. We do our best to avoid speculation about supralapsarianism or sublapsarianism (Psalm 131:1).
- C. For more of God's sovereign priorities, see ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/dominion-of-god.pdf>.
- D. There are vessels of honor prepared for glory – that is their merciful end, for God's glory (9:23).

And another unto dishonor.

- A. God has made some men for dishonor – to themselves, but for His own honor over them (9:17).
- B. There are vessels of wrath fitted to destruction – that is their design, but for God's glory (9:22).
- C. These are the children of wrath that we read about elsewhere (Eph 2:3; I Thess 5:9; I Peter 2:8).

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

What.

- A. Observe that this long sentence, stretching for three verses in our KJV, is formed as a question.
1. Paul often reasoned by questions, for it is a wise, powerful rhetorical tool, and he does so here.
 2. There are eight questions between 9:14 and 9:24, with the entirety of 9:22-24 being a question.
 3. Though formed as a rhetorical question, there is no question at all – it is a dogmatic declaration.
- B. It rhetorically asks of God's eternal purposes in condemnation and salvation ... leaving man silent!
1. *What* forms the question, but it truly asks what you are going to say or do about His election.
 2. This question should be understood in what has gone before (9:14-18) and especially (9:19-21).
 3. What can be argued against this most-definitive declaration of condemnation and salvation?
 4. Notice the order – Paul by the Holy Spirit begins with reprobation to judgment, not election.
 5. It is clearly of salvation to eternal life, not of mere national privilege, for it includes Gentiles!

If.

- A. The Spirit's choice of this word does not allow any possibility, hypothesization, variability, etc.
- B. Though formed as a rhetorical question, there is no question at all – it is a dogmatic declaration.
- C. Here is the most extreme sovereign statement of God's electing choices among men in the Bible.
1. It is formed as a question to connect to the verses before – He is the Potter; you are but clay.
 2. Shall the thing formed – as in election and reprobation stated here – complain to the Maker?
 3. Is there any limitation of power – ability, authority, or right – for God to do exactly as stated?

God.

- A. This is the true and living God, even Jehovah, and not the imagination of men, pagan or Christian.
1. Men love to imagine God as they desire, but He has holy words for such effort (Ps 50:21-23).
 2. He revealed His eternal power and Godhead, but they will not retain the truth (Rom 1:19-28).
 3. From the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel or "God Is Watching from a Distance," they gravely err!
- B. The true God is infinitely holy and cannot and will not accept the actions or persons of the wicked.
1. The foolish shall not stand in His sight, for He hates all workers of iniquity (Ps 5:4-6; 11:4-7).
 2. He will by no means clear the guilty and will not at all acquit the wicked (Ex 34:7; Nahum 1:3).

3. Know this – Jehovah will repay those that hate Him to their face, to destroy them (Deu 7:9-10).
 4. Cain in Eden or preachers in the end, He will reject actions and persons (Ge 4:5; Mat 7:21-23).
 5. See “Holiness of God” here: <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/holiness-fringe.pdf>.
- C. The true God is infinitely sovereign over all creatures and does according to His will with them all.
1. Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest of kings, was reduced to a grass-eating ox for seven years (Da 4).
 2. He chose Isaac of Abram’s eight sons and Jacob of Rebekah’s twins without a qualm (9:7-13).
 3. He told Moses that He would have mercy and compassion on those of His choosing (9:15-16).
 4. He told Pharaoh that He had raised him up for one God-glorying purpose – his ruin (9:17-18).
 5. He is not answerable to any man, no matter what He may choose to do with a man (9:19-21).
 6. This God tells you to take your petty arguments to another broken shard of pottery (Is 45:9-10).
 7. See “Dominion of God” here: <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/dominion-of-god.pdf>.
- D. The true God is infinitely dreadful and terrible in his dealings with wicked creatures of all kinds.
1. Daniel prayed to the dreadful God (Dan 9:4); His name is dreadful among pagans (Mal 1:14).
 2. He is terrible (De 7:21; 10:17; Neh 9:32; Ps 47:2; 66:3,5; 68:35; 76:12; 99:3; 145:6; Zep 2:11).
 3. Jehovah is known by His judgments (Ps 9:15-17; 58:10-11; 83:13-18; Ex 14:4; Deut 29:22-28).
 4. He laughs at the calamities of the wicked, and we may also (Ps 2:4-5; Pr 2:24-27; Is 37:22).

Willing.

- A. Get this absolutely clear – God is willing – He wants to – do exactly what this sentence details.
1. He is willing to save some eternally and to pass over the rest to their eternal condemnation.
 2. He made all things for Himself and pleasure, even the wicked for judgment (Pr 16:4; Re 4:11).
 3. The great Day of Judgment is the climax to creation and salvation ... all for the glory of God.
 4. He has appointed – He is willing – the wicked to suffer His eternal wrath (I Thes 5:9; Jude 1:4).
- B. God’s will in context is absolutely supreme and the only and final authority of mercy or judgment.
1. The will of God has just been stated six times in the immediate preceding context (9:15-18).
 2. The will of God clearly determines mercy and compassion on some and hardening on others.
 3. There is no unrighteousness in the matter whatsoever, for its mere declaration proves it right.
 4. You do not have the right to question His will, no matter how unfair you might think it to be.
- C. The Bible declares the will of God to be the determining factor in His government of the world.
1. God does according to His will in the army of heaven and inhabitants of the earth (Dan 4:35).
 2. God has one mind, and no man alters His decisions; whatever He wants, He does (Job 23:13).
 3. All the earth should stand in awe of Him, Whose counsel standeth for ever (Psalm 33:8-11).
 4. Contrary to idols, Jehovah lives in heaven and does whatever He pleases (Ps 115:3; 135:6).
 5. When God purposes a matter, it will happen, and there is no man to disannul it (Is 14:24-27).
 6. Even the crucifixion of Jesus, the most heinous crime ever, was by God’s counsel (Acts 4:28).
- D. Salvation is no less by God’s will, for it turns entirely by His purpose according to His own will.
1. Remember, Romans has already taught God’s purpose in saving the elect (Rom 8:28-33; 9:11).
 2. It is God’s will entirely and exclusively that gives mercy, compassion, or hardening (9:15-18).
 3. Adoption is by the good pleasure of His will, and He does all things by His will (Eph 1:5,9,11).
 4. His purpose and grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began (II Timothy 1:9).
 5. The very means of grace, as some call them, are according to good pleasure (Matt 11:25-27).
- E. Arminian drivel and twaddle ignored, the Bible does not contradict itself in the work of salvation.
1. I Timothy 2:4 in context large and small teaches that God will have *all kinds of men* be saved.
 2. II Peter 3:9 is to the elect of God as *usward* with God’s longsuffering for practical repentance.
 3. Ezekiel 18:32 and 33:11 regard God’s chastening of His church; He desires repentance and life.
 4. Arminians are beyond ignorant – their scheme has God creating those who reject Him, thus binding Him to send them to hell, though He loved them so much and tried His best to save!
 5. For unconditional salvation ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/salvation/unconditional/seven-proofs.htm>.

5. For five phases of salvation ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/salvation/when-were-you-saved.htm>.
6. For salvation problem texts ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/salvation-problem-texts.pdf>.

To shew his wrath.

- A. Jehovah God, the true God of the Bible, is willing ... willing to shew His wrath upon sinful men.
- B. Our approach is in a minority less than 1% of 1%, because we dare declare and exalt God's wrath!
 1. The Bible says God is angry with the wicked every day without peace (Ps 7:10-17; Is 48:22).
 2. The Bible's God's *wrath* extends from Moses' song to the Lamb's war (Ex 15:7; Rev 19:15).
 3. If Moses wrote about God's anger and wrath, what shall the wicked experience (Ps 90:7-17)!
 4. If Peter said the righteous are scarcely saved from judgment, what of the wicked (I Pe 4:17-19)!
- C. Why is God wrathful and angry? Because He is holy (hating sin), righteous (hating wrong), just (hating inequity), and jealous (hating competitors)! His wrath is not emotional folly like ours!
- D. God's wrath is revealed from heaven against ungodly men, especially by the gospel (Rom 1:18).
 1. Moses declared God's vengeful wrath to the church of the Old Testament (Deut 32:35-43).
 2. Many of David's Psalms describe the wrath of God (Psalm 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 58, 66, 76, 83, etc.).
 3. Consider Nahum's description of God's wrath against the city-state of Nineveh (Nahum 1:1-6).
 4. Peter raised it to Cornelius (Acts 10:42) and Paul to several men (Acts 17:29-31; 24:24-25).
 5. Paul persuaded men toward Christianity by referencing the terror of the Lord (II Cor 5:10-11).
 6. A fundamental and rudimentary aspect of Christ's gospel is eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1-2).
 7. This epistle to the Romans declared it in 2:2-11 and 5:9 and 14:9-12. Let every man beware.
 8. The reason men do not remember and fear God's wrath is their refusal to retain it (Rom 1:28).
 9. God has not changed in any degree in His wrath, and it should be remembered (Heb 12:28-29).
 10. When men minimize, euphemize, or compromise, the truth of God's wrath against sin, it leads to men holding the truth in unrighteousness, which ought to be opposed with all our might by constant repetition in public and private of God's anger against sin and sinners.
 11. When preachers modify the message to please the audience, two terrible things happen, and one of those things is that those knowing truth will live unrighteously (Ezek 13:22).
 12. It is truly perilous times when pleasure-mad Christians have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof, as Paul warned prophetically of a great spiritual decline (II Tim 3:5).
 13. Because they will not endure sound doctrine, they gather so-called Christian teachers to scratch their itching lusts with fables, rather than condemn them with truth (II Tim 4:3-4).
- E. What example of His wrath should you consider, for God is known by His judgments (Ps 9:15-17)?
 1. How angry was He to damn a race of 50 billion three different ways for eating the wrong fruit?
 2. How angry was He to drown and suffocate all humanity, regardless of sex, age, race, or ability?
 3. How angry was He to give all the different languages and force all men to perpetually separate?
 4. How angry was He to burn up the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and turn Lot's wife into salt?
 5. How angry was He to plague Egypt, take their money, kill their firstborn, and drown the army?
 6. How angry was He to bury alive Dathan and Abiram and their wives and little children?
 7. How angry was He to annihilate the Canaanites man, woman, and children without any regard?
 8. How angry was He to kill 50,300 men of Bethshemesh for taking a peek in the ark (I Sa 6:19)?
 9. How angry was He with His people Israel to siege Samaria until mothers ate their children?
 10. How angry was He to kill 185,000 battle-hardened soldiers of the Assyrian army (Is 37:36-38)?
 11. How angry was He to move Jews to child sacrifice for their own destruction (Ezek 20:25-26)?
 12. How angry was He to rewire minds of men and women to dishonor their bodies by sodomy?
 13. How angry was He to kill 1,100,000 in Jerusalem in such straits that women ate their children?
 14. How angry was He to bruise and kill His only begotten Son for the transgressions of the elect?

- F. What future pouring out of His wrath on the wicked should you consider to grasp this passage?
 - 1. How angry will He be to keep the fire unquenched and the worm from dying (Mark 9:43-48)?
 - 2. How angry will He be to mock a man begging for a drop of water with this life (Lu 16:22-26)?
 - 2. How angry will He be to cause great and small to hide in caves from His face (Rev 6:12-17)?
 - 2. How angry will He be to torment the followers of the beast day and night forever (Re 14:9-11)?
 - 3. How angry will He be to cast into the lake of fire that is not written in His book (Re 20:11-15)?
 - 4. You have never been afraid at all like you will be; the screams of the damned will be terrible.
- G. If you do not believe on Jesus Christ with works, the wrath of God already abides on you (Jn 3:36).
- H. God intends for you to fear Him, just as Jesus taught and Paul persuaded (Lu 12:4-5; II Co 5:9-11).

And to make his power known.

- A. Jehovah God, the true God of the Bible, is willing ... willing to make His power known on sinners.
 - 1. We must wisely consider and understand both God's power and the fact He wants it known.
 - 2. This is not merely a demonstration of strength but a demonstration of dominion over rebels!
 - 3. By its close connection to His wrath, which comes first in order, His power is for punishment.
 - 4. His power includes visual phenomena, but that is not the sense or fulfillment of this passage.
- B. An illustration? Pharaoh in the immediate context is an object of God's power (Ro 9:17; Ex 9:16).
 - 1. How did God use His power toward Pharaoh? How did He want it known? Visual phenomena?
 - 2. Why was God not content with Moses' rod becoming a serpent? Did He need to show power?
 - 3. What is more powerful? The ten plagues? Death of every firstborn? Drowning of his army?
 - 4. Forgot the plagues? Blood, frogs, lice, flies, pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, firstborn!
 - 5. Yes, God had chosen this wicked pagan as the object of His power, as stated by the scriptures.
 - 6. This wicked man had said, "Who is the LORD?" and, "I know not the LORD" (Exodus 5:2).
 - 7. God's judgment and destruction of Pharaoh, Egypt, and others were remembered (Je 32:18-20).
- C. The natural creation shows His eternal power, but He wants to show it much more clearly in hell!
- D. All things exist and all events occur for the greater glory of God one way or another (Ps 76:10).
- E. God intends for you to fear Him, just as Jesus taught and Paul persuaded (Lu 12:4-5; II Co 5:9-11).

Endured with much longsuffering.

- A. It is difficult and painful for God in some respects to wait for the eventual judgment of the wicked.
 - 1. Though His holy justice demands their punishment, for His greater glory He defers it to later.
 - 2. His kindness to sinners, testifying His inherent goodness, will result in their greater judgment.
 - 3. Only God's determinate counsel and His longsuffering to wait for it keep judgment held back.
 - 4. The great Day of Judgment is the climax to creation and to salvation ... for the glory of God.
- B. There are several examples in the Bible of God's endurance and longsuffering before judgment.
 - 1. His longsuffering waited for Noah to finish the ark before the great Flood came (I Peter 3:20).
 - 2. His longsuffering waited with Israel in Egypt for the Amorites to get more wicked (Gen 15:16).
 - 3. His longsuffering waited for the Jews to fill up their sins (Da 7:24; Mat 23:31-33; I Thes 2:16).
 - 4. His longsuffering waits in our dispensation for the rest of the martyrs to be killed (Rev 6:9-11).
- C. God's longsuffering and goodness should lead to repentance (Rom 2:4-5; Ps 50:21; II Pet 3:9,15); do not foolishly presume that because you have not been judged that God approves of your life.

The vessels of wrath.

- A. The use of *vessels* here takes the reader back to the Maker of 9:20 and Potter of 9:21. Get down!
- B. The phrase *vessels of wrath* describes vessels under God's wrath, not vessels that have their wrath.
 - 1. God is willing to show His wrath – this is not judgment of wrathful vessels, though they be so.
 - 2. This is the same as the children of wrath in Eph 2:3, who as Satan's followers will be judged.
- C. Praise God we were saved by electing grace and God's appointment from wrath (I Thes 1:10; 5:9).

Fitted to destruction.

- A. The choice of *fitted* here goes back to the metaphors at hand – things formed and pottery (9:20-21).
 - 1. The apostle had just written by the Spirit that it was vessels God would pour His wrath upon.
 - 2. Things formed cannot question their Former, and vessels of pottery cannot question the Potter.
 - 3. A vessel can be fitted for a glorious and honorable end or an inglorious and dishonorable one.
- B. The choice of *fitted* here is to be understood in light of *prepared* in the next verse about the elect.
 - 1. This is God's act, choice, and work.
 - 2. It was settled afore, short for in eternity according to other scriptures, as Jude 1:4 of reprobates.
- C. Salvation, no matter the supreme importance and sanctity of it, is by God's absolute prerogative.
- D. Vessels of wrath, reprobate sinners to be judged, were chosen like a potter might, for destruction.
 - 1. God will have mercy and compassion on whom He will, and He will harden and judge others.
 - 2. Embrace Proverbs 16:4 and its glorious, terrible sense ... http://www.letgodbettrue.com/proverbs/16_04.htm.
 - 3. Jude wrote of their eternal ordination to condemnation, which Enoch prophesied (Jude 1:4).
 - 4. Peter wrote of appointment to disobedience (hardened) and not chosen as others (I Pet 2:7-10).
 - 5. They have been planned and reserved (and fitted) for destruction from very early (II Pet 2:3,9).
- E. The wicked have a reservation made for them – to be brought for destruction under God's wrath.
 - 1. Job's defense included the wicked reserved for God's day of destructive wrath (Job 21:27-33).
 - 2. The great Day of Judgment is the climax to creation and salvation ... for the glory of God.
- F. The wicked fit themselves for destruction in Adam and by their sins, but that is not the point here.
 - 1. God's choice to save or not included man's rebellious choice to sin, but it is not taught here.
 - 2. Adam's offence in Eden condemned men to judgment without the second Adam (Ro 5:12-19).
 - 3. But men, without compulsion from God, continue to prove His judgment righteous (Ac 13:46).
 - 4. God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and Pharaoh hardened his own heart, but the latter is not here.
- G. Enoch prophesied of God's judgment on the wicked as the seventh from Adam (Jude 1:14-15).

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

And.

- A. This coordinating conjunction is important, as it presents the human vessels of honour from 9:21.
- B. Before you can appreciate them, you must be convinced and familiar with reprobation (9:21-22).
 - 1. It was God the Holy Spirit's choice to first declare God's will in reprobating some men (9:22).
 - 2. With His will to show His wrath and power known, He declared His will to show His glory.
- C. God's will is two-sided when creating men – some for judgment, some for mercy and compassion.
 - 1. The glory of God, fairly representing all aspects of His nature, requires judgment and salvation.
 - 2. The will of God is to save the vessels of mercy, as in 9:15-16, which the apostle now declares.

That he might make known.

- A. Jehovah is infinitely perfect from eternity, as proven by His name, I AM THAT I AM (Ex 3:6).
- B. But His perfections bring Him no glory, honor, or praise without creatures to provide it for Him.
- C. For His own glory and pleasure, He created angels and men and decreed reprobation and salvation.
 - 1. We gather this from verses declaring the purpose for God creating (Proverbs 16:4; Rev 4:11).
 - 2. We see this in individual examples like Pharaoh in the preceding context (Ex 9:16; Rom 9:17).
 - 3. We see this in individual examples like Saul of Tarsus, who was a pattern for us (I Tim 1:16).
 - 4. We see this as a stated purpose of redemption (Ephesians 1:6,12; II Thess 1:10-12; 2:13).
 - 5. We see this in a stated purpose of redemption for the angels (Ep 3:10; I Pet 1:12; Rev 5:11-12).
 - 6. We see this in what God does during eternity to display His rich kindness (Ephesians 2:7).
 - 7. We see this in how reprobates are tormented in the sight of heaven forever (Rev 14:9-11).

8. We see this in what is stated about the reprobates in 9:22 and the redeemed here in 9:23.
9. We see this in the purpose for all creatures (Ps 96:11-13; 148:1-13; Rev 5:13; Rom 11:36).
10. We see this in repetitive statements of perpetual praise to God forever (Ps 41:13; 106:48; Eph 3:21; I Tim 1:17; I Pet 4:11; 5:11; Jude 1:25; Re 7:9-12).
11. We see this in particular and specific creatures made for praise (Isaiah 6:1-4; Rev 4:8-11; 5:14).

The riches of his glory.

- A. Salvation is for God to display His grace in saving wicked and rebel men from their deserved condemnation to an eternal inheritance of heaven's riches, being joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.
 1. Salvation shows God's grace, wisdom, and power in desiring, designing, and decreeing to save.
 2. Salvation allows God to pour eternal riches on adopted children that had and deserved nothing.
- B. The riches of his glory are first and foremost the abundant degree of gracious kindness to save us.
 1. Remember, it is vessels of mercy that are the objects of this display, meaning they had no right.
 2. Romans had already described His riches of goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering (2:4).
 3. Romans had already described sin abounding and reigning, but grace much more so (5:20-21).
 4. Ephesians identifies the glory of God's grace as the object of praise for redemption (Eph 1:6).
 5. Ephesians identifies the riches of His grace as the basis for redemption in Christ (Eph 1:7).
 6. Ephesians identifies the wisdom and prudence of God's redemptive plan for us (Eph 1:8); this is an incredible deliverance, seeing that God poured out His wrath on Jesus instead of you.
 7. Ephesians identifies God's rich mercy as the basis for Him setting His love on us (Eph 2:4).
 8. Ephesians identifies the exceeding riches of God's grace in His kindness to save us (Eph 2:7).
 9. Paul in Titus used *abundantly* rather than riches to define God's love and kindness (Tit 3:2-7).
 10. The called and chosen discern in the gospel of salvation God's power and wisdom (I Cor 1:24).
- C. The riches of His glory are secondarily an eternal inheritance in a glorious world of perfect bliss.
 1. In the midst of listing the glory of grace, Paul wrote of a gloriously rich inheritance (Ep 1:18).
 2. This glorious inheritance has an earnest glorious itself and indicating future glory (Ep 1:11-14).
 3. This incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeless inheritance is reserved for God's elect (I Pet 1:1-5).
 4. Jesus suffered as we do, but He then obtained *glory* (I Tim 3:16; Hebrews 2:9; I Peter 1:11,21).
 5. We are joint-heirs with Christ to be glorified like Him (Romans 8:17,23,30; Philippians 3:21)!
 6. This glory shall be fully displayed at the second coming of Jesus Christ (Col 3:4; I John 3:2).
 7. Our bodies will be changed to accommodate the transcendent glory of heaven (I Cor 15:35-44).
 8. The heavenly kingdom has been prepared for the prepared elect from eternity (Matthew 25:34).
- D. The riches of His glory are then the inclusion of Gentiles into the family of God (Ep 3:8; Col 1:27).
- E. The riches of His glory are then the intangible riches of God's presence (Eph 3:16; II Thess 2:14).

On the vessels of mercy.

- A. The foundation has already been laid so that these words are easy to read and fully understand.
 1. From the metaphorical language of 9:20-21, God has vessels of dishonor and honor (9:22-23).
 2. Paul had already declared clearly that God chooses mercy on whom He will (9:15-16,18).
- B. This has nothing to do with their mercy, just as vessels of wrath has nothing to do with their wrath.
- C. Our salvation is by the mercy of God – undeserved pardon (Tit 3:5; I Pet 1:3; Ps 130:7; Mic 7:18).

Which he had afore prepared unto glory.

- A. He decreed and appointed the elect to something very different from the wicked (I Thess 5:9).
- B. This is an eternal purpose that God had – *afore prepared* – not a result of man's actions in time.
 1. Salvation, like reprobation in 9:22, is based on God's determinate counsel before time.
 2. The plan and promise of salvation were before the world began (Eph 1:4; II Tim 1:9; Titus 1:2).
 3. God's works in time are the result of His determinate counsel in eternity (Acts 4:28; 15:18).

4. Some men, from the one lump of humanity, are fitted for damnation or prepared for glory!
 5. Even heaven itself is described as having been prepared for them from eternity (Matt 25:34).
 6. What God did for you in eternity ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/before-the-world-began.pdf>.
- C. It is obviously of salvation to eternal life, not of mere national privilege, for it included Gentiles!
1. It is a disgraceful shame of Bible perversion to limit this passage to nationalism (II Tim 2:15).
 2. Paul started this passage off by setting Israel's national privileges against spiritual blessings.

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Even us.

- A. The adverbial use of *even* as here means 'namely' or 'that is to say', emphasizing our identity.
1. This is not an emphatic *even*, as in Prov 16:4, applying a general principle to an extreme case.
 2. It is merely explanatory, as in Rom 4:17; 9:10; 15:6; and similar verses throughout the Bible.
- B. Paul's words of 9:22-23 are not doctrinal speculation or soteriological theory – it involves persons.
1. Though a doctrinal declaration of reprobation and election, our apostle brought the point home.
 2. The apostle and audience, including saved readers, are the body of Christ of Jews and Gentiles.
 3. Paul identified some, including himself, as vessels of mercy, which God had prepared to save.
 4. This is no mere doctrine or concept – it is our personal salvation by God through Jesus Christ.

Whom he hath called.

- A. This calling, or appointment by God, has been mentioned before. See Romans 1:6; 8:28; and 8:30.
1. What does it mean to be called of God? It means God chose and appointed you to be His child!
 2. The Romans were called of God (Rom 1:6-7), or chosen of God (I Cor 1:24-29; I Peter 1:2).
 3. Your calling is your chosen or appointed role or vocation (I Cor 7:17-24; Ephesians 4:1 cp 5:1).
 4. God's call can be appointment, or regeneration as a son, or the gospel call to act like one.
 5. The call here is different and more than an invitation, offer, or request for us to choose.
 6. It is God's charge, command, order, and ordination that result in us being sons of God.
 7. The gospel call to be sons is nothing compared to God's authoritative call, appointment, ordination, or regeneration to be His sons (Matt 22:14; Rom 9:11; Eph 1:3-12; I Pet 2:9).
 8. The gospel call always follows God's sovereign call (I Cor 1:22-31; II Thess 2:13-14).
 9. God's sovereign call has already been identified as such in the call of Jacob and Esau (9:11).
 10. What is this calling? It is synonymous with appointing and ordaining, as we identified in 1:1 above, where Paul was called, appointed, or ordained, to be an apostle.
 11. Luke wrote an inspired commentary that ordination to eternal life fits the bill (Act 13:48).
 12. I do confess that the soteriological terms, general call and effectual call, are more confusing than helpful, and they are used to promote the heresy of gospel regeneration.
 13. While there is a call of the gospel, a lesser number is chosen (Matthew 22:14; II Thess 2:14).
 14. The gospel cannot call a natural man to obedience, even by the Holy Spirit (I Cor 2:14).
 15. There must be a prior creation of a new spiritual man, which is called regeneration, and before that there must have been God's predestination leading to quickening (John 8:47; Ro 8:29-30).
 16. The call is not as we might think today, an audible request, a phone conversation, an invitation, a visit, etc. It is the sovereign choice of God to appoint some to salvation.
- B. The calling or vocation we receive from God is according to his purpose, not at all our own (8:28).
1. Salvation and calling are by God's eternal purpose in Christ, not by our works (II Tim 1:9).
 2. If God has been merciful to you, it is according to His own own good will (Matt 11:25-26).
- C. Our calling, or our appointment, is to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess 5:9).
- D. Consider this call even further by additional usage (I Corinthians 1:9; Hebrews 3:1; I Peter 5:10).

- E. The most important issue about calling is to determine if you are the called as a vessel of mercy!
 1. According to what has already been stated in this very epistle, do you love God (Rom 8:28)?
 2. Do you see in the gospel and show by a new life the power and wisdom of God (I Cor 1:24)?
 3. Peter listed eight things that when done can make your calling and election sure (II Pet 1:5-11).

Not of the Jews only.

- A. Realize first of all that the issue of this chapter is not at all national privileges of Jews or of Israel.
 1. It is a disgraceful shame that Arminians and Dispensationalists will pervert the gospel of God.
 2. The vessels of mercy include Gentiles (see next phrase) and reject many Jews (this phrase).
 3. The issue at hand is the riches of God's glory realized in Christ both now and in eternity (9:23).
- B. It is certainly not all Jews, only OF the Jews; for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel (9:6).
- C. This is personal and individual election of some persons from out of the Jewish nation, or Israel.
- D. Jehovah was not and is not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles (Romans 3:29).
- E. The distinction and special treatment of Israel is gone (Gal 3:28; Eph 2:11-22; 3:6-8; Col 3:11).

But also of the Gentiles.

- A. Realize first of all that the issue of this chapter is not at all national privileges of Jews or of Israel.
 1. It is a disgraceful shame that Arminians and Dispensationalists will pervert the gospel of God.
 2. The vessels of mercy include Gentiles (this phrase) and reject many Jews (the previous phrase).
 3. The issue at hand is the riches of God's glory realized in Christ both now and in eternity (9:23).
- B. It is certainly not all Gentiles, only OF the Gentiles; for God has not chosen to save all Gentiles.
- C. This is personal and individual election of some persons from out of the Gentiles nations, or world.
- D. Jehovah was and is the God of the Gentiles also, not exclusively the God of the Jews (Rom 3:29).
 1. As early as God's prophecy of Judah, the coming Shiloh would gather the people (Gen 49:10).
 2. Jesus taught it as the Good Shepherd (John 10:16), and Caiaphas prophesied it (John 11:49-52).
 3. Paul declared it to Gentiles, which caused them great joy to hear the good news (Ac 13:47-48).
 4. But the first event formal event of this kind foretold by God was of Cornelius (Acts 15:14-18).
- E. What should Gentiles do? They should rejoice with great gladness for this inclusion (Ro 15:8-12).

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

As he saith also in Osee.

- A. Paul has proved Israel's election/reprobation by Bible examples and theology, now by scripture.
 1. He stated the hard doctrine (9:6), then illustrated it (9:7-13), and then established it (9:14-24).
 2. Paul's general argument for God's sovereignty in election so far pertains to all men (9:17,24), and he included Gentiles as well earlier in the epistle (Rom 1:13-16; 2:14,24; 3:29-31; 4:9-17).
 3. However, the great theme of this chapter and the next two is Israel, the Jews (9:1-5; 10:1; 11:1).
 4. Paul stated and then proved a hard point – *they are not all Israel, which are of Israel* (9:6-24).
 5. It was a staggering concept to Jews to hear that only some of their nation were God's children.
 6. Paul had just restated this axiom by declaring that election was only of some of the Jews (9:24).
 7. The vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory were only those Jews called out of the nation.
 8. God had elected only some Jews as vessels of mercy, and He had also elected some Gentiles, but this concluding thought to the long sentence of 9:22-24 is secondary to the larger argument.
- B. The prophet referred to is Hosea (the Hebrew to Greek to English being Osee); the use is of 2:23.
 1. That this kind of variant of O.T. names irritates some gives this author joy to trust God's word.
 2. For this reason we see Jesus for Joshua, Elias for Elijah, Esaias for Isaiah, Eliseus for Elisha.
 3. We do not want to correct those issues of scripture that cause skeptics to gloat in its "errors."

- C. Hosea's first two chapters should be read, where you can read the prophecy of God's rejection and destruction of the ten tribes, with particular attention paid to the three children's names and meanings – Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah, and Lo-ammi, and then His elective choice to save them again.
- D. The passage we have entered proves election/reprobation of Jews from O.T. scriptures (9:25-29).
 - 1. The Jews could not complain, for the scriptures they revered taught Paul's exact doctrine.
 - 2. Though a hard doctrine for them to consider – reprobation of part of Israel – it was scriptural.
- E. We cannot overlook the adverb *also*, if we value each word of God as we should (Pr 30:5; Lu 4:4).
 - 1. Paul's use of Hosea here in 9:25 should line up with his other quotations earlier, showing election and reprobation within the patriarch's families and with Pharaoh (9:7,9,12,13,15,17).
 - 2. The adverb *also* compares similar or identical things, connecting God in the first person back to 9:13,15,17, for the singular male pronoun here is not Hosea, but rather God speaking, as earlier.
 - 3. The key concepts connected are election (9:13) and God's will in mercy (9:15). See Hos 1:6-9.
 - 4. Paul's one argument runs from the sixth verse – there are two Israel's by election/reprobation.
 - 5. Note the parenthesis (14-24) defending election (10-13), by, "What shall we say then?" (9:14).
 - 6. Paul continued pursuing his argument that God is not bound by His word to the nation at large but rather to a portion of the nation only (9:6), which God had already revealed in scripture.
 - 7. The lesson at hand, and the one from we should not move, is election and reprobation of Jews.
 - 8. These three chapters (9-11) are not about the Gentiles; they will only merit ancillary attention.
- F. Neither Hosea nor Paul intended Gentiles with Hosea 2:23, though most have confused it to be so.
 - 1. Hosea chapters 1-2 (and the rest of the book for that matter) is clearly and only about Jehovah's severe judgment and destruction of Israel (the ten tribes) and then the recovery of them later.
 - 2. Hosea's only mention of Gentiles is to identify them as captors and judges of Israel (Hos 8:8).
 - 3. The point at stake – *they are not all Israel, which are of Israel* – is some of Israel is reprobate.
 - 4. Do not presume Gentiles here merely by *Gentiles* ending the previous verse, for introduction of a new word and subordinate thought in 9:24 should not alter the overriding argument from 9:1.
 - 5. Verse 24 is only an ancillary part of the whole sentence of reprobation and election (9:22-24), which is the theological summary of Paul's defense of reprobation and election started in 9:14.
 - 6. Do not presume them Gentiles by their description as not being God's people, for that is precisely the judgment God declared by the prophet Hosea to Israel's ten tribes (Hosea 1:1-9).
 - 7. Inspired Peter applied this passage and terminology exclusively to Jews, clearly distinguished from Gentiles, showing that Christ made them unique Israelites (I Peter 2:4-12); it is discouraging and shameful to read efforts to prove that Peter wrote to Gentiles by these words.
 - 8. Inspired Peter's audience was the *diaspora* scattered throughout the Empire (I Pet 1:1), from both the Assyrian destruction of Israel and Babylon's of Judah/Benjamin; Peter was one of the apostolic pillars assigned to the Jews, and he wrote them as did James (Gal 2:9; James 1:12).
 - 9. As we continue in Romans 9, the next few verses are quotations from Isaiah about Israel, not Gentiles, and another use of the adverb *also* connects them to the quotations from Hosea (9:27).
 - 10. The Gentiles are not part of Paul's argument here until 9:30, where they are quite ancillary, and they are only briefly mentioned, for Paul returned quickly back to the issue in Israel (9:31-33).
 - 11. In addition, there is no reason to introduce *Israel* or *Jews* for all the elect people of God made up of Jews and Gentiles, for the racial distinction is maintained throughout chapters 9-11.
 - 12. It is a connection by sound and not sense to leap to Gentiles merely by their previously being strangers, as the scriptures in places like Ephesians 2:11-13 are clearly dealing with Gentiles.
 - 13. We can never succumb to interpretation by the sound of words; we must get the sense (Ne 8:8).
 - 14. We must rightly divide phrases that sound similar by their contexts and scripture (II Tim 2:15).
- G. What does Hosea say in his prophecy that is in agreement and helpful to Paul's Jewish argument?
 - 1. God rejected Israel in one generation by withdrawing mercy and scattering them by Assyria.
 - 2. God elected Israel in another generation by alluring and loving them again to their recovery.
 - 3. Thus, Paul's argument that not all of Israel is elect Israel is proven by Hosea's record of it.

- H. Note the lesson here, and though indirect, it is still valuable, the apostolic method of instruction.
1. For those who tire of flipping in their Bibles to various passages, they would have hated Paul.
 2. The Bible is not written like a handbook – truth is learned by comparing numerous scriptures.

I will call them my people.

- A. Paul used a part of Hosea 2:23 to show agreement of the prophets with him about election (9:25).
1. Note in Hosea 2:23 God's choice to bestow mercy on those who had not been shown mercy.
 2. Also note there that God would now call such persons His people that had not been His people.
 3. And the full text in Hosea shows the response God elicited from them by grace to worship Him.
- B. By Hosea's preceding context, we know this text to be an election of Israel after their reprobation.
1. Israel elected in Hosea 2:23 had been rejected earlier in Hosea 1:1-9. Recall Israel's history.
 2. Paul will go in reverse order (to our minds) by showing the preceding reprobation (9:26) next.
- C. Far worse than the Jews, we Gentiles truly needed God's elective choice, though not taught here.

Which were not my people.

- A. From a natural standpoint, the Jews had always been God's people by national privilege (Am 3:2).
- B. However, for spiritual adultery and evil debauchery, Jehovah rejected Samaria and the ten tribes – He reprobated them as being unworthy of being His people and destroyed them (Hosea 1:4-9).
- C. This has nothing to do with the Gentiles, though they were not God's people, for the point is Israel, and a comparison with Hosea could not make it any clearer – Israel (the ten tribes) is the object.
- D. Peter also quoted Hosea for the same terminology and used it exclusively of the Jews (I Pe 2:4-12).
- E. Though not pertaining to Gentiles directly at all, we can still rejoice that God made us His people.

And her beloved, which was not beloved.

- A. The wording is different in Hosea 2:23, *I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy.*
- B. Being Bible believers, we trust the providence of the living God that it fills out the spiritual sense.
- C. By reading this far, God loved Jacob (9:13) and His mercy and compassion are connected (9:15), therefore we could with little effort fill out the connection between love and mercy.
- D. These are not Gentiles born outside God's mercy; this is Israel having mercy withdrawn (Hos 1:6)!
- E. Consider the progressive lesson – I will have compassion and mercy on whom I will have it (9:15).

26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

And it shall come to pass.

- A. This quotation is also from Hosea, but it is Hosea 1:10, where God's election is stated differently.
- B. The order of verses (Paul used 2:23 before 1:10) is not key, for he intended one general thought.
- C. God judged and dispersed Israel (ten tribes), but they grew in numbers in the world (Hos 1:10); He later reversed His judgment and called some of them back to one head under the gospel (1:11).

That in the place where it was said unto them.

- A. Where was it said that Israel was no longer God's people? In Jerusalem, in Samaria, Israel, and the world, for God judged Israel and ended it according to His prophets' warnings (Hos 1:4-5); Assyria took them captive into all the world, and yet later from Jerusalem the alluring gospel of grace.
- B. From rejection to readmission – Israel did not change place, but God changed His mind toward Israel, that is, from one generation that was rejected to another generation that He later received.

Ye are not my people.

- A. God reprobated His people by the prophets, as they declared God's divorce and rejection of Israel.
- B. It was God Who said of Israel they were no longer His people by the ministry of the prophets (Hos 1:1-9).
- C. God said it through Hosea, and all you have to do is read this book to see it clearly (Hosea 1:9)!
- D. Their enemies knew Jehovah of Israel had forsaken them, for the once great nation was powerless.

There shall they be called the children of the living God.

- A. Though dispersed and scattered abroad, the gospel message came inviting Israel back to God.
- B. Jerusalem, the center of the Jews' religion, was the source of both statements about God and Israel.
- C. This reversal is the point introduced in 9:6 and continued to here – God made choice to reject Israel (the ten tribes) for many years, and then He by His grace called and restored some of Israel again.
- D. We reject Scofield's note at this verse that says the prophecy still awaits fulfillment, for it was fulfilled naturally with Zerubbabel and spiritually with Jesus Christ.

27 *Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:*

Esaias also crieth concerning Israel.

- A. Leaving quotations from Hosea, Paul then quoted Isaiah 10:22-23 for election in Israel (9:27-28).
- B. The prophet here is Isaiah (the Hebrew to Greek to English being Esaias); the use is of 10:22-23.
 - 1. That this kind of variant of O.T. names irritates some gives this author joy to trust God's word.
 - 2. For this reason we see Jesus for Joshua, Osee for Hosea, Esaias for Isaiah, Eliseus for Elisha.
 - 3. We do not want to correct those issues of scripture that cause skeptics to gloat in its "errors."
- C. Note again the adverb *also* here, indicating Hosea and Isaiah spoke of the same audience for the same purpose – to prove Paul's point from scripture – *they are not all Israel, which are of Israel*.
- D. There is no disjunctive here to distinguish Hosea from Isaiah – *but Esaias crieth concerning Israel*.
- E. There is no conjunctive here to separate Hosea from Isaiah – *and Esaias crieth concerning Israel*.
- F. The one speaking in 9:25, from Hosea 2:23, is God Himself, not Hosea to be compared to Isaiah, therefore the adverb *also* cannot be comparing Hosea to Isaiah but rather Israel to Israel as object.

Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea.

- A. Hosea used this expression about the size of Israel as well (Hos 1:10), as a contemporary of Isaiah.
- B. God had promised Abraham that he would have a seed this large (Gen 13:16; 32:12; Heb 11:12).
- C. The obvious point here is that the size of national Israel was not the size of the true Israel of God.
- D. What is Paul's intent and purpose? He is proving from the scriptures his opening declaration – *they are not all Israel, which are of Israel* (9:6) – for this declaration was a shocking revelation to Jews.
- E. No matter how large Israel might be, even by God's natural blessings, only some were His elect.

A remnant shall be saved.

- A. In spite of God blessing Abraham with large numbers of a natural seed, the election was smaller.
- B. In fact, the use of *though* in introducing the large numbers of Israel, indicates *only* a small remnant.
- C. The next use of Isaiah (9:30) calls God's elect *a very small remnant* (Is 1:9), for our comfort.
- D. **Remnant.** With *a* and *pl.* A (small) remaining quantity, part, or piece. A small remaining number of persons. Compare scripture (Deut 3:11; Hag 1:12,14; Matt 22:5-6; Rev 12:17).
- E. Any remnant, whether Noah's eight or the apostolic *many thousands*, is only by grace (Rom 11:5).
- F. They are the ones the LORD Himself shall call (Joel 2:32), as Romans 8:28 and 9:24 have taught.

- G. Paul's inspired use of scripture is very powerful, for this clearly teaches the very point he sought to make about Israel, that God had elected only some of the large nation to be His saved children.
- H. Remember many are called, but few are chose, for though Israel was large, only a few were saved.

28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

For he will finish the work.

- A. The work the Lord finished in righteousness was judging Israel (Assyria) and Judah (Babylon).
- B. Isaiah called it *the consumption decreed, shall overflow with righteousness*

And cut it short in righteousness.

- A. God would no longer endure Israel in longsuffering and patience – He destroyed them and Judah.
- B. All of God's works without fail are done in righteousness, even His strange work of judgment.

Because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

- A. Both the work and short work of 9:28 is a "consumption" in Isaiah, God's destructive judgment.
- B. Comparing scripture reveals a consumption to be God's judgment (Isaiah 28:18-22; 1:28; 5:24).

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

And as Esaias said before.

- A. Quoting again from Isaiah, Paul used a text coming *before* his previous quote (Is 1:9 cp 10:22-23).
- B. The election in Isaiah's first chapter is an election from the desolation of judgment (Isaiah 1:1-8).

Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed.

- A. *Seed* is to be understood as a remnant, a small part of the original whole of the nation of Israel.
- B. *Seed* is Paul's choice by the Holy Ghost; Isaiah's explanatory source is **a very small remnant**.
- C. The election in Isaiah's first chapter is an election from the desolation of judgment (Isaiah 1:1-8).
- D. It is important for us to realize that the exceptions in the human race are by God's grace, not man.
- E. The "seed" of Israel as a small remnant is important (Isaiah 6:9-13; 45:25; 53:10; 65:9,23; 66:22).

We had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

- A. Sodom and Gomorrha suffered annihilation, without any exceptions: God saved a few Israelites.
- B. Considering Gentiles for a moment, we were even farther from God, and salvation is all of grace!

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

What shall we say then?

- A. Paul brought this section of his argument about election in Israel to an intermediate conclusion, with this common rhetorical question of his (4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 9:14).
- B. In this chapter he declared election and reprobation in Israel (9:6), illustrated it by the patriarchs' families (9:7-13), proved it by theology (9:14-24), and proved it by their O.T. scriptures (9:25-29).

- C. He included Gentiles in 9:24, but they are not the main theme of these three chapters, and it should be recalled they were included from the beginning (Rom 1:13-16; 2:17-29; 3:29-30; 4:9-17; etc.).
- D. However, to further exacerbate Israel's situation and make a comparison, he mentioned them in this verse to identify a difficult thing – their reception of the gospel against Israel's rejection of it.
- E. Here is the first mention of the gospel in this chapter and the response to it by Gentiles and Israel.
- F. The gospel, justification, righteousness, and faith were dealt with thoroughly already (chaps. 3-5).
- G. Paul here dropped another bomb on his readers – Gentiles showed a better response to the gospel.
- H. As Gentiles, we should rejoice and be bound to give thanks for God's salvation of us (II The 2:13).
- I. There are two aspects to our reception of the gospel – election and no superstition about the Law.

That the Gentiles.

- A. Having mentioned Gentiles in 9:24, he described them first and fast here, then pursued Israel again.
- B. We reject any assumption Paul referred to Gentiles in 9:25-26, for the reasons already given there.
- C. It should be obvious only some of the Gentiles are under consideration though not expressly stated.
 - 1. Not all Gentiles had attained to righteousness; in fact, only a very small portion of them had.
 - 2. Paul did not clarify this point, so it is our duty to rightly divide the word of truth (II Tim 2:15).
 - 3. The only Gentiles he had in mind were those identified earlier, the elect *of the Gentiles* (9:24).
 - 4. Let this point be clear – Paul's argument involved only the elect *vessels of mercy* of Gentiles.
 - 5. The use of Gentiles must be understood as a class of people with emphasis on the elect only.
 - 6. Not all of the Gentiles were either saved legally or converted practically by the gospel.
- D. To keep to Paul's main argument for chapters 9-11, we view the Gentiles here as a parenthesis.
 - 1. There is no new thought here regarding Gentiles, for Paul had already shown them justified by faith, for they had more similarity to Abraham than did the Jews themselves (Rom 4:9-17)!
 - 2. There is no new thought here about Gentiles, for Paul had already declared (a point the Romans knew well) about many Gentile conversions (Rom 1:13-16; 2:17-29; 3:29; 4:9-17; 9:24).
- E. We should keep this class distinction in mind, for we must rightly identify the Israel that follows.

Which followed not after righteousness.

- A. Gentiles were born outside God's nation of Israel and had no relationship to God or His worship, not even in outward form or ceremonial ritual, for God righteously left us in our own dark ignorance.
- B. The nature and conduct of Gentiles is clearly described by Paul in the first chapter (Rom 1:18-32).
- C. It is hard to imagine a people more ignorant and rebellious of God and worship than our ancestors.

Have attained to righteousness.

- A. God does not justify Gentiles or anyone else because of their faith any more than because of works.
 - 1. The Bible, especially Pauline arguments, describes justification by faith. Why? Because Paul had to combat Jewish legalism everywhere he went, so the language is faith versus law works.
 - 2. When Jewish legalism is not a pressing concern, but rather carnal Christianity, justification by works is what the Bible teaches, as James mocked justification merely by faith (Jas 2:14-26).
 - 3. Paul, and we in our notes, have dealt with justification and righteousness by faith (chaps. 3-5).
 - 4. The full truth of the matter is that justification must be seen in five phases to be fully scriptural.
 - 5. For more about five phases of salvation: <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/salvation/when-were-you-saved.htm>.
 - 6. If unsettled here, see notes on chapters 3-5, which reconcile the role of Christ, faith, and works.
- B. Attaining righteousness by faith indicates to us that practical justification is the righteousness here.
 - 1. No one, Gentile or Israelite, can attain legal righteousness by their nature or effort (3:9-20).
 - 2. Only practical justification is by human faith: legal justification is by Jesus alone; He is the Second Adam and made us righteous by representation, as Adam made us sinners (5:12-19).

3. Practical justification is our evidence and proof of righteousness to God, men, and ourselves by the Bible-defined marks of a righteous man – faith in God and works following to prove it.
4. For more about this distinction, see this 1647 work by Samuel Richardson, a Baptist pastor of the first London Confession of faith: <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/salvation/justification-by-christ-alone.pdf>.
5. We reject Reformed doctrine and its obsessive use of *sola fide*, for it neglects or rejects James and other important issues at stake. See here: <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/reformed-baptists.pdf>.
6. We are not Calvinists or Arminians. See: <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/calvinism-arminianism.pdf>.
- C. The last thing taught here or in the next verses is any plan of legal justification by gospel means.
 1. The preceding context entirely annihilated any such thought by God's own choice (9:14-24)!
 2. It is all of God's will, and only God's will, that disposes of His mercy and compassion (9:15)!
 3. Man's will or efforts have nothing to do with obtaining God's mercy in justification (9:16)!
 4. God hardens men in rebellion against Him as part of His disposing sovereign choice (9:17-18)!
 5. Men do not have the right to even question His rule, no matter how it seems to them (9:19-20)!
 6. Men are but clay in His sovereign hands to be made vessels of honor or dishonor (9:21)!
 7. And this choice of the Potter is clearly the determining factor in eternal destiny (9:22-24)!

Even the righteousness which is of faith.

- A. This name for justification, *the righteousness which is of faith*, is practical justification of the elect.
 1. Faith is the evidence and proof of righteousness, which God gave to the elect by Jesus Christ.
 2. Of course, faith without works is proof of nothing but a devil's faith, thus says James 2:14-26.
 3. This subject has been dealt with thoroughly already by Paul 3:21 - 5:21 and in our notes there.
- B. How in the world did this miraculous distinction occur between the Gentiles and the Israelites?
 1. It is entirely contrary to the heritage of both classes, for one had God and the other did not.
 2. As Paul had taught to this point from 8:28, the doctrine of election entirely made the difference.
 3. When a large scale conversion of Gentiles took place, God's election was the basis (Acts 13:48).
 3. Mercy or compassion to any man, whether Gentile or Jew, is entirely by God's will (9:15-18).
 4. In God's eternal counsel, He elected only some of the Jews and some of the Gentiles (9:21-24).
 5. After election, God opened the minds of Gentiles, who were not superstitious about the Law.

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

But Israel.

- A. After identifying Gentiles first and fast, Paul quickly returned to his primary argument – Israel.
- B. Recall the class distinction of Gentile elect (9:30), for Israel here is used as a class for Israel's elect.
 1. The previous verse, setting up this verse, used a class name for only the elect within the class.
 2. We assume the same right here – for this contextual reason and others reasons in the context.
 3. As with *Gentiles* in 9:30, we rightly divide the word of truth to use a class name for the elect.
- C. The Israel here is elect Israel, though identified merely by its class distinction from the Gentiles.
 1. The opening verse in this section (9:30) used a class name for only the elect within the class.
 2. Paul had distinguished elect Israel from merely national Israel from his opening argument (9:6).
 3. He had concluded his summary of God's electing/reprobating will with only some Jews (9:24).
 4. He had shown from the scriptures that a national discrimination had occurred before (9:25-29).
 5. Paul opened the tenth chapter with a prayer for Israel's salvation, which we assume for reasons in that place must be limited to elect Israel (II Tim 2:10), lest he be found to fight against God!
 6. Paul did not pray or labor for God's mercy and compassion on those He had chosen to reject.

Which followed after the law of righteousness.

- A. Israel as a class distinct from Gentiles had an inspired religious system of ritual worship to God.
- B. Moses' law, which ostensibly was their plan of justification, was merely a schoolteacher of Christ.
- C. From a class standpoint, and from outward compliance, Israel pursued justification with God.
- D. As shown in the previous point about the identity of Israel, we assume elect Israel pursuing God.
- E. These are God's elect seeking justification and righteousness by the Law and missing Jesus Christ.

Hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

- A. Paul concluded of elect Israel as a class distinct from Gentiles – they had not attained justification.
- B. The justification Paul had in mind here is practical justification by faith in Jesus' finished work.
- C. He explained in the next chapter that faith in Christ saves a Jew from hopeless Law works (10:3-5).
- D. Why did elect Israel miss practical justification? Because they were still in love with Moses' Law.

32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

Wherefore?

- A. Here is another rhetorical question, and rightly so for this contradictory Gentile-Israel situation.
- B. Why did elect Israel miss practical justification? Because they were still in love with Moses' Law!
- C. It was hard to wean even converted Jews from it (Ac 21:20). Remember why Paul wrote Hebrews!

Because they sought it not by faith.

- A. Many of elect Israel did not believe on Jesus Christ's finished work out of superstition to the Law.
- B. They did not believe Jesus of Nazareth, the accused devil-possessed enemy of the Jews' religion.
- C. Though there is much more than faith for practical justification, it begins with faith in Jesus Christ.
- D. Though there is much more than faith for practical justification, Paul set faith over against the Law.

But as it were by the works of the law.

- A. Though the gospel was sent first to the Jews, the majority rejected it, even those of elect Israel.
- B. They were faithful and loyal to the tradition of the elders and missed the prophecies of Jesus Christ.
- C. Arminians take confidence in their faith, the Jews took confidence in Abraham or Moses or both!

For they stumbled at that stumblingstone.

- A. Why did they reject the ministry of John, Jesus, and the apostles with all their attendant proofs?
- B. Because Jesus of Nazareth did not fit their idea of the Messiah they had planned on all their lives.
 - 1. They stumbled, tripped, and fell over a poor carpenter's son killed by Rome as their Christ!
 - 2. They sought a handsome, charismatic leader like David to defeat Rome and restore greatness!
- C. God was not surprised by this response to His Son, for He had purposed it from the very beginning.

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

As it is written.

- A. God was not surprised by this response to His Son, for He had purposed it from the very beginning.
- B. In fact, the Old Testament scripture plainly prophesied that He would cause great division in Israel.
- C. Paul quoted from Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14 to form the combination that follows showing this division.
- D. Peter also used very similar wording from these texts and Psalm 118:22 as well in I Peter 2:6-8.

Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence.

- A. Sion, or Zion, was one of the mountains making up Jerusalem and often the name for the city.
- B. Jesus of Nazareth was disappointing and offensive as the prophets had foretold (Isaiah 53:2).
- C. The poverty in reputation and wealth of his parents offended Jews (Luke 2:34-35; Matt 13:54-58).
- D. Paul explained very clearly that only called Jews could see God's blessing in Jesus (I Cor 1:22-24).
- E. Observe that Peter assigned the stumbling over Jesus Christ to God's appointment (I Peter 2:8).

And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

- A. Though lacking outward attraction, faith would not be disappointed or shame a man (Rom 10:11).
- B. Peter sheds further light on this part of the prophecy and gospel by using confounded (I Peter 2:6).
- C. Faith, and the things added to faith, when practiced diligently prove one's election (II Pet 1:5-11).
- D. Reader, whether Gentile or Jew, do you find Jesus Christ your all in all and seek to bear Him fruit?