

## Introduction

Karen and I are building a new home in Rome, Georgia. We are downsizing from 4,600 square feet to 2,000 square feet. We do not have seven children at home and we do not need all of the space. Some call it right-sizing rather than downsizing. We picked out a floor plan, and purchased a lot to build on. After the permitting, the first part of the actual building process is to get the foundation. They have to pour footers and put in pylons. Once the foundation is done, they will begin framing the house. During the past week I went several times to inspect the foundation work, and the first thing the builder did was to grade the building area. Then, he staked out the home site, and drew the floor plan with chalk on the ground so that he could get the footers and foundation walls done. The foundation is very important. If the foundation is not put in correctly, the builders will struggle to build the house correctly.

This morning, I want to help lay a foundation for Romans 9. It is a very difficult chapter, and has been one of the most controversial chapters in the Bible. Bob Deffinbaugh, the pastor at Community Bible Chapel in Richardson, Texas said this about Romans 9.

*“This chapter is so troublesome to some Bible teachers that they would prefer it not to be in Scripture. One of the pastors I regard most highly in terms of his ministry in my life told me that he would try not to teach on chapter 9, even if he were teaching through the Book of Romans chapter by chapter.”<sup>1</sup>*

I am committed to teaching the whole counsel of God, and I will not skip chapters. I may not fully understand every chapter, but I will do my best to study and accurately teach every passage.

In teaching Romans 9, I do want to do something a little bit unusual; I want to draw some lines where we are going to build so that we can lay a proper foundation. If we have a proper Biblical understanding of some key principles, it will be easier for us to understand some of the more difficult verses in the chapter. I think there are some important ramifications for how you interpret the passage. At the same time, I do not include these in my list of essential doctrines. There are however, many churches who are dogmatic about their interpretation of some of these verses, and in these churches if you do not agree with them, you are not allowed to teach Sunday School or be in a leadership position.

Here are the key principles that I want to cover today. First, God loves the whole world. John 3:16 tells us that God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son. The second principle is that God desires all men to be saved. 1 Timothy 2:4 says that God desires all men to be saved. This is one of the key principles that theologians do not agree upon. The third principle is that Jesus paid for all of the sins of the world. 1 John 2:2 says that Jesus was the propitiation for our sins and not only for our sins, but the sins of the world. This is another controversial principle and a major point of contention. The fourth principle is that God rejoices when the lost are found. God searches for the lost because and when they are found it brings great joy to Him. The fifth principle is that God’s promises are obtained by faith. It is not the children of flesh that are sons of God, but those who are by faith. We obtain the promises of God by faith. Finally, God is God. He is Creator and Owner of all things, so He can do whatever He wants. He is Omniscient and knows all things, including the past and the future. While we may not comprehend and understand all of His ways, He is God.

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<sup>1</sup> Bob Deffinbaugh, Community Bible Chapel, <https://bible.org/seriespage/11-sovereignty-god-salvation-romans-9>

## Framework for Romans 9

1. God loves the whole world.
2. God desires for all men to be saved.
3. Jesus paid for the sins of the world.
4. God rejoices when the lost are found.
5. God's promises are obtained by faith
6. God is God.

### 1. God loves the whole world.

God loves the whole world. He hates sin, but He loves people. In John 3:16-17, we find that God sent the Son into the world so that whoever would believe in Jesus would not perish, but have eternal life. He did not come to judge or condemn the world, but to save the world.

(John 3:16-17) "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. {17} For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

When God said that He loved Jacob, but hated Esau, we need to put that in the framework that God does not hate people; He loves people. God tells us that if we don't hate our mother and father and brother and sister, we cannot be His disciple. God does not want us to hate our mother and father. He doesn't want us to hate our wife or husband. God's word clearly teaches us to honor our parents, love our wives, and to love our brother. We have to understand that we must love God and put Him above all other relationships. In the same way, God puts His relationship with people of faith above other relationships.

(Rom 9:13) "Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

(Luke 14:26) "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

God knew that Esau would despise His birthright and God's covenant, and that the children of promise would go through Jacob. God did not hate Esau; He hated the disobedience and sins of the flesh. But the passage is not talking about two individuals, but two nations. In Genesis 25:23, God told Rebekah that two nations were in her womb, and the older will serve the younger. On an individual basis, Jacob repeatedly called himself a servant to Esau, and this was not the intent or the outcome of the Word God spoke. God was talking about the two nations and historically that is what happened. The descendants of Esau served the descendants of Jacob. This passage is not talking about individual choice, but the choice of nations.

(Gen 25:22-23) "But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is so, why then am I *this way*?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. {23} The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger."

God loves the world because He is a God of love. That is His character and that is who He is. In 1 John 4 we see that love comes from God and that God is love. The love was manifested to us in that God sent Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins so that we might live through Him. God is

love, and He does not hate us. He made a provision for our sin so that we might live, because that is who He is.

(1 John 4:7-10) “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. {8} The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. {9} By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. {10} In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.”

## 2. God desires for all men to be saved.

The teaching that God created some people to go to hell is not Biblical. God created man to have fellowship with Him. God’s desire is to have fellowship with us. We have choices and there are consequences to those choices. God told Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and if he ate from it, he would surely die. Adam chose to disobey, and the consequence of that choice was death and separation. God did not make Adam disobey. God did not create Adam to die, be separated from Him, and to be cast into hell. God prepared hell, the eternal fire, for the devil and his angels. It was Satan’s rebellion that brought this consequence. It was Adam’s choice that brought death and separation from God. God’s desire was for fellowship.

(Gen 2:15-17) “Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. {16} The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; {17} but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

(Matt 25:41) “Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;”

When Adam sinned, God provided a garment of skin to cover him. God covered him so that He could continue to have fellowship with Him, albeit not at the same level as before the sin. God had a plan for a perfect sacrifice to completely restore the fellowship, which shows His true desire was relationship with man.

In 1 Timothy 2:3-4, God tells us that He desires for all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. God is not talking about classes of men, like Jews and Gentiles, or men and women; He is saying that His desire is for all men to be saved. Not all men will be saved, but God’s desire is for all to be saved. His desire was not for some to be saved, and for some to be cast into hell on judgment day. God’s desire is for all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

(1 Tim 2:3-4) “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, {4} who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

In 2 Peter 3:9, God gives the same message through Peter. He said that He did not want any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. The word any includes every person that was ever born. His desire was not for people to perish and be cast into damnation; His desire was for all to come to repentance and fellowship with Him. He desired all men to be saved.

(2 Pet 3:9) “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

In Paul’s letter to Titus, he wrote, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.” God’s plan of salvation was for all men. Again, this does not mean sects, classes, or groups of men; the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.

(Tit 2:11) “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,”

In John 12:32, Jesus said that if He was lifted up from the earth, He would draw all men to Himself. In the next verse, John clarified that Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die, which was to be lifted up on a cross. The point is that Jesus died for the sins of the world and was going to draw all men unto Himself.

(John 12:32-33) ““And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.’ {33} But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.”

### 3. **Jesus paid for the sins of the world.**

God loves the world so much that He sent His Son to save the world, not to judge the world (John 3:16-17). In 1 John 2:2, God tells us that Jesus is the propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. Many people today teach that Jesus only died for the sins of the elect. That doctrine is called Limited Atonement and is one of the five points of Calvinism. The truth is that Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world. God’s desire was for all men to be saved, and He made provision so that all men could be saved. His desire was not to create some men to be saved and others for the express purpose of sending them to hell. God’s desire, is and always has been, to have fellowship with man.

(1 John 2:2) “and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.”

Many years ago, Karen and I visited a church and the pastor said that if you are not a five-point Calvinist then you would not be allowed to even teach Sunday School. When I asked about Limited Atonement and gave 1 John 2:2, the pastor said that it was speaking of the elect, not the whole world. We did not go back to the church because I will not put the doctrines of men above the Scriptures. I believe the Scriptures are very clear that Jesus paid for the sins of the world.

When the whole world’s fellowship with God was broken through Adam’s sin, Jesus came to die for the sins of the world. When Jesus began His earthly ministry, John the Baptist prophesied, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” It was not stated as the sins of the descendants of Jacob, or the disciples of Jesus; it was clearly stated the sin of the world. Jesus’ atonement was for everyone.

(1 Cor 15:22) “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”

(John 1:29) “The next day he \*saw Jesus coming to him and \*said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

In Romans 11:32, Paul wrote, “For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.” Christ’s atonement was for the sins of the world, so that He could show mercy to all. It was not to show mercy on a select group of people; His desire was to show mercy to all so that none would perish.

(Rom 11:32) “For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.”

In Paul’s letter to Timothy, he wrote, “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.” Jesus came to save sinners? Who are the sinners? All of us are sinners. There is none righteous, no not one. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Jesus died for the sin of the world, so that all sinners could have their sins forgiven and a relationship with God.

(1 Tim 1:15) “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.”

#### 4. God rejoices when the lost are found.

In Luke 19 Jesus was on His way to Jericho and had an encounter with Zacchaeus, who was a rich tax collector. Jesus told Zacchaeus to come down from the sycamore tree because Jesus was going to his house. People grumbled that Jesus was associating with tax collectors and sinners. Jesus’ response reveals God’s heart, “For the Son of Man has come to see and to save that which was lost.” God seeks out the lost because He wants to save people.

(Luke 19:10) “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

In Luke 15 Jesus gave three parables about the lost being found. The first parable is about the lost sheep. The shepherd left the ninety-nine to search out for the one lost sheep. Lost individuals matter to God. Never underestimate how important one lost sheep is to God. When the sheep was found, the man celebrated and told his neighbors to rejoice with him. The point that Jesus was making was there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous who need no repentance. God pursues sinners because it brings great joy to Him.

(Luke 15:6-7) “And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ {7} “I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

The second parable was about the lost coin. The woman searched throughout her house until she found the lost coin, and when she found it, she called her neighbors to rejoice with her. Again, the point was heaven rejoices when a sinner repents. God pursues sinners because when one repents it brings Him great joy.

(Luke 15:10) “In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

The third parable was about the prodigal son. When the younger son returned home the father threw a party for him. The older brother, who represents the Pharisees and religious leaders, was upset that the father was rejoicing over the return of the younger son. The father celebrated

because his son was lost and was found. Again, the point is that heaven rejoices when a lost person is found. The Son of Man came to seek that which was lost.

(Luke 15:32) “But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and *has begun* to live, and *was* lost and has been found.”

Another way to look at this is from Ezekiel 18:32. God spoke through the prophet, saying, “For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies, therefore, repent and live.” God is calling out to sinners to repent and live. He does not rejoice over the lost that die; He wants all men to repent and live. God pursues sinners because He wants all to come to repentance and live.

(Ez 18:32) “For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord GOD. “Therefore, repent and live.”

## 5. God’s promises are obtained by faith.

In Hebrews 11:6 God tells us that without faith it is impossible to please Him, and that anyone that comes to God must believe that He is. God’s promises are obtained by faith. Abraham was a man of faith. In Genesis 15:6 Abraham believed in the Lord and God reckoned it to him as righteousness. Abraham is known as the father of faith.

(Heb 11:6) “And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

(Gen 15:6) “Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

The Jews thought that they were the children of promise because they were fleshly descendants of Abraham. In Romans 9, Paul makes it very clear that it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

(Rom 9:6-8) “But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; {7} nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." {8} That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.”

In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul wrote that God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. In Romans 1:16, Paul wrote that he was not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. The promise of salvation is given to those who will believe.

(Rom 1:16) “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.”

(1 Cor 1:21) “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”

The biggest theological debate in the early church was over the law. There were many that believed that circumcision was necessary. Paul and Barnabas met with the apostles in Jerusalem to settle the issue. The conclusion was that we are saved by faith and not by works of the Law. In Paul's letters, he makes it abundantly clear that we are saved by grace through faith.

(Eph 2:8-9) "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; {9} not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

We know that God desires all men to be saved, and He has made provision for all the sins of the world. We also know that He is drawing all men to Himself, and that whoever calls upon the Lord will be saved. That promise of God is available to everyone who will call upon the name of the Lord and put their trust in Him.

(Acts 2:21) "AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

## 6. God is God.

In Romans 9 Paul tells us that God will have mercy on those whom He has mercy. Paul also likens God to a potter that can make whatever kind of vessel He wants to make. He mentions that communicated what He was going to do through the prophets. God knows the past, present, and future. When we study Romans 9 or any other passage, we must remember that God is God.

### a. God is the Creator and Owner of all.

The reason that God, the Potter, can do whatever He wants is that He is the Creator and Owner of all. The Lord created the heavens, the earth, and everything on the earth. Because He created it, the world and all it contains belongs to Him. As owner, God can do whatever He wishes.

(Ps 24:1-2) "The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it. {2} For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers."

(Ps 50:12) "If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains."

### b. God is Omniscient.

God knows all things; He is omniscient. He knows the beginning and the end. He knows the days that are ordained for each of us before there was one. He knows the gifts and callings that He has placed inside of us. He knows our thoughts before we speak a word. He knows who are going to repent and those who are not going to repent. You and I do not know who will respond to the gospel message, but God knows because He is omniscient.

(Ps 139:2-16) "You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. {3} You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. {4} Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O LORD, You know it all... {15} My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, *and* skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; {16} Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained *for me*, when as yet there was not one of them."

God spoke through the prophets about what would happen in their day, and in the latter days. There were thousands of prophecies given and this was only possible because God sees and knows the future. In Romans 8:29, we saw that those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son. God knew in advance those who would believe and place their faith in Him. The fact that He predestined those who would trust in Him to become conformed to His image does not mean that He predestined everyone else to rebel and be worldly; that would be against His will for any and all men.

(Rom 8:29) “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;”

God had a predetermined plan to send Jesus into the world to bring us back into fellowship with Him. In Acts 2:23, Peter preached that Jesus was delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God. God is omniscient and had full knowledge of everything that would take place in the future.

(Acts 2:23) “this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.”

Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:1-2 to the scattered aliens that had been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. God knew in advance who would believe in Him and they were chosen according to His foreknowledge.

(1 Peter 1:1-2) “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen {2} according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.”

In Acts 13, Barnabas and Paul were on their first apostolic journey and after they had preached the gospel as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. Because of this there are those that teach that God determines who will be saved and who will go to hell.

(Acts 13:48) “When the Gentiles heard this, they *began* rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”

These are difficult concepts to understand and to wrap our hands around. We know that God desires all men to be saved, and He has made provision for all the sins of the world. We also know that He is drawing all men to Himself. God knows in advance who will respond to the gospel message and who will not respond. Whoever calls upon the Lord will be saved, and these are predestined and chosen.

## **Conclusion and Applications**

Today we laid some key foundations. We learned that God loves everyone in the world, not just a select people. God desires for all men to be saved. He does not have a select group that He wants to save; He wants all men to be saved. He demonstrated His love to the world by sending His Son to die for our sins. Jesus did not just die for our sins, but for the sins of the world. God made provision for every person to be saved. We also saw that God and His angels rejoice when

a lost person is found. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. We also saw that in order to obtain salvation or any other promise from God, we have to receive it by faith. It is by grace that we are saved through faith. Even though salvation is available to all, it is those who believe that will be saved; they are the ones that are predestined to adoption as sons.

There are some difficult passages that we will be navigating through, but with this foundation and framework, we should have an easier time understanding Romans 9. It is a difficult passage, but all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be equipped for every good work. We need Romans 9 and we need to have a proper understanding of what Paul is saying and what he is not saying.

There may be someone listening today that does not know the love of God. If the Lord has been tugging at your heart and you sense that He is drawing you to Himself, I want to encourage you to invite Him into your heart. God loves you, and has made provision for your sins to be forgiven. God would like nothing better than for you to enter into His kingdom, and the angels in heaven will rejoice. If that is your desire, then pray with me.

Father God, thank You for loving the whole world, and for loving me. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die for our sins, and I do believe that You raised Him from the dead. Jesus, I ask You to come into my life and forgive me of my sins. I now confess You as my Lord and Savior. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

There may be others here today that have been exposed to some of the teachings about individual election, and today's message has brought light to who God is and who He wants to be saved. I believe the biggest takeaways from this is our service to Him. We have a job to reach as many people with the gospel as possible. We need a renewed vision and commitment to evangelism. Second, we need a revival of prayer for the people around us. Third, we need the abundant grace of God. Fourth, we need an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Father God, help us to align our hearts and desires with Your heart and desires. Give us a love for all people. Give us a desire to see all men to be saved. Give us the same purpose that Jesus had, to seek and to save that which was lost. We are Your witnesses and servants who have been charged to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations. We ask You to pour out Your Spirit and Your grace to help us accomplish the work You have given us to do. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Q & A

If God has predetermined who will get saved and who will go to hell, and man has no part in this, why has God commanded us to preach the gospel?

Why would the apostles become martyrs for the sake of the gospel if God was going to save His chosen list of people?

As a result of hearing this message, what do you see as your role and responsibility? What is one application for you?

**Introduction** (John 3:16, 1 Timothy 2:4, 1 John 2:2)

1. **God loves the whole world.** (John 3:16-17, Rom 9:13, Luke 14:26, 1 John 4:7-10)
  
2. **God desires for all men to be saved.** (Gen 2:15-17, Matt 25:41, 1 Tim 2:3-4, 2 Pet 3:9, Tit 2:11, John 12:32-33)
  
3. **Jesus paid for the sins of the world.** (John 3:16-17, 1 John 2:2, John 1:29, Rom 11:32, 1 Tim 1:15)
  
4. **God rejoices when the lost are found.** (Luke 19:10, Luke 15:6-7, 15:10, 15:32, Ez 18:32)
  
5. **God's promises are obtained by faith.** (Heb 11:6, Gen 15:6, Rom 9:6-8, Rom 1:16, 1 Cor 1:21, Eph 2:8-9, Acts 2:21)
  
6. **God is God.**
  - a. **God is the Creator and Owner of all.** (Ps 24:1-2, Ps 50:12)
  - b. **God is Omniscient** (Ps 139:2-16, Rom 8:29, Acts 2:23, 1 Pet 1:1-2, Acts 13:48)

**Conclusion and Applications**