

**Romans 9:6-33**  
**(Jeremiah 18:1-11; Luke 10:1-2, 17-24)**  
**“Children of the Promise”**

## **Introduction**

We saw last week that Paul wrote Romans 9-11 in order to address the problem of Israel’s rejection of Jesus as her promised Messiah. This was far from a theoretical problem for Paul, for his love for his people moved him and motivated him in his mission so much that he was willing, he said, to be cut off from God’s grace if only his fellow Jews might be saved. He develops his thought in such a way that it is quite difficult to understand what he is saying in any one of these chapters without having some sense of the logical flow of all three chapters.

For that reason, last week we overviewed chapters 9-11, and if you were not here, I commend that overview to you so that you don’t get lost in one section on a question that is answered a little further on. And bear in mind that Paul ends chapter 11 with a doxology that calls us to humility in our approach to the mystery of salvation. There is no way to finish studying these three chapters with all of our questions answered.

In this morning’s text, Paul asks and answers a series of questions that naturally arise when we contemplate salvation history. These four questions will serve as our outline in trying to understand the first of these three chapters, and the one that focuses on God’s sovereignty in the salvation of his people.

## **Body**

### **1. Has God’s word failed (9:6-13)?**

No. God’s promises were always made to the children of the promise, not merely children of the flesh. Clearly, not all who are part of Israel by birth are spiritually part of Israel. This is a major Old Testament theme. In raising the doctrine of divine election, or predestination, it important to note that this is not Calvinism, nor is it even a doctrine unique to Paul. It is a doctrine that threads it way through both Old Testament and New, through the gospels and the epistles. It was taught by the prophets of Israel, by Jesus (see, for example, the middle passages of John 6), and by his apostles.

But be clear about this: nowhere in Scripture is anyone who seeks the Lord rejected because he or she is not chosen. That is not what the doctrine teaches. It rather teaches that all alike reject God, unless he graciously draws them by grace to turn to him in repentance and faith. Whenever the Bible speaks of judgment, it is for what we have done or not done, based upon

what we have believed or failed to believe. Predestination rightly understood is a great comfort, and a reminder of why we have been chosen of God: in order to bear the God news of salvation to the nations!

**2. Is God unjust in choosing one over another (9:14-18)?**

No. Since no one deserves God's grace, he cannot be faulted for showing his mercy to some who do not deserve it, while giving others exactly what they deserve.

**3. If God is sovereign in salvation, why does he still find fault (9:19-29)?**

We must be careful here: asking questions is good and right, but standing in judgment on God is dangerous. The potter has the right to make of the clay what he will. But be careful of over-interpreting this analogy, for Paul uses the same illustration in 2 Timothy 2:20-21 in a way that makes a place for the human response to God's grace. The key here is that God is revealing his grace and his justice, his mercy and his wrath, in his dealings with us.

**4. What conclusion should we draw from all this (9:30-33)?**

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says of this chapter that the first part shows us why some are saved, and the final part shows us why some are lost. Some are saved because of God's grace, freely given to those who do not deserve it and have no right to claim it, while some are lost because of their own stubborn refusal to cast themselves upon the grace of God and the Savior he has provided. So the cornerstone of salvation becomes for them a stumbling-stone. In the case of our salvation, all praise and glory rightly belongs to God. But in the case of divine judgment, the blame is completely our own, for we have all alike rejected God's gracious offer of salvation.

**Conclusion**

As we noted in our overview last week, Paul will immediately follow this presentation of God's sovereignty in salvation with an equally powerful reminder that people are responsible before God for their response to the gospel. He will quote the prophet Joel's promise that, "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (10:13).

So I ask you this morning whether or not you have yet known God's majestic mercy and grace. Have you yet turned from your brokenness and rebellion and called upon the name of Lord, pleading for forgiveness and grace, for him to send his Spirit to give you new life? He has promised to hear and answer those who call on him in truth. Don't leave here still lost in sin, dead to God and to his promises. Call upon the name of the Lord and live!

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