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Rice Memorial MBC

Rice Memorial Missionary Baptist Church
Apostle Walter F. Camp, Presiding Senior Pastor
Pastor David K. Baker III, 2nd Presiding
802 W. 15th, Little Rock, AR 72202, 501-773-6546
www.RiceMemorialBaptistChurch.org

Dependent on God's Mercy

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Romans 9:6-18

Introduction: This chapter opens in some degree a new train of thought and argumentation (reasoning). Its main design probably was to meet objections which would be alleged against the positions advanced and defended in the previous parts of the Epistle. In the previous chapters, Paul had defended the position that **the barrier between the Jews and Gentiles had been removed**; that the Jews COULD NOT be SAVED by any external advantages which they possessed; that **ALL** were **alike guilty before God**; and that there was but ONE WAY for Jews and Gentiles of salvation - **by FAITH IN Jesus Christ**; Romans 9:1-5.

(2) he shows them from their own writings that the principle of election had existed in former times - in the case of Isaac Romans 9:7-13; in the writings of Moses Romans 9:15; in the case of Pharaoh Romans 9:17; and in the prophecies of Hosea and Isaiah Romans 9:25-29.

(3) he takes occasion throughout the chapter to vindicate (support or maintain as TRUE or correct) **this principle** of the **divine administration** (management); to answer objections; and to show that, on the acknowledged principles of the Old Testament, a part of the Jewish nation might be rejected; and that it was the **PURPOSE of God** to **call others** to the **privileges** of the **people of God**; Romans 9:16, Romans 9:19-23, Romans 9:25-26, Romans 9:29-33. The chapter, therefore, has NOT reference to national election, or to choice to external privileges, but has direct reference to the **doctrine of the election to salvation** which had been stated in Romans 8. To suppose that it refers merely to external privileges and national distinctions, makes the whole discussion unconnected, un-meaningful, and unnecessary.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/romans-9.html>)

Romans 9:1-2, *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.*

NOTE: Great heaviness - Great grief. **Continual sorrow** - The word rendered "continual" here must be taken in a popular sense. NOT that he was literally ALL the time pressed down with this sorrow, but that **whenever he thought on this subject**, he had **great grief**; as we say of a PAINFUL SUBJECT, it is a source of constant pain. The cause of this grief, Paul does not expressly mention, though it is implied in what he immediately says. It was the fact that so **large a part** of the **nation** would **be rejected**, and **cast off**.
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/romans-9.html>)

Romans 9:3-5, *For I could wish that myself were accursed (religious ban) from (by) Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the FLESH: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the COVENANTS, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

NOTE: For I could wish ... - (1) the object of the apostle is NOT to state his FORMER feelings, but his **PRESENT attachment** to his countrymen, and **willingness to suffer for them.** (2) the proper grammatical construction of the word used here is NOT I did wish, but I COULD desire; that is, if the thing were possible.

Were accursed from Christ - Might be **anathema BY Christ** - anathema einai apo tou Christou This passage has been much controverted (disputed). The word rendered "accursed" (anathema) properly means,

(1) Anything that was **set up,** or "**set apart,**" or **consecrated** to the gods in the temples, as **spoils of war,** images, statues, etc.

...In this respect it is used to express the sense of the Hebrew word חֶרֶם cherem "anything devoted to **Yahweh,** without the possibility of redemption." Lev. 27:21; Lev. 27:29; Num. 18:14; Deut. 7:26; Joshua 6:17-18; Joshua 7:1; 1 Samuel 15:21; Ezekiel 44:29.

Joshua 6:17, And the city shall be **accursed,** even it, and **ALL** that are therein, **TO** the LORD (Yahweh): only Rahab the harlot shall **live,** she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

(2) as what was thus dedicated to Yahweh was alienated from the use of him who devoted it, and was either BURNT or SLAIN and DEVOTED to destruction as an OFFERING, the word came to signify **a devotion** of any thing **to destruction,** or **to complete ruin.** And as whatever is devoted to destruction may be said to be subject to a CURSE, or to be ACCURSED, the word comes to have this signification; 1 Kings 20:42; Isaiah 34:5. But **in NONE of these cases does it denote eternal death.** The idea, therefore, in these places is simply, "I could be willing to be destroyed, or devoted, to death, for the sake of my countrymen." And the apostle evidently means to say that he would be **willing to suffer the bitterest evils,** to **forego ALL pleasure,** to endure any **privation** (state of being deprived) and **toil,** nay, **to offer his life,** so that he might be wholly devoted to sufferings... (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/romans-9.html>)

Romans 9:6-7, Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are **not** all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the **seed of Abraham,** are they all children: but, **In Isaac** shall **thy SEED** be called.

NOTE: Not as though the promise of God had entirely failed. Though I **grieve** thus Romans 9:2-3, though I am deeply apprehensive for the nation, yet I do not affirm that all the nation is to be destroyed. The promise of God will not entirely fail.

Not all Israel - Not all the descendants of Jacob have the **true spirit of Israelites,** or are Jews in the scriptural sense of the term; see the note at Romans 2:28-29.

Romans 2:28-29, For he is NOT **a Jew,** which is one **outwardly;** neither is that circumcision, which is **outward** in the **flesh (BODY):** But he is **a Jew,** which is one **inwardly;** and **circumcision** is that of the **heart (MIND),** in the **spirit,** and NOT in the **letter (scripture);** whose **praise** is not of (FROM) men, but of (FROM) God.

Are they all children - Adopted into the true family of God. Many of the **descendants** of Abraham were REJECTED.

But in Isaac - This was the promise; Genesis 21:12.

Shall thy seed ... - Thy true people. This implied a selection, or choice; and therefore the **doctrine of election** was **illustrated** in the very commencement of the history of the nation; and as God had then made such a distinction, he might STILL do it. As he had then **rejected** a part of the natural descendants of Abraham, so he might still do it. This is the argument which the apostle is pursuing.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/romans-9.html>)

Romans 9:8, That is, They which are the **children** of the **FLESH,** these are NOT the **children**

of God: but the **children** of the **PROMISE** are **counted** for the **SEED**.

NOTE: ...children of the promise - The descendants of Abraham on whom the **promised** blessings would be bestowed. The sense is, that God at first contemplated a distinction among the descendants of Abraham, and intended to confine his blessings to such as he chose; that is, to **those** to whom the **promise particularly appertained**, to the **descendants of ISAAC**. The argument of the apostle is, that "the principle" was thus established that a distinction might be made among those who were Jews; and as that **DISTINCTION** had been made in former times, **SO** it might be under the Messiah. **Are counted** - Are regarded, or reckoned. God reckons things as they are; and therefore designed that they should be **HIS true children**.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/romans-9.html>)

Galatians 4:28, Now we, BRETHREN, as **Isaac WAS**, are the **children** of **PROMISE**.

Romans 9:9, For this is the **word** of **PROMISE**, At this time will I come, and **Sara** shall have a SON.

NOTE: This is the promise made to Abraham. The design of the apostle, in introducing this, is doubtless to show to whom the promise appertained; and by specifying this, he shows that it had **NOT reference** to **Ishmael**, but to **Isaac**.

At this time - Greek, According to this time; see Genesis 18:10, Genesis 18:14. Probably it means at the exact time promised; I will fulfil the prediction at the very time; compare 2 Kings 4:16. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/romans-9.html>)

Romans 9:10-14, And not only this; but when **Rebecca** also had **conceived** by one, even by our father **Isaac**; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the **purpose** of God according to **election** might stand, not of **works**, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto **her**, The **ELDER** shall serve the **YOUNGER**. As it is written, **Jacob** have **I LOVED**, but **Esau** have **I HATED (love less)**. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

NOTE: Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated ... was not written of Isaac's sons before they were born, but centuries **AFTERWARD**, this being a quotation, **NOT** from **Genesis**, but from Malachi 1:2f. God's **foreknowledge** of what the **Edomites** would become was proved to be accurate by the **SINS** and **EXCESSES** of that people who came, in time, to deserve the denunciation recorded by Malachi.

Malachi 1:1-3, The burden of the word of the LORD (Yahweh) to Israel **by Malachi**. I have **LOVED** you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou **LOVED US**? Was not **Esau** Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet **I loved Jacob**, And **I hated Esau**, and laid his mountains and his heritage **waste** for the dragons of the wilderness.

Jacob and Esau, as individuals, were **NOT** the principal concern of the **election**, but the **NATIONS** which they would produce. Despite that, the election had to **BEGIN WITH** individuals. As Whiteside noted, The **selection** of **Jacob** was the **selection of a PEOPLE** rather than **an individual**.^[12] This harmonizes with Genesis 25:23, where the "manner of **PEOPLE**" looms as God's great consideration. If Esau had been made the patriarch instead of Jacob, Israel would never have continued long enough to **deliver** the **Messiah** to **mankind**; but the **overruling providence** of the all-wise God interposed to prevent such a thing from taking place. God's choice did **NOT DETERMINE** the eternal destiny of either twin, their subsequent (following in time) **lives determining that**; but God's **choice** did determine which would be the patriarch of Israel.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/romans-9.html>)

Romans 9:15, For he saith to Moses, **I will have MERCY on WHOM I will have mercy, and I will have **compassion (pity)** on whom I will have **compassion (pity)****

Mercy on defined 1653. eleo el-eh-eh'-o, to compassionate (by word or deed, specially, by divine grace): -- have COMPASSION (pity on).

Compassion, a sensation of sorrow excited by the distress or misfortunes of another, sympathy (PITY [kindness of feeling toward one who suffers]).

NOTE: This quotation is from Exodus 33:19, and it affirms the **sovereign** (Supreme in power) **RIGHT** of Almighty God to save whomsoever he will. No basis of any kind is there stated as an explanation of God's **saving some** and **rejecting** others; but any **understanding** whatever of God's dealings with his human children demands the assumption that there is a **JUST and RATIONAL foundation** for everything that God does.

...there is abundant proof in God's word that it was something "**IN men**" that entered into **God's election** of them. For example, God elected Abraham, and why? If God is to be understood as either **rational** or **just**, there **had to be a reason why**. Human intelligence demands to know what it is; and the gracious and righteous God deigned to reveal to his human children just what the reason was, thus: And the Lord said, **For I know him (Abraham)** that he will **command his children** and his household after him, and they shall **KEEP** the way of the Lord, to **DO** justice and judgment; that the Lord **may bring upon Abraham** that which he hath **spoken** of him (Genesis 18:19).

Genesis 18:18-19, SEEING that **Abraham** shall surely **BECOME** a great and mighty **NATION**, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For **I know him**, that **he WILL command his children** and **his household** after him, and they shall KEEP the WAY of the **LORD**, to do justice and judgment; that the **LORD MAY BRING** upon Abraham that which **he hath spoken** of him.

In this epic passage of God's word, God stated **his REASONS** for **the choice of Abraham**. God categorically stated, that he **KNEW** that Abraham would command his posterity after him, that they would **keep the way** of the Lord to **DO** justice and judgment, "that the Lord MAY BRING upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him," the latter clause being a dogmatic affirmation that without the **qualities** God **foreknew IN Abraham**, the **fulfillment of the PROMISE would have been IMPOSSIBLE**. Thus they greatly **ERR** who fancy that it "was nothing **IN**" Abraham that entered into God's election.

Going a bit further, this example of why God **chose** Abraham is clearly applicable to the **rejection of Esau**. God saw in him a different "manner" of people from Abraham, making the **fulfillment of the promise through Esau an utter impossibility**; and that is something "IN" Esau that resulted in God's **REJECTION** of him. And to carry this postulate even further, in every case of **ELECTION**, there has to **be an element IN the elected** that **distinguishes him** from those NOT elected; and to **DENY** this is to make election to be a totally immoral and capricious (fickle changeable) thing, unworthy even of people, much less of God. Nor can such a certainty as this bear the slightest resemblance to any theory of anyone's ever **meriting salvation**. Even when the election occurs, at least partially upon the basis of what is "IN" the elected distinguishing them from the non-elected, the election is **STILL WITHOUT the merit** of the **elected** and **founded** in God's **LOVE** and grace, but **NOT** upon "GRACE ALONE," the proof of this being that God's grace has come alike upon the totality of mankind (Titus 3:11), which includes the non-elected. Factors **OTHER** than grace are therefore involved in election.

(Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/bcc/romans-9.html>)

Exodus 33:17-19, And the LORD (Yahweh) said unto **Moses**, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found GRACE in MY SIGHT, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech thee, **shew ME thy glory**. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the **name (honor, authority, character)** of the LORD (Yahweh) before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew **MERCY on** whom I will **shew MERCY**.

Romans 9:16, So then it is **NOT** of him that willeth, **NOR** of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth **MERCY**.

NOTE: Paul's words were still being directed at the Jews, primarily. Supposing that they were entitled to **salvation**, that **God owed it to them**, the nation as a whole, and the Pharisees as conspicuous examples of it, were wallowing in an **arrogant self-righteousness** that Paul struck down in the considerations brought forward here. No man MERITS SALVATION. In the last analysis, it is the gracious outflowing of God's **LOVING grace and mercy** that **makes salvation possible** for any person whomsoever. This is the conclusion Paul drew from the quotation from Exodus, and the only conclusion. Godet understood this verse thus:

When God gives, it is NOT because a human WILL ("he that willeth") or a human WORK ("he that runneth") **lays him under obligation**, and **forces him** to give, in order not to be unjust by refusing. It is in himself that the initiative and the efficacy are ("him that calleth") - it is FROM HIM that the gift flows.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/romans-9.html>)

John 3:14-16, And as **Moses lifted up** the **serpent** in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever **believeth** in him should NOT **perish**, but have eternal life. For God **so LOVED the world**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever **believeth** in him should not perish, but have **everlasting life**.

Romans 9:17, For the scripture saith unto **Pharaoh**, Even for this same **PURPOSE** have I **raised (rouse fully** [agitate {to move into violent irregular action}] thee UP, that I might **SHEW my POWER in (because of)** thee, and that **MY name (authority, character)** might be declared throughout ALL the earth.

Thought 1. What Yahweh did was SEND his servants Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh.

Exodus 5:1-2, And afterward **Moses** and **Aaron** went in, and told **Pharaoh**, Thus saith the **LORD** (Yahweh) God of Israel, Let MY people go, that they may hold a **feast** unto ME in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, **WHO** is the Lord (Yahweh), that I should OBEY his voice to let Israel go? **I KNOW NOT** the Lord (Yahweh), **NEITHER will I LET Israel go**.

Thought 2. First, Pharaoh didn't KNOW that Yahweh is the Highest Authority: the Living God. And next, that meant it angered him to be TOLD by someone he didn't KNOW, or reverence, to do something he didn't want to do. The spiritual principle at work here is to "hear and DISOBEY Yahweh" is SIN, which deceives, and then HARDENS the heart (MIND) of the person who's disobedient. (Heb. 3:12-15)

As a result, Pharaoh's disobedience caused him to be "JUDGED" by Yahweh, who ordained TEN plagues upon him and his land, to be executed as Moses and Aaron did as he commanded. Each time Yahweh brought a plague upon Pharaoh and his kingdom, his POWER was SEEN! Amazingly, the first TWO plagues were duplicated by Pharaoh's magicians through demonic power from Satan. But, after that, they were unable to do so. (Ex. 7:14-25; Ex. 8:1-15). The LAST plague was the DEATH of Egypt's FIRSTBORN: of humans and animals. (Ex. 12:29)

After that plague, Pharaoh let Israel go, but afterwards, hardened his heart and went after them to destroy them. The result was the forces that followed Israel on dry ground into the Red Sea were drowned when the wheels of their chariots came off and Yahweh moved by his POWER to protect his people and destroy their enemies by bringing the waters upon ALL of them that went in. (Ex. 14:5-31)

So, contrary to the old saying, Yahweh did NOT: "Let sleeping dogs lie". Because of Pharaoh's PRIDE, he was a vessel of dishonor in Yahweh's creation. But, he could still get some USE out of him. So, he woke him up and agitated him with commands, for the explicit PURPOSE of showing his POWER, so all the known world would HEAR and KNOW that Yahweh is the "Highest" in the earth, GAINING reverence, first, for himself, and then his people!

Romans 9:18-24, Therefore hath he **MERCY on** whom he will **have mercy**, and whom he will **he hardeneth**. Thou wilt say then unto me, **Why doth he yet find fault?** For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing **formed** (created) say to him that **formed (shape [created])** it, **Why hast thou made (APPOINT)** me thus? Hath NOT the potter power over the **clay**, of the **same LUMP** to **make (APPOINT)** one vessel unto **honour**, and another unto **dishonour**?

What if God, **willing** to SHEW his WRATH, and to make his POWER known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might **make known** the **riches of his glory** on the **vessels of MERCY**, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, NOT of the **Jews** only, but also of the **Gentiles**?

NOTE: The bearing of this analogy on the Jewish question, still in the forefront of Paul's thought, was stated by Godet, thus: The **LUMP** represents the **whole of humanity** Let not Israel therefore say to God, "Thou hast no right to make of me anything else than a **vessel of HONOR**; and thou hast no right to make of that other body, the Gentiles, anything else than a **base** (LOW in value) **vessel**." It belongs to God himself to decide, according to his wisdom.^[17]

The figure of the **TWO kinds** of vessels, **honorable** and **dishonorable**, made from the **same lump** is most instructive and was extended by Paul in his letter to Timothy (2 Tim. 2:20-21). Paul's instruction from the same figure there reveals that caprice (a whim) is not the determining factor in selecting which vessels are to **be honorable**; because Paul granted to those who WILL **"purge themselves of wickedness"** the precious promise that they should be made into **vessels of HONOR**, suitable for the **Master's USE**.

2 Timothy 2:120-21, But in a **great house** there are not only vessels of GOLD and of SILVER, but ALSO of **WOOD** and of **EARTH**; and **SOME to honour**, and **SOME to dishonour**.

If a man therefore **PURGE** himself from these, he shall be a **vessel unto HONOUR**, **sanctified**, and meet for the master's USE, and prepared unto every GOOD work.

The hardening of Israel and God's rejection of that nation from having any further place as a favored portion of humanity is the great announcement Paul was leading up to, as noted by Locke, thus: By "the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction" (mentioned in Rom. 9:22) he manifestly means the **nation** of the **Jews**, who were now **grown ripe**, and **fit for the destruction** he was bringing upon them. And by "**vessels of mercy**" he means the Christian church gathered out of a small collection of convert JEWS, and the rest made up of GENTILES, who were together from thenceforward to **be the people of God** in the room of the Jewish nation, now cast off, as apparent in Romans 9:24.

Thus, Paul's use of the analogy of **honorable** and **dishonorable vessels** from the **SAME LUMP** is a parallel argument and supplemental (additional) to the **judgment of Pharaoh**, both being applicable to the **hardening of Israel**, **ALREADY a fact**, and the subject throughout this whole section of Romans.

(Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/bcc/romans-9.html>)