

A shallow reading of Romans Chapter 9 will twist the truth about God

Like: That God loved Jacob but hated Esau, even before they had done anything.

That God hardened Pharaoh's heart, causing him to do the evil that he did.

That God makes us, His clay, into good or bad people, according to His will, not ours.

Therefore God elects some people to salvation, others to damnation, so we can do nothing;

Mark 16:16 He who believes...will be saved but he who does not believe will be damned

Millions of the unsaved and Christians alike have bought into this utter distortion of both the truth of scripture and the character of God. They will speak of the sovereignty of God, or that God is in control, or identify themselves as Calvinists. But, because they have falsely judged God about His seeming unfairness, they will never fully surrender their lives to the Lordship of, complete ownership by, Jesus Christ, on which their eternal salvation depends.

God says that His election and predestination reflect His foreknowledge of our choices:

Any discussion of Romans chapter 9 that deals with God's right to determine the fate of nations and individuals should include reference to a key verse in the preceding chapter 8.

Rom 8:29 **Whom He (God) foreknew (knew beforehand), He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son...** This truth is confirmed in 1st. Peter:

1 Pe 1:2 **Elect according to the foreknowledge (advance knowledge) of God the Father;**

In these verses a fundamental truth is established, a truth that is reflected throughout scripture, namely that God's decisions on the destination of nations and people is based on His knowing in advance the free will choices that such nations and individuals will make. Nowhere is the truth better demonstrated than with respect to salvation. There are two ultimate spiritual destinations, heaven with God, and hell with Satan. Hell was not created for people but for Satan and his fallen angels. It is not God's will that any human being chooses to join Satan in hell having reconciled the entire human race to Himself by putting our sins on Jesus Christ and judging Him for them. But the choice of accessing heaven through Jesus Christ, He is the only door, God leaves with each individual. Jesus Himself lamented the sad fact that more people will actually choose hell than heaven.

2 Pe 3:9 **The Lord is...not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance** (a radical change of mind and heart about God and our sins).

Rev 22:17 **...Whoever wills, let him drink (believe) the water of (eternal) life freely.** KJV

Mat 7:13-14 (Jesus) **The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide enough for all the multitudes who choose its easy way. But the Gateway to Life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it.** TLB

Who are the heirs of God's promise of salvation to Abraham, his natural or spiritual seed?

The main subject of Romans chapter 9 is natural Israel, who Paul refers to in verse 3 as his "Kinsmen according to the flesh": In it the Holy Spirit, through Paul, answers an objection, by the natural born Jews, to God giving the promise of salvation to the Gentiles

and thereby seeming to reject the Jews. Since this promise made by God was originally to Abraham and his seed, which the Jews presumed to mean themselves, they considered God had gone back on His word or therefore made it of no effect.

To this the Holy Spirit through Paul clarifies in verses 6-8 that (a) God's word has not been made of no effect because (b) The true seed of Abraham, who are the children of God, are not Abraham's natural descendants but rather his spiritual heirs according to promise.

Romans 9:8 **Those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.**

In other words God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ and in all those (both Jew and Gentile alike) who receive the promise by faith – as is made clear in Galatians:

Galatians 3:26 **For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**

Galatians 3:29 **And if you are Christ's (not once were His, but are right now), then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

Clearly the general substitution of the gentles for the Jews was not an arbitrary election of one by God and rejection of the other, but simply the reality of who would believe God. For:

John 1:11 **He (Jesus) came unto his own (the Jews), and his own received him not.**

Jacob and Esau - the foolishness of judging God as to fairness without having the facts:

After making clear that it is those who choose to receive the promise of Abraham by faith who are his seed, the Holy Spirit through Paul then answers the Jews questioning the righteousness of God's decisions, by referring to His election of Jacob over Esau:

Rom 9:12-13 **It was said unto her (Rebecca, the mother) The elder (Esau) shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.**

Keep in mind that Esau sold his birthright, representing his eternal inheritance, to Jacob for a morsel of food (Gen 25:29-34) and could never recover this blessing (Heb 12:16-17). Now while the text appears to refer to the two individuals, Jacob and Esau, it is in fact referring to the nations that descended from them. Esau never served Jacob but his descendants the Edomites did serve Jacob's descendants the nation of Israel:

Gen 25:23 **The LORD said to her (Rebecca): Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger.**"

Gen 36:9 **The genealogy of Esau, the father of the Edomites...**

I Chron 18:13 **...And all the Edomites became David's (King of Israel) servants.**

The Potter and clay; Just like Jacob and Esau, the clay represents nations not individuals

Romans 9 continues by affirming God's sovereign right to select one nation over another nation, in this case Israel over Edom. But He doesn't do it arbitrarily, in Jeremiah 18, just after the episode of the potter and the clay, God says this about how He deals with nations:

Jer 18:6 **Don't I have the right to do with you people of Israel what the potter did with the clay? You are in my hands just like clay in the potter's hands.**

7-10 TEV **If at any time I say that I am going to uproot, break down or destroy any nation...but then that nation turns from its evil, I will not do what I said I would. if I say that I am going to plant or build up any nation... but then that nation disobeys me and does evil, I will not do what I said I would**

It is clear that the actual conduct of a nation has a material impact on God's determination of its destiny. The Edomites (Esau) were a constant enemy to and frequently attacked Judah (Jacob) – 2 Chron. 28:17. So God hated the Edomites but loved Judah. Once again, the rightness of God's decisions and the integrity of our Father's character are vindicated. [Andrew Wommack comment: It is the choice of the people that determines God's choice]

Pharaoh - the rightness of God's dealings with people based on foreknowing their choices:

Chapter 9 then turns to God's dealings with individuals as opposed to nations and reference is made to God's unequivocal right to have mercy or not on whom He chooses. Keep in mind however it has been said previously (Rom 8:29) that God's elections are based on His foreknowledge of the choices people make. Pharaoh is used as an example:

Romans 9:15 **He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.**

Romans 9:17-18 **For the scripture says to Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you...Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.**

If reference isn't made to other portions of Bible truth that reveal the nature of God, these scriptures have led to the erroneous conclusion that God was responsible for hardening Pharaoh's heart. And elected him to wickedness without his having anything to do with it.

In Exodus it states that Pharaoh's hardening was in the first instance his own act. Five times it says he hardened his own heart (Exod. 7:13, 7:22, 8:15, 8:32; 9:7) before it later says that God hardened his heart (Exod. 9:12). After Pharaoh hardened his own heart it was simply God's judgment of his rebellion that then served to further harden his heart.

Four times in the scripture we are warned not to harden our own hearts (Psa. 95:8, Heb. 3:8, 3:15 and 4:7) but we are never warned that God may harden our hearts. What a travesty to accuse God of unilaterally hardening Pharaoh's heart and thereby implying God elects some to wickedness and damnation. We can see clearly God's true nature and His attitude even toward the wicked such as Pharaoh, in the following passage:

Ezek 33:11 **...I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn, turn from your evil ways; for why will you die...?**

In the scriptures, Pharaoh is portrayed as a type of Satan in that He held the Israelites captive in Egypt just like Satan holds the unsaved captive in spiritual Egypt (Acts 26:18, Isa. 14:17). The Bible is clear that Satan's downfall was because "sin was found in him" not because God hardened his heart (Eze 26:13-17) so too with Pharaoh, a type of Satan.

Unless I let God convince me of His unwavering fairness I will be deceived and likely lost

Did you freely choose to believe the gospel of your salvation? What kind of delusion would it be to think that everyone else can't also freely choose to believe, meaning God is partial?

1 Tim 4:10 ...**God, who is the Savior of all people, in particular, of those who believe.**

One of the foundational truths of the gospel of God, a truth that needs to be quickly enthroned in every new believer's heart, is the truth of God's unchanging even handed, fair, impartial, just and right dealings with every individual. If the light of this revealed truth does not reside in my heart then the accuser of the brethren and the accuser of God will easily be able to deceive me into believing that God does not deal fairly with people. If I remain captive to this lie, I won't be able to fully trust God or want Him to fully save me.

Acts 10:34 ...**God shows no partiality and is no respecter of persons.** AMP

Gal 2:6**God shows personal favoritism to no man...** NKJV

1 Pet1:17 ...**The Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work;**

Against the light of these words from God it is hard to imagine how a whole doctrine could have arisen that falsely accuses God, who out of love sent Jesus to bear the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2), of having randomly pre-selected some to salvation and others to damnation. No, we will have to bear the responsibility for our own decisions and choices. Our human nature resists this unchanging truth that we ourselves choose our eternal home:

Deut 30:19 (God says) ...**I have set before you life and death , blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;**

Questions will sometimes arise about God's fairness relative to scripture or present day life. At such times it would be very wise to refrain from hastily judging God but rather seek Him with a whole heart, He says He can always be found (Jer 29:13), so that He can reveal more of His truth that we have not yet seen or understood. When we do this we will always come to the conclusion, He is right, He is fair, and He has been good to all:

Ps 145:9 **GOD is good to one and all; everything He does is infused with grace.** MSGE

There is no random pre-selection, Jew and Gentile alike are free to choose life in Jesus

The Holy Spirit through Paul concludes that the only difference between the elect Gentiles and the largely un-elect natural born Jews, is that the former sought God's righteousness (Jesus Christ) by faith and the latter sought it through the works of the law.

Rom 9:32-33 **Why? Because they (Israel) did not seek it by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone (Jesus Christ) and rock of offence: and whoever (currently) believes in Him shall not be ashamed.**

And to whom does God offer access into His election, only to those He has randomly pre-selected, no, as the last verse of Romans 9 says clearly, whoever believes in Jesus Christ;

Mar. 7:37 (Thanks be to God our Father for)...**He has done all things well...**