

God's Sovereign Choice—Romans 9:1–29

Topics: Blessing, Burdens, Justice, Opportunities, Rejection, Sovereignty

Open It

1. When have you felt that you were judged unfairly in a contest?

Romans 9:1–29 (ESV)

¹I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—
²that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

⁵To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

⁶But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,
⁷and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”

⁸This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.

⁹For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.”

¹⁰And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac,

¹¹though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—

¹²she was told, “The older will serve the younger.”

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

¹⁴What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!

¹⁵For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

¹⁶So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

¹⁷For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

¹⁸So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

¹⁹You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?”

²⁰But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?”

²¹Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

²²What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

²³in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—

²⁴even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

²⁵As indeed he says in Hosea, “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’ ”

²⁶“And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’ ”

²⁷And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved,

²⁸for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.”

²⁹And as Isaiah predicted, “If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.”

Explore It

2. What situation made Paul feel sad and anguished? (9:2–3)
3. What gifts and opportunities had God given to the Jewish people? (9:4–5)
4. How did Paul explain the difference between Jews who believe and Jews who do not believe? (9:6–8)
5. Whom did God bless as the parents of the nation of Israel? (9:7–9)
6. What did Paul say to people who claim to be children of God merely because they are descendants of Abraham? (9:8–9)
7. What decision did God make about Jacob and Esau before they were born? (9:12–13)
8. How did Paul defend the accusation that God is unjust in His treatment of people? (9:14–15)
9. What determines how God bestows favor on people? (9:16)
10. What examples from history did Paul use to demonstrate God’s choice of blessing? (9:17–18)
11. What right do we have to question God? (9:19–21)
12. Why does God show great patience with us even though we deserve His wrath? (9:22–24)
13. What did the prophets Isaiah and Hosea tell us about God’s patience and justice? (9:25–29)

Get It

14. What’s wrong with depending on a religious background or heritage for favor with God?
15. What sacrifices would you be willing to make to give others a chance to know Christ?
16. Why do we tend to question God’s actions toward us or anyone else?
17. What does this passage teach us about God’s character?

Apply It

18. What sacrifices or efforts can you make this week to help a friend come to faith in Christ?