

Introduction

As a teacher of God's word, I am constantly striving to rightly divide the word of truth. Paul exhorted Timothy to study to show himself approved to God as a workman, that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. The New American Standard says to be diligent to present yourself approved to God who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. So, Paul wrote this letter to me, not just to Timothy. I am constantly exhorted to study and to be diligent so that I can rightly divide the word of truth and accurately handle the word of truth. There are some passages in the Bible that are more difficult to rightly divide than others. Romans 9 is a passage that many respected Bible scholars divide a certain way, and many other respected Bible scholars divide a different way. It is a passage that I did not have a firm conviction about, and have never fully understood. This past month that I have been studying, meditating, researching, and praying about has been very beneficial to me. I have a better understanding of this passage. I have more conviction about what I believe. I am more comfortable giving a defense of what I believe. And, I am more comfortable teaching Romans 9 now than before. So, I am grateful for the opportunity and responsibility to teach this passage.

(2 Tim 2:15 KJV) "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

(2 Tim 2:15 NASB) "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."

Our text today is entitled, God's Choice. Last week we saw that this passage is not about individual salvation, but about nation building, the choosing of the lineage of Christ, and God's choice to show mercy to the Gentiles. The seed of Abraham, which is Christ, was not seeds, but seed, meaning that it had one single line. It was God's choice that it went through Isaac and not Ishmael. It was God's choice that it went through Jacob and not Esau. This was God's choice, not the choice or will of men. Before Esau and Jacob were born, God had already determined that His promise would go through Jacob. But, not all of the descendants of Israel were true children of Israel. They had not pursued righteousness by faith, but by the works of the Law. Because they stumbled over the stone, God granted salvation to the Gentiles. Today, we will be finishing up the people of promise, and finishing with the basis of God's choice.

God's Choice – Part 2 (Rom 9:17-33)

1. Paul's heart for his fellow Jews (Rom 9:1-5)
2. **The people of promise (Rom 9:6-29)**
3. **The basis of God's choice (Rom 9:30-33)**

(Rom 9:19-33) "You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" {20} On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? {21} Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? {22} What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? {23} And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, {24} *even* us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. {25} As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'" {26} "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU

ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD." {27} Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; {28} FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY." {29} And just as Isaiah foretold, "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH." {30} What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; {31} but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. {32} Why? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, {33} just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

1. Paul's heart for his fellow Jews

Paul shared his heart for his fellow Jews, telling how he had great sorrow and unceasing grief in his heart because of the Jews. He wished he could be accursed and separated from Christ for the sake of his brethren. Paul also told the Jews how special they are because the adoption as sons, the glory, covenants, giving of the Law, temple service, and promises had been given to them. Finally, he said that the Christ has come through them.

2. The People of Promise

In verses six through nine, Paul taught that not all those that descended from Israel was Israel. God was not at fault. His word had not failed. The promise to Abraham was that through Isaac his descendants would be named. The seed of Abraham, Christ, was going to go through Isaac, not Ishmael. The children of promise are regarded as descendants, not the children of the flesh.

(Rom 9:6-9) "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. {9} For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON."

(Gal 3:16) "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ."

In verses ten through thirteen, Paul said the children of promise went through Jacob, not Esau. Before they were even born or had done anything good or bad, God chose the seed of Abraham, Christ, to go through Israel. God had told Rebekah that two nations were in her womb and that the older would serve the younger. This was not about the individuals, but about the nations. The nation that came out of Esau served the nation of Israel. That was God's choice.

(Rom 9:10-13) "And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac; {11} for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, {12} it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." {13} Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

Paul also quotes from Malachi 1:2-3, where God also said that He loved Jacob and hated Esau. God is a loving God, and does not hate anyone, much less hate Esau. A better way to look at that is that God's love for Jacob was far greater because he was the one that the seed of Abraham was going to be passed down to the Christ. Additionally, God made a covenant with Abraham and God has a special love for those He is in covenant with, and are in a covenant with Him. This is not favoritism; God does not show favoritism. God has a different commitment to those He is in covenant with. I love people, but I have a special love for my wife, who I made a covenant with forty-three years ago.

(Mal 1:2-3) "I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How have You loved us?" "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob; {3} but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and *appointed* his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness."

Tim Chaffey¹, a pastor and theologian who has authored twenty-four books, and now serves content manager for the Attractions Division at Answers in Genesis, developing the content for the exhibits at the Creation Museum and the Ark Encounter, had this to say about God loving Jacob and hating Esau.

"Malachi was written more than 12 centuries after Jacob and Esau had died. But for the millennium leading up to Malachi's time, God had shown love to Jacob's descendants (the Israelites) who were occasionally faithful to Him, but he "hated" (loved less) Esau's descendants (the Edomites, a very wicked nation throughout the years). While Genesis 23:25 pointed forward to the relationship between the Edomites and Israelites, Malachi 1:2-4 looked back on God's treatment of them during the intervening centuries."²

In verse fourteen, Paul asks, "What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there?" Paul answers emphatically, "May it never be!" It was God's choice to choose who the seed of Christ would go through. It was His choice to choose Isaac and Jacob. Because He chose Jacob does not make Him an unjust God. There is no injustice with God; may it never be.

(Rom 9:14) "What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!"

In verses fifteen and sixteen, God told Moses that He will have mercy on those on whom He has mercy and compassion on those on whom He has compassion. God has the right to show compassion and mercy to those that He chooses. That does not make Him unjust. It is not up to men to decide who God will show mercy upon; it is solely up to God.

(Rom 9:15-16) "For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." {16} So then it *does* not *depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy."

In Titus 2:11, Paul wrote, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men." God's mercy or grace has appeared to bring salvation to all men, not to a select few. God's

¹ Tim Chaffey, http://midwestapologetics.org/blog/?page_id=2

² Tim Chaffey, <http://midwestapologetics.org/blog/?p=926>

choice was about the seed of Christ being passed down from Abraham, it was not about individual election. God's mercy and forgiveness is available to all men. His salvation through the promised seed is available to all men. In Galatians 3, God tells us that we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. If we place our faith in Christ, we become Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

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

(Gal 3:26-29) "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus....{29} And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."

In Romans 9:17-19, Paul uses the example of Pharaoh, who resisted the will of God. God wanted to bring the nation of Israel out of bondage and into the Promised Land. Pharaoh resisted this and did not want to let the Jews leave. Pharaoh kept hardening his heart and finally we read that God hardened his heart. When people continue to harden their hearts and resist God's will, He can harden their heart. Paul said that God raised up Pharaoh to demonstrate His power to him, so that His name would be proclaimed throughout the whole earth. Each of the miracles that Moses performed related to the idolatrous worship of the Egyptians. God was demonstrating His power to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians, and yet Pharaoh kept resisting. God is God and He can show mercy to whom He shows mercy and He can harden others that resist His will.

(Rom 9:17-19) "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." {18} So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. {19} You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

In verses twenty through twenty-four, Paul uses the example of a potter and the clay. The question is, "Who are we to answer back to God?" God is God and He can do whatever He wishes to do. He can show mercy to whom He wants to show mercy. In the natural, there were some common vessels that were for everyday use. There were other vessels that were used for special occasions. This is a reference to Jeremiah 18, where the Lord told the prophet to go down to the potter's house, and He would speak to him there.

(Rom 9:20-24) "On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? {21} Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? {22} What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? {23} And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, {24} *even* us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

The potter was making a vessel and it spoiled, so he remade it into another vessel as the potter pleased. Then the Lord said, "Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does? Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it, if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; if it does evil in My sight by not

obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.” When God spoke of Pharaoh, He was speaking not just to the leader, but to the nation of Egypt. If they had repented as a nation from the idolatry, God could change the plagues, but Pharaoh hardened his heart, and then God hardened his heart even further so that He could show his glory to all the earth. God, the Potter, can raise up nations or tear them down. Again, this is not about God hardening hearts of those that He created to send to hell; it is about a nation that refused to repent of its idolatry and wickedness.

(Jer 18:1-10) “The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD saying, {2} “Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will announce My words to you.” {3} Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. {4} But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make. {5} Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, {6} “Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter *does*?” declares the LORD. “Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. {7} “At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy *it*; {8} if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. {9} “Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant *it*; {10} if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.”

In verses twenty-five and twenty-six, Paul quotes Hosea, and introduces the Gentiles. As a nation, Israel had not obeyed God's voice and were not following God, and had not received the Messiah. God was now bringing the Gentiles into the kingdom of God, calling those who were not My people, “My people.” The Gentiles were now going to be sons of the living God. Gentiles were not God's chosen people, and Paul is indicating that God was now going to call them, “My people.” As the Potter, this was God's choice.

(Rom 9:25-26) “As He says also in Hosea, “I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'” {26} “AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD.”

(Hos 2:23) “I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, and I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they will say, ‘*You are my God!*’”

Paul then quotes Isaiah, who had quoted from Hosea 1:10, and said that only a remnant would be saved. Even though there were lots of sons of Israel, it was the remnant that was going to be saved. The Jews believed that they would be saved because they were descendants of Abraham. Paul has dispelled that belief, saying that only a remnant will be saved, and that Gentiles, who were not God's people, were also going to be saved.

(Is 10:22) “For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, *only* a remnant within them will return; a destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.”

(Hos 1:10) “Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and in the place where it is said to them, “You are not My people,” it will be said to them, “*You are* the sons of the living God.”

(Rom 9:27) “Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “**THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;**”

In verses twenty-eight and twenty-nine, Paul quotes from Isaiah 10:23 and Isaiah 1:9, saying that God will execute a complete destruction in the midst of the earth, and that unless the Lord had left a few survivors, they would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah, which was completely destroyed.

(Rom 9:28-29) “**FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY.**” {29} And just as Isaiah foretold, “**UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH.**”

(Is 10:23) “For a complete destruction, one that is decreed, the Lord GOD of hosts will execute in the midst of the whole land.”

(Is 1:9) “Unless the LORD of hosts Had left us a few survivors, we would be like Sodom, we would be like Gomorrah.”

The King James Version says unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrha. I believe this is the best translation for this verse. The Greek word, which the NASB translates as posterity, is sperma, which means seed. We saw earlier in Romans 9:5 that the Jews were the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh. In Galatians 3:16, we see that Jesus is that seed that God preserved, and unless that seed had come, we would all be destroyed. All of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All of us deserved death and destruction. The Jews had rejected Christ and pursued righteousness by works rather than faith, and as a nation they could have been destroyed, but God preserved the seed by which all nations would be blessed.

(Rom 9:29 KJV) “And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.”

(Rom 9:5) “whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.”

(Gal 3:16) “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.”

3. The Basis of God's Choice

Paul asks the question, “What shall we say then?” God is going to save a seed or remnant of Israel, and He is going to call a people that were not His people, His people. The Gentiles, who were not physical descendants of Abraham, and not God's people, and who had not pursued righteousness, attained righteousness, because of their faith. Just as Abraham had been reckoned as righteous because of his faith, the Gentiles were going to be reckoned as righteous because of

their faith. On the other hand, Israel, which had pursued a law of righteousness, were not reckoned as righteous. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, which is Christ. It is only by believing in Christ that we are saved.

(Rom 9:30-32) "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; {31} but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. {32} Why? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,"

Paul quotes Isaiah again, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed. The Jews were expecting the Messiah to come and deliver them from Roman rule. Jesus came humbly and was not interested in setting up a kingdom here on earth; He preached the kingdom of heaven. Jesus reached out to sinners, seeking to save that which was lost, but the Jews had stumbled over the stumbling stone. Those that believe in Christ will not be disappointed; they will receive God's mercy and be reckoned as righteous. Those who reject Christ, and pursue their own righteousness by works and the law, will not attain this righteousness, and will be vessels of wrath.

(Rom 9:33) "just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

(Is 28:16) "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone *for* the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes *in it* will not be disturbed."

(Is 8:14) "Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, *And* a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

Conclusion and Applications

In Peter's first letter, he quoted Isaiah, telling us that we are living stones being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. He said that the Jews had stumbled because they were disobedient to the word, and were appointed to doom. But to all of us who have received Christ, we are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. God was rejecting Israel because they had not believed in the Christ, but He had saved a seed or remnant, which is Christ. God had called the Gentiles, who were not His people, His people, because they believed in Jesus.

(1 Pet 2:4-10) "And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, {5} you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. {6} For *this* is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." {7} This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*," {8} and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed. {9} But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal

PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; {10} for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.”

This does not mean that all Gentiles are saved and all Jews are doomed. Paul preached the gospel to the Jew first and also to the Greek, for it is the power of salvation to everyone who believes. Those that believe and receive Christ are the chosen race. When you are in Christ, you are part of the chosen race, and are part of a holy nation. Romans nine is about a holy nation that God was creating. The Jews had pursued righteousness by works and by the law and did not attain it. They rejected Christ and stumbled over the stumbling stone. God, who had promised that the seed of Abraham would be a blessing to all nations, had always intended to offer salvation to all men, not just the Jews. But, that seed would go through the Jews. God is the Potter and has the right to extend mercy to those who will believe in Jesus. The chosen people are those who place their faith in Christ. Those that trust in Christ will not be disappointed.

(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.”

Introduction (Rom 9:19-33)

- 1. Paul's heart for his fellow Jews** (Rom 9:1-5)
- 2. The people of promise** (Rom 9:6-29, Gal 3:16, Mal 1:2-3, Tit 2:11, Gal 3:26-29, Jer 18:1-10, Hos 2:23, Is 10:22, Hos 1:10, Is 10:23, 1:9, Gal 3:16)
- 3. The basis of God's choice** (Rom 9:30-33, Is 28:16, 8:14)

Conclusion and Applications (1 Pet 2:4-10, Rom 1:16)