



The Chosen and the Hardened

Romans 9:1-23

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A Missionary's Burden

Romans 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-- 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel.

- **Conviction:** salvation only in Christ
- **Compassion:** grief over perishing people

A blessed heritage

Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

**Has God's gospel failed?
No, not all in the chosen
family are chosen.**

It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

Children of the promise

8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.

9 For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."

Unconditional election

10 Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. 11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand: 12 not by works but by him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13 Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Is God unfair?

14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

- "Though justice be thy plea, consider this, that in the course of justice, none of us should see salvation." (Shakespeare)

Hardening

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." 18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

How can God blame us?

19 One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?” 20 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

- The first word belongs to God the Creator.
- The final word belongs to God the Judge.

Wrath and mercy

22 What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? 23 What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— 24 even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

Straight answers

1. **Does the unbelief of some mean that God's gospel failed?** No, the gospel saves those whom God has chosen.
2. **Is God unfair?** No, under law we are all doomed. God freely chooses to show either wrath or mercy; either choice is fair.
3. **Can God blame the hardened?** Yes, the Creator is supreme; we're not. God judges us for our choices; we can't judge Him for His choices.

Fuller picture (Romans 10-11)

1. Responsible to accept the gospel
2. Responsible to spread the gospel
3. Israel is not totally rejected
 - a. A Jewish remnant chosen by grace
 - b. An era of Gentile conversion
 - c. A vast future conversion of Jews
4. No group can claim superiority: only through humble faith are we saved
5. Adore God's mystery and majesty

Mystery and majesty

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"

"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever!

Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)