

Election in Romans 9:1-24

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The doctrine of God's sovereign election is not an arcane item found rarely in obscure passages of Scripture, nor does it require the pursuit of a diligent scholar to uncover it. The doctrine of election appears on virtually every page of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. No section of Scripture sets it forth, however, more definitively and persuasively than Romans 9. – R.C. Sproul

Part 1 – Unbelieving Kinsmen: Verses 1-5

- Consider the great truths Paul has proclaimed in previous chapters.
- And yet, many of Paul's kinsmen are separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord
- Christ is from their race, according to the flesh, and yet they do not believe

Part 2 – Unbelieving Kinsmen: Verses 6-13

- Israel is not a nation of flesh – it is a nation of promise – see John 8 – esp v44
- Abraham had a son – Ishmael – but he was not the promised son.
- Isaac had two sons – but only one son of the promise
- The promise came prior to their birth and is attributed, not to their doing of good or bad, but of God's purpose of election
- The result of election – not foreknowledge – is that the older will serve the younger – Jacob I loved. Esau I hated.

Question/Discussion: Jacob and Esau were both the fathers of nations. Is Paul speaking of individual election or corporate election?

Consider:

1. Who makes up nations?
2. Paul and his kinsmen are all from the nation of Israel – yet Paul is elect and his kinsmen are not.
3. The election in view is “before they were not yet born and had nothing either good or bad.” Does Paul mean before a nation was born or before a child was born? Does Paul mean before a nation did good or bad or before a child did good or bad?

Question/Discussion: The election was made before they did either good or bad, but God knows the future and could have elected based on knowing that Jacob would do good and Esau would do bad. Would this satisfy concerns about the fairness or justice of God? What conclusions can we draw from verses 6-13 that would make a person question God's justice – because that is where Paul goes in verse 14.

Part 3 – Objection #1: The Injustice of God: Verses 14-18

- He says to Moses: “I will have mercy on whom (singular) I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom (singular) on whom I have compassion.
- “It” – i.e. election – depends not on human will or exertion, but on God
- He has mercy on whomever he wills and he hardens whomever he wills.



Question/Discussion: Let's assume that God hardens unbelievers – i.e. they are unbelievers, and therefore God hardens them. And let's assume that God has mercy on believers – i.e. they are believers, and therefore God hardens them. This would, I believe, support the Arminian position that man's free will is the deciding factor on who gets mercy and who gets hardened. If we draw that conclusion, why does verse 19 and following exist?

Part 4 – Objection #2: Why Does He Still Find Fault? Verses 19-24

- The expected objection to Paul's line of reasoning in verses 14-18 comes in verse 19 – Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?
- Man cannot answer back to God – he takes a lump and makes one vessel for honorable use and one for dishonorable use
- God shows patience with dishonorable vessels in order to make know the riches of his glory for honorable vessels
- Those honorable vessels are the elect – Jew and Gentile