

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN SALVATION (PT 2)

Romans 9:14-33

Introduction: Objections to Election

I. Objection #1: Election is Unfair (v.14-18)

A. Description of this objection

- o Paul asks whether electing some and not others is "injustice" (v.14)
- o The fact that Paul acknowledges this objection proves he is teaching election. If he wasn't teaching election this objection would never arise!

B. Answer to this objection

- o It is not unfair because mercy, by definition, is not obligatory!
 - "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy" (v.14) means that God can show mercy "on whomever he wills" (v.18)
 - Therefore, "it [God's mercy] depends not on human will or exertion but on God who has mercy" (v.16)
 - Example: Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Matt 20:1-16)

****Key point:** We must be careful if we demand "fairness" from God. To ask for fairness is to ask for what we deserve. And what we deserve is judgment.

- o Paul proves God is not unfair through the Example of Pharaoh
 - God was not unjust when he destroyed Pharaoh—he was not obligated to save him
 - Indeed, God even "hardens" Pharaoh's heart (v.18).
 - Hardening is not caused by a person's own action—God hardens whomever he will
 - Hardening does not make/force a person to sin; rather God removes his restraining grace and turns a person over to their own wicked desires.
 - This hardening has a good purpose, to "show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (v.18)

II. Objection #2: Election Violates Our Free Will (v.19-23)



A. Description of This Objection

- o If God determines our response, then it sounds like we are like “puppets” on a string, just doing what God designed for us to do.
- o If God’s will determines our response to Him then how can He hold us accountable for our actions? How can he blame us?

B. Answers to This Objection

- o We’re in no position to question God: “Who are you, O man, to answer back to God?” (v.15)
- o God Has the Right to Create People for Different Purposes
 - God creates some as objects of wrath “prepared for destruction”
 - Why does he do this? “To make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy” (v.23)
- o We are still responsible for our actions
 - God does not force people to sin—they are already sinners and deserving judgment. God simply hardens their heart to the truth
 - God does not force people to believe—He opens their heart and mind so they believe willingly
 - **Thus God does not bring people to heaven kicking and screaming! Nor does he block people from heaven who really want to be there!

C. Related Objection: If God has already determined who he will save, then why bother doing evangelism?

- o Because God has commanded it!
- o Because evangelism is the *means* God has chosen to save his elect
- o If God does not intervene to save his elect, then evangelism is a complete waste of time! Thus, election gives us *optimism* in our evangelism—God will save those who are his.

III. Paul Uses Election (Again) to Explain Israel’s Unbelief (v.24-33)

A. God’s purposes in election explain the inclusion of the Gentiles—He saves whom he wants to save

- o “Those who are not my people I will call ‘my people’” (v. 25-26, citing Hos 2:23)

B. God’s purposes in election explain why only a remnant of Jews are saved—He saves whom he wants to save

- o “Only a remnant of them [Israel] will be saved” (v.27 citing Isa 10:22)

C. Paul concludes that Gentiles have found salvation because they pursued it by faith and not by works (v.30-33)



Discussion Groups

1. How often do you find yourself demanding “fairness” from God in your life? How does this passage change your perspective on that issue?

2. God makes it clear that he prepares some people for destruction so that he might show his glory in them (e.g., Pharaoh). How does that change the way you evaluate whether God is “winning” or “losing” in our culture today?

3. How does the doctrine election actually provide additional motivation and encouragement for you in your evangelism?

