

Romans 9b

16 God's mercy will choose the one best suited for His purposes because of His great love for all. So should we just give up! He already argued that point in chapter 6. God is so gracious to us we are obligated to receive his mercy and help to walk in righteousness.

17 Ex. 9:16 Prov 16:4 Everything will glorify God! Reconsider this verse...is it more powerful to change the heart of a hard ruler to release his slave population and have him proclaim that Jehovah is God... or crush him? Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 was such a display. Read this verse thinking about him. See how it applies either way?

18 Yet remember foreknowledge in 8:29. If you observe what Pharaoh did in hardening his own heart the first half of the plagues, it is amazing that when he repented it was he who had to again harden his heart. God only hardened it after he continually resisted what was obviously God.

19 This is the strongest passage in Scripture for predestination. It seems Paul is saying He creates us with his plan in mind to display his justice and power or his mercy and grace. Still, there is the call to "whoever calls on the name of the Lord..." and "God so loved the world..." See the word 'anyone' in 10:11. There is no exclusive club, the invitation is to all not just the special tribe, or do gooders, or even pre-chosen. Other Scripture tells us of the power to choose. Choose ye this day who you will serve. Repent and believe the Gospel. Who is on the Lord's side? and many more. I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse, choose life that you may live! With all that in mind how are we to take these Scriptures? All Scripture is inspired by God.

20 Can God raise up a man to display his power as in the case of Pharaoh and still be just? Of course He can. He is the potter, the Creator, the Sovereign over all. Can Pharaoh complain to God? No way. My question would be, did God see Pharaoh's decision from before to reject all the signs and after hardening his heart against what was clearly God, harden him even more to display His power even more fully. It seems that is what God does with Satan constantly. He plans for evil as in the case of Job and God allows but turns it in to greater victory frustrating Satan's schemes. But God gave them choices, they did not reject the choices because of how He made them, but once they hardened their hearts they are given over to a condition. (see chapter 1) If they question, "Why did you give me over?" God can answer, "You insisted."

21 We must trust God that He designed us to fit in the body of Christ in a unique way. The finger can't complain that it is not an eye as we need our fingers.

Trust Him that He made you exactly as He desired for a special unique purpose. Thank him for it! Compare this with Paul's last letter 2Tim 2:20,21. You can be designed for common use and by God's transforming power be remade. Is it wrong for God to give others a tendency and gifting toward special use? He is God and He is just. Common vessels are more needed everyday than the noble ones.

God designs as He sees fit and we should be grateful we are of use at all. Related to Pharaoh and Esau, did they reject the use for which they were intended?

22 What is amazing is that God did not vaporize Pharaoh. In this one man He shows power and mercy up to a point. 10:11 Objects of wrath can be reshaped. See Eph 2:3f

23 Prepared for destruction or prepared for glory? Remember this flows into 10:11. The only way this fits with all Scripture is to believe in God's foreknowledge- He saw what decisions we would make when presented with the truth. A reprobate will be used to display the power and justice of God so that the objects of mercy might know the riches of his glory. Have you ever witnessed someone who completely hardened their heart to God - and it always follows that they harden their heart to man also - and you just know the destructiveness that sin will bring into their lives? When you see that happen you know God asks us to flee from sin because He loves us. You are seeing glory more clearly.

24,25 His prevenient grace that draws us to himself before we ever made an effort, is applied to people all over the world. Does He apply it to all? "If I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." "Jesus died once for all" I have often wondered why the Jewish people did not see this in Scripture. Nu 27:16 Ex 12:38 The Israelites were a religion not a people group and outsiders could join. They were not permitted certain privileges but were considered a part of the nation. But this passage from Hosea is very clear in regards to what God was going to do. Isaiah also talks about the light to the Gentiles.

26 Ho 1:10 Pretty straight forward! The Israelites were chosen to show the world the wonderful rule of Jehovah. The court of the Gentiles was there surrounding the temple for them to come and worship. The Jews were chosen to be a display of God's rule but refused the calling. Now we who have presented ourselves as living sacrifices have the same job. As people see the wonderful rule of God in our lives they want to know Him.

27 As Paul explained earlier, not all Israel is born of the promise. Physical lineage and spiritual lineage may and often does differ.

28 Isaiah 10:22,23 God has a plan and it will not drag on forever. There is a day of completion. It must of been amazing to Paul how many would not accept the long awaited Messiah. Of course he didn't either, at first.

29 It sounds as if the number of Jews who receive Christ will be small, at least at a particular point in time. This is a hard chapter to deal with. No wonder he put 8 first to warm our hearts and open us up. This chapter is much debated and has been an excuse to many. Bottom line is God does as He pleases and whatever He does is good. It is about faith being the way to God not some special lineage or performance. We are in no place to argue with His actions and need to recognize that. I think one day we will look back over history and stand in awe at the wonder of what He did. But today it is revealed only in part. We can trust that all He does is just, loving, and graciously merciful.

30-32 Sounds like the stumbling stone is works instead of faith and yet we have clear teaching that it is Christ. The faith mentioned is faith in the provision of God to make us right with Himself. That provision is Christ Jesus. 'Faith not works' is about faith in Jesus who did it for us. So then there is no difference.

33 Notice the stone is a "him". Never being put to shame is because of trust placed in Him - not keeping the unkeepable law. The audacity to think we could be good enough is mind numbing. They could not see Christ the Messiah even though they had waited for centuries praying for him to come. Misconceptions and personal interpretation of Scripture helped them draw an image much different from the real Christ. Do we have some of those same false images? Let the Spirit correct them as you open the Word. Place your trust in Jesus the Rock and you will never be proven to have made a mistake in that choice.