



## World Christian Fellowship

[www.wcflondon.com](http://www.wcflondon.com)  
[wcflondon@gmail.com](mailto:wcflondon@gmail.com)

### Romans 93

## God's Sovereignty & Israel rejection!

### Romans 9:14-18

**Romans 9:14-18**, *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! <sup>15</sup> For 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." <sup>16</sup> So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." <sup>18</sup> Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.*

**Romans 9:6-33**, Paul gives four reasons why Israel's unbelief doesn't violate God's character.

The unbelief of Israel is consistent with

- ✓ God's promise,
- ✓ God's person,
- ✓ God's prophets and
- ✓ God's prerequisite.

**V 6-13**, Israel doesn't believe doesn't mean God has violated His promise.

**V 14-24**, doesn't mean God has violated.

**V 25-29**, doesn't mean God has violated His prophets' word.

**V 30-33**, doesn't mean God has violated His prerequisite.

Because Israel does not believe doesn't mean God has cancelled His promises.

If Israel rejected and was out of the covenant then God's word would be broken, His promises useless, His character untrustworthy because He changed His mind. He had overturned everything He said.

Israel would have been able to say God is not a covenant keeping God, you can't trust Him.

It is important for Paul to deal with this here.

Paul has been presenting justification by grace through faith. He has been presenting the means of salvation.

Having presented that he stops, and he answers the question about where does the Jew fit in.

The question comes up in the mind of Jew is that, **If I can trust Jesus Christ with my life how come He didn't keep His word to the Jews?**

**Romans chapter 9, 10 and 11** Paul develops this whole theology of how the Jew fits in to God's redemptive plan.

Most Jews believe, and believed then, that all Israel is saved by birth.

You are born into the covenant because of Jewishness. You are born as Abraham's seed so you are automatically a part of the kingdom. That is common Jewish belief.

Paul wants to help us to understand how the gospel can be true and at the same time be rejected by the people of the covenant.

**V 1-5**, Paul sort of sets up the chapter by telling us how much he cares for Israel.

**How could Israel reject, and God's promises still be valid?**

**V 6 -13**, the unbelief of Israel is consistent with God's promise.

Now this is a challenging portion of Scripture. It is undeniably difficult to understand.

Emphasis on this passage is the sovereign righteousness of God.

It is one of those things written by Paul of which Peter spoke when he said he writes things hard to be understood.

It is hard to understand in our finite minds what is said here. It is important, true and it is enriching.

Many people struggle with the idea of the truth that God is absolutely sovereign.

That God is free to do whatever He wants.

That God is free to determine all things according to His own pleasure. But that is exactly what the Scripture teaches.

God is God and God does exactly what God wants to do. He is sovereign and that is to say He is the Most-High, that is to say He is the absolute King, that is to say He is the ultimate authority doing His will in heaven and in earth.

No one can prevent it, and no one can argue with it.

**Psalm 115:3**, *But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.*

**Daniel 4:35**, *All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven*

*And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"*

These scriptures affirm that God is in charge, that God does have control of everything. God does do what He pleases, and that no one can stop Him or question Him.

God has a right to govern His universe, that He has a right to do whatever He wants, whenever He wants to whomever He wants, but He does.

**1 Timothy 6:15**, *which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,*

God is sovereign in creation.

People who want to argue with God being in charge must ultimately go back to creation and then ask the question, "when God created, who was in charge?"

**Revelation 4:11**, *"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."*

Before there was every anything, God created everything that is for His own good pleasure by His own good will.

**Proverbs 16:4**, *The Lord has made all for Himself, Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.*

God has made everything, righteous, wicked, for His own good pleasure.

Out of His own free choice He created angels.

Out of His own free choice He created the universe.

He created the stars, the planets, the sky, the earth.

He created the mountains and the sea, the rivers, the deserts, the plains, the lakes, streams, the sunshine, the rain, the snow, and the ice.

He created the insects and the elephants and everything in between.

He created the birds, the fish and every variation of everything and every variation on every variation.

### **Why did God do that?**

Only answer is because He wanted to do that because once there was nothing and then all of this and no one gave Him any input at all.

**2 Samuel 10:12**, *Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the Lord do what is good in His sight."*

God is sovereign not only in creation but in what we could call administration of that creation.

**Job 23:13**, *"But He is unique, and who can make Him change? And whatever His soul desires, that He does.*

He has one mind, and He does what He wants and no one can change that.

**Psalm 33:9-11**, *For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. <sup>10</sup>The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. <sup>11</sup>The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.*

**Psalm 103:19**, *The Lord has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.*

**Isaiah 14:27**, *For the Lord of hosts has purposed, And who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, And who will turn it back?"*

**Isaiah 46:9-10**, *Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like*

*Me, <sup>10</sup> Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'*

Hannah in her hymn of praise in

**1 Samuel 2:6-8**, *"The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. <sup>7</sup> The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up. <sup>8</sup> He raises the poor from the dust And lifts the beggar from the ash heap, To set them among princes And make them inherit the throne of glory. "For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, And He has set the world upon them.*

**Acts 17** Paul said, *"It is in Him we live and move and have our being."*

Bible presents God as sovereign in creation and sovereign in the administration of that created universe.

Bible is clear on those aspects of God's sovereignty. The Bible is most clear on the issue of God's sovereignty in the matter of salvation.

This whole section is teaching us that, that God is absolutely sovereign in the matter of salvation. He chooses according to His own good pleasure.

Paul is presenting the doctrine of salvation in Romans.

It started in chapter 3. Paul started talking about justification by grace through faith and he has been talking about it since chapter 3 verse 21. Paul talked about all aspects and all facets and all dimensions of salvation.

Paul has said this is God's message to the world, a message of salvation, a message of eternal life, a message of peace with Himself.

**Romans Chapters 3 to 8** was the richness of salvation presented.

Now the final result of salvation was given to us at the end of chapter 8.

**Romans 8:35**, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

**Romans 8:39**, *nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Salvation is eternal and nothing can ever take it away, nothing can ever separate us from it.

Paul, having said that, he anticipates a question.

If you say that when God gives salvation to a person, when God makes that new covenant with someone, He never changes it, there's never a possibility of separation from then on throughout eternity, what about the Jews, because they also had a covenant with God, they were His chosen people, and now they are set aside.

**If God then has changed His relationship to the nation Israel, what guarantee do we have that He won't change His relationship to us?**

The Jews had an intimate special relationship to God nationally.

Paul, if we believe your gospel that God never changes His promise and that if you receive Jesus Christ and the New Covenant, justification by grace through faith in Christ, that's an eternal relationship and God will never change that and you will never be separated from it, then answer us, why is it that God having had a relationship with Israel has now temporarily set them aside?

**Why should we think that we are secure if Israel wasn't?  
How can this new gospel be true, the Jew is saying, if God's chosen people aren't believing it?**

## **How can we believe you when even God's chosen people the Jews reject this?**

In the light of such questions, he needs to spend some time discussing the unique relationship between God and Israel, and that's what he does in **chapter 9, 10 and 11**.

In these three chapters he demonstrates God's purpose and plan for Israel. It's a very important section.

Now as we look at chapter 9 Paul is trying to demonstrate that Israel's unbelief does not violate God's promise in any way.

God hasn't really broken any promise at all.  
It doesn't deny His Word.

Last time in our study we looked at verses 6 to 13, the unbelief of Israel is consistent with God's promise.

**Romans 9:6**, *But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,*

God never intended that every physical descendant of Abraham would be a child of promise. God never promised to redeem everyone born of the loins of Abraham.

Salvation was never a racial issue.

Just because Israel now is in unbelief doesn't mean God has changed His promise because God never promised to redeem all physical Jews, all natural descendants of Abraham.

Paul uses two to illustrate it.

First, he says in Abraham only Isaac was called. Abraham's first son was Ishmael. God was selective. That shows that not all those born of Abraham are children of the covenant, not Ishmael but Isaac was chosen.

Secondly, Isaac had two sons Jacob and Esau. Of those two, which did God choose?

### **Why?**

No one knows.

Only thing that we can answer is that God does as God pleases to do and He pleased to choose Isaac and He pleased to choose Jacob.

God never from the beginning intended that all the physical seed of Abraham would be the children of promise. So it doesn't violate God's promise at all that many in Israel do not believe.

The unbelief of Israel is consistent with God's person.

**V 14, *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!***

Are we going to say God isn't fair because He chose Isaac over Ishmael, He chose Jacob over Esau and He's still doing that?

Does the fact that God chooses men mean He is unjust, unfair, and unrighteous?

People still think the doctrine of sovereign election makes God unrighteous or unfair.

This section deals with the person of God, the former one with the promise of God, the next one with the prophets of God.

The objection comes and it's easily expected from the carnal mind, that's not fair, that's unrighteous, that's not right.

The only other alternative that you find in the secular world is that God's impotent.

**What's Paul's answer? Is God unfair?**

*"God forbid."*

Strongest negative in the Greek language, no, never, no way, impossible.

The thought is folly and instantly and abruptly must be denied and dismissed. It is blasphemy.

- ✓ God is righteous.
- ✓ God is just.
- ✓ God is fair.

**Genesis 18:25**, *Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"*

- ✓ God has no capacity for inequity,
- ✓ He has no capacity for unfairness,
- ✓ He has no capacity for unrighteousness,
- ✓ He has no capacity for sin.

**Psalm 7:9**, *Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, But establish the just; For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds.*

**Psalm 116:5**, *Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful.*

**Psalm 119:137**, *Righteous are You, O Lord, And upright are Your judgments.*

**Psalm 71:19**, *Also Your righteousness, O God, is very high, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You?*

**Psalm 48:10**, *According to Your name, O God, So is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness.*

**Psalm 119:142**, *Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth.*

**Jeremiah 9:23-24**, *Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; <sup>24</sup> But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.*

God could never act inconsistently with who He is and He never changes.

**Malachi 3:6**, *"For I am the Lord, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.*

God does not change, and He has always been righteous.

So what appears as an unrighteous, unfair or unjust only appears so to the carnal mind, to the limited biblical knowledge and to weak faith.

Paul pounces on such a question and says, "No, no, no, no."

Paul takes two proofs out of Scripture.

**V 15**, *For 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."*

Quote from **Exodus 33:19**.

**V 17**, *For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."*

Quote from **Exodus 9:16**.

Paul gives two Old Testament quotes.

If you believe that God elects people to be saved and chooses them before they were ever born, before they have ever done anything right or wrong, chooses them to salvation, that sounds unfair.

Paul says it isn't unfair because God is righteous and to prove it here are two scriptures.

We would expect some kind of logic.

We would expect him to go into some deep profound reasoning.

**V 15**, *For 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."*

Quote from **Exodus 33:19**.

Let me give you the picture in that passage.

Moses had asked to see a revelation of God. Moses had wanted to see God's glory. He wanted to behold God's glory.

### **Why?**

Because he wanted his faith strengthened.

Moses had just been through a very trying experience in chapter 32.

In **Exodus chapter 32** Israel was in sin, breaking God's laws. They were apostatizing and worshiping a golden calf.

**Exodus 32:30**, *Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."*

They had sinned a great sin.

God killed 3,000 of them.

He had a right to kill the whole nation for sin, but He killed 3,000 of them in immediate judgment. This made everybody who lived a little nervous.

This gave them the idea that God was a God of judgment, a God of wrath, a God of anger against sin.

So, in **Exodus chapter 33** as God is calling Moses to a particular place of leadership.

**Exodus 33:13-16**, *Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people.”<sup>14</sup> And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”<sup>15</sup> Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.<sup>16</sup> For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth.”*

Moses poses this question to God that, Are You going to be gracious to me?

Lord, I want to be sure You are going to be gracious to me because I am a sinner, too, and don't want to get killed.

Moses wants to know that God will be gracious to him. He is personally concerned because he has seen God's wrath just annihilate 3,000 people.

**Exodus 33:17**, *So the Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."*

**Moses says I appreciate that, but could You prove it?**

**Could You just show me that You are going to be gracious?  
Could I see Your glory?**

**Exodus 33:19**, *Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."*

That is a formal declaration of the divine prerogative.

God says that I will show you My grace, and I will show you, My mercy.

Remember, I reserve the right to be gracious to whom I will be gracious and to be merciful to whom I will be merciful.

In other words, God says I will show you My sovereign grace. I will show you My sovereign mercy which I dispense as I will.

It is My right as God to judge 3,000 and My right as God to choose to be gracious to you.

That is divine prerogative.

And since all of us are sinners and all of us deserve judgment, none of us can claim a right to grace and none of us can claim a right to mercy, then none of us is wronged if mercy and grace are withheld.

So, it is not unrighteous.

God is God.

All men deserve judgment.

**Exodus 33** God says, *"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."*

Remember that God chooses to be merciful in Himself, not because of something worthy in the sinner. He chooses because of something in Himself.

**Exodus 33:19**, Paul uses the term "mercy" and "compassion."

- Mercy is the action.
- Compassion is the feeling behind the action.

When God desires to be compassionate, He acts in mercy.  
So, the Lord then is not unrighteous in electing because the Scripture says He has a right to do that, and that's Paul's answer.

**V 16**, *So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.*

It is not because somebody wants it in their heart, it's not because somebody chases it, "but it is of God that shows mercy."

- Mercy doesn't come because men desire it.
- Mercy doesn't come because men work for it.

It comes because God predetermines to give it.

Ishmael desired the blessing.

Esau ran for the blessing, didn't get it.

it's of God. Neither of them received it.

**Hebrews 11:16-18**, *But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. <sup>17</sup>By faith*

*Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, <sup>18</sup> of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called,"*

God clearly identifies that Isaac is the one.

Isaac is the one to whom the promise is given.

When Isaac has two children, Jacob, and Esau, it is Jacob.

**Hebrews 11:20**, *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

A little statement "by faith"

God chose Isaac but by faith Isaac.

God chose Jacob but by faith Jacob.

The choosing is predetermined by His elective sovereign majesty, it is nonetheless confirmed by Faith.

Tragic side of it, is that the Bible says Esau couldn't receive the blessing, the promise, even though he sought it with tears.

So, the salvation of any man is not due to his own good desire. It's not due to his own diligent seeking, but solely the pleasure of God.

**V 17**, *For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."*

Quote from **Exodus 9:16**.

Now God says I raised you up, Pharaoh.  
You were also elect, not to salvation but to a unique purpose.  
I raised you up.

In **Exodus 9:16**, God through Moses says to Pharaoh, and the Pharaoh was probably Amenhotep II, "I raised you up."

You Pharaoh because I determined that you would be the Pharaoh that I might show My power in you and My name might be declared throughout all the earth."

Now that Pharaoh that God put into power because God controls history.

Pharaoh that God put into power was the man who more than any other man became the means of the greatest Old Testament display of God's redeeming power!

When any Jew goes back to celebrate God's redemption, they celebrate the Passover. That's the deliverance from Egypt.

The Jews kept the Passover because it was their identification of God as a redeeming God for, He redeemed them out of Egypt. That was symbolic of their soul redemption as well.

God raises up this Pharaoh, says **Exodus 9:16** in the very words of God spoken through Moses, and says, *“For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”*

God did!

It was because Pharaoh oppressed the people of God, it was because Pharaoh wouldn't let them go that God brought the miracles and the plagues.

It was because of Pharaoh that the Exodus occurred, that the Red Sea parted, that the whole Egyptian army was drowned.

God put Himself on display because this man stood in the way. He was used by God for God's own display of His glory.

In Exodus chapter 15 there is a marvellous song of redemption that is penned by Moses.

**Exodus 15:1-18**, *Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and spoke, saying: “I will sing to the Lord, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has*

thrown into the sea! <sup>2</sup> The Lord is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him. <sup>3</sup> The Lord is a man of war; The Lord is His name. <sup>4</sup> Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. <sup>5</sup> The depths have covered them; They sank to the bottom like a stone. <sup>6</sup> "Your right hand, O Lord, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces. <sup>7</sup> And in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown those who rose against You; You sent forth Your wrath; It consumed them like stubble. <sup>8</sup> And with the blast of Your nostrils The waters were gathered together; The floods stood upright like a heap; The depths congealed in the heart of the sea. <sup>9</sup> The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword, My hand shall destroy them.' <sup>10</sup> You blew with Your wind, The sea covered them; They sank like lead in the mighty waters. <sup>11</sup> "Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? <sup>12</sup> You stretched out Your right hand; The earth swallowed them. <sup>13</sup> You in Your mercy have led forth The people whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in Your strength To Your holy habitation. <sup>14</sup> "The people will hear and be afraid; Sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia. <sup>15</sup> Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed; The mighty men of Moab, Trembling will take hold of them; All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away. <sup>16</sup> Fear and dread will fall on them; By

*the greatness of Your arm They will be as still as a stone, Till Your people pass over, O Lord, Till the people pass over Whom You have purchased. <sup>17</sup>You will bring them in and plant them In the mountain of Your inheritance, In the place, O Lord, which You have made For Your own dwelling, The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established. <sup>18</sup>"The Lord shall reign forever and ever."*

God got His glory and demonstrated His power and manifested His name throughout all the earth by what He did in delivering the children of Israel out of the bondage of this man and He says in Exodus 9:16, I raised up that man for that reason, for that reason. Tremendous truth.

**V 17,** *"That My name might be declared throughout all the earth,"*

When God did this, His reputation fast spread throughout all the earth.

**Exodus 15:14-15,** *"The people will hear and be afraid; Sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia. <sup>15</sup>Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed; The mighty men of Moab, Trembling will take hold of them; All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away.*

When the word spread about God delivering the people of Israel, that is exactly what happened.

We can see it in many other passages in the Old Testament.

**Joshua 2:10-11**, *For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. <sup>11</sup> And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.*

It went out all over the place, everywhere.

**Psalm 105, Psalm 106 and Psalm 136** and those Psalms celebrate the fact that the world of men heard about God who parted the sea and delivered His people from Egypt.

Pharaoh Amenhotep II, that man was raised up for no other reason than that God should use him to display His power and declare His name.

**V 18**, *Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.*

- The first part of verse 18 is referring to the illustration of Moses. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy.
- The second part of that verse is referring to the illustration of Pharaoh. whom He will He hardens.

### **Why was Pharaoh so stubborn?**

**Exodus 4:21**, *And the Lord said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.*

### **Why did God do that?**

Because God wanted to use this occasion to put His glory on display.

God hardened Pharaoh's heart. By the way, it says that ten times in those chapters in Exodus, ten times, God hardened his heart, God hardened his heart, God hardened his heart.

By the way, it also says several times, "*Pharaoh hardened his heart.*"

It is not that God alone does it but that man confirms that by his own act, and therein lies the irreconcilable tension between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man.

It's like Judas. Judas was appointed before he was ever born to betray the Lord Jesus Christ yet bore the guilt for it himself.

- Moses emphasizes mercy in the sovereignty of God,
- Pharaoh emphasizes hardening.

The passage is saying that God will give mercy to whom He will, and He will harden whom He will. He is sovereign God.

God is a righteous God.

**John 15:16**, *You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

No one can accuse God of unjust, unrighteousness.