

Wrestling with the Sovereignty of God & the Freedom of Relationship

Romans Chapters 9:14-18

* Walkthru Overview – Cheat Sheet

In chapters 5-8 Paul has provided an amazingly detailed explanation as to how Jesus accomplishes what God has always promised in the story...the fulfillment & culmination of the grand Gospel
And yet, ETHNIC Israel remains in unbelief

- Romans 9:1-5
- Romans 10:1 (prays for their salvation)
- Romans 11:1 (will they fall permanently)
- Romans 11:11 (will they fall permanently)
- Romans 11:23 (they can rejoin if they believe)

1. Has God's Word failed? – 9:6 from 3:3

God always intended that only some of Abraham's descendants would carry forward the saving purpose

And don't confuse those who carry the Gospel forward with those that accept it

Romans 9

Those chosen to bear the Gospel message forward:

- Not just because they are born from Abraham (9:6b-7)
- Not based on mother vs. father (9:10-12)
- Not based on merit (9:11-13)

The Question is about unbelieving ETHNIC Israel

POINT = God has done what He promised, His Word has not failed (answering 9:6)

He has carried the Gospel forward THRU ETHNIC ISRAEL – How He did it is His choice

2. Is this fair? – Romans 9:14 from 3:5

For this answer, Paul turns from the Patriarchs and turns to the Exodus

Section 2: Romans 9:14-18 = The Exodus

- Romans 9:14

Again, this comes right out of chapter 3:3

It has to do with a twofold issue with God:

- a) God's covenanted obligation to bring salvation to the Gentiles thru Israel
- b) His simultaneous obligation to deal with sin

- Romans 9:15-16

[Anyone know where this quote comes from?](#)

Exodus 33:19 – really the scene of Exodus 32

God meets with Moses to enter into a solemn covenant in the giving of the Torah

In the midst of that sacred covenant moment we have the Golden Calf incident

Severe judgment was due to EVERYONE and about to fall on them

In the midst of this, God decides to spare a few

The issue again is not whether they deserved judgment

Rather it highlights how amazingly merciful God is to spare some
What ultimately carries forward God's redemptive plan is not Israel
It is God and His infinite mercy
Again, the point is that God has elected to work His plan thru Ethnic Israel
And He has chosen his own path down that line

- Romans 9:17-18

Here we have another Exodus scene – Moses before Pharaoh
Just like Israel with the Golden Calf, Pharaoh is guilty here
He was due judgment, immediate judgment for not listening to God
Instead, God's "made him to stand", He "raised him up"
"raising you up" = literally resuscitated, you were lying down dead and I kept you going
When you read this it can sound like he was CREATED for this, but that is not what it means
He lived, he sinned terribly over and over, and now he is in a sense DEAD IN JUDGMENT
And God stays the judgment, in a sense resuscitating him to carry out His purposes
And why? So that God's name might be known in all the world
Read Genesis 12 – God is enacting His plan
God's decision is not arbitrary
Pharaoh has already sinned, he has enslaved God's people and now won't let them go
God's goal is not the punishment of Pharaoh, but rather keeping His covenant
Paul isn't trying to argue that just routinely whenever God has a whim he can harden or show mercy
This is specific to the redemptive plan of Genesis 12 and Ethnic Israel's role and call
REMEMBER THE POINT OF THE PASSAGE:
To explain what is happening to Paul's kinfolk
God's action with Pharaoh:
a) prolonging immediate judgment when it is clearly deserved
b) nudging him along his own inclination for a greater goal
Part of the means to:
a) rescue Israel from slavery for His redemptive plan to continue
b) make His name known to the world according to Genesis 12

By the way, God is now doing the same two things with Israel today

- Romans 11:25-26
- Romans 11:11-14

God is bringing the Gospel to the Nations and ultimately back to ethnic Israel
He is doing it thru sinful Israel
He is doing it thru sinful Pharaoh

* Read out of context is can look like God made Pharaoh to be sinful for His designs

* Back to the question – Ethnic Israel isn't believing the Gospel, yet God still carries His plan forward THRU Ethnic Israel on HIS TERMS, even prolonging judgment

CHEAT SHEET OVERVIEW so Far

INTRODUCTION

God is Sovereign – and by that we mean how, when, and why He acts or what He thinks is up to Him

- a) God is in control but chooses not to control everything
- b) God FOR THE SAKE OF RELATIONSHIP changes His mind (strategic vs. flexible) on occasion
- c) God by His own Sovereign choice respects our decisions and does not force Himself upon us
- d) Sovereign Risk is at the most basic core of who God is – FOR THE SAKE OF RELATIONSHIP – no freedom and choice, no love or relationship
- e) God designed it this way EVEN BEFORE the fall
- f) Our decisions matter to God – in particular faith, and faith is a) not a work and b) the one decision someone can make while dead in sin (Adamic state)

ROMANS

“God’s Gospel (story of God culminating in Jesus) unveils God’s righteousness (His faithfulness to the covenant and His obligation to right the world)”

Romans 1”16-17a For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed

Raises the main question

How then, if the majority of ETHNIC Israel does not believe the Gospel, has God been faithful and is this really fair? Is this consistent with the “Story”?

Romans 1 – The world is guilty and due immediate wrath

Romans 2 – Ethnic Israel is just as if not more guilty

Romans 3 – All under sin

Romans 4 – The Covenant family of Abraham is BY FAITH, not ethnicity

Romans 5 - Adam to Messiah – One brings Death, One brings Life

Romans 6 – Those of faith take on the death & resurrection of Messiah

Romans 7 – The Law (though Holy) could not give life

Romans 8 – Spirit gives Life and that is the Promise

Romans 3’s 3 questions answered in Romans 9:

1. Has God’s Word failed? - 9:6 from 3:3
2. Is God unjust? – Romans 9:14 from 3:5
3. Why does He find fault? – Romans 9:19 from 3:7

Israel	And then there is “Israel”
1. Ethnic Israel Rom.4:13-14	1. Israel by faith
2. Abraham’s Descendants – 9:6-7	2. Abraham’s “Seed”
3. Children of the Flesh	3. Children of the Promise
4. Circumcised physically – Rom. 2:28-29	4. Circumcised in the Spirit
5. Bearers of the Gospel	5. Recipients of the Bearers