

Romans Chapter 9 Continued

Romans 9:18 "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will [have mercy], and whom he will he hardeneth."

Have you even read that God hardened someone's heart and wondered why our God would do that to someone? Let's examine this a little closer.

The Greek word for hardens literally means to make something hard, but is often used figuratively to refer to making stubborn or obstinate. Ten times Exodus refers to God's hardening Pharaoh's heart, and other times to Pharaoh's hardening his own heart.

This does not mean that God actively created unbelief or some other evil in Pharaoh's heart, but rather that He withdrew all the divine influences that ordinarily acted as a restraint to sin and allowed Pharaoh's wicked heart to pursue its sin unabated.

Exodus 4:21" And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go."

We also see this very same thing in Joshua:

Joshua 11:20 "For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, [and] that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses."

We are not to question God's motives. In both of these instances, this taught us that God is even in control of Satan and all his evil forces. God can cause them to destroy themselves especially by creating fear in their hearts by allowing them to believe a delusion. Remember the story of Gideon?

Romans 9:19-20 "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 say to him that formed [it], Why hast thou made me thus?"

"Who has resisted his will"? Does all this lead to fatalism? Paul does not answer this question directly, for it is absurd and raised by one who is ignorant of the righteous character of the infinite God and the finite character of man. Paul rather deals with the heart attitude that would produce such a question and reminds man of his limited understanding of the unlimited and sovereign God.

The nature of Paul's reply makes it clear that he is not addressing those with honest questions about this difficult doctrine, but those who seek to use it to excuse their own sin and unbelief.

Isaiah 45:9 "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! [Let] the potsherd [strive] with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?"

Romans 9:21 "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?"

Paul argues that it is as irrational, and far more arrogant, for men to question God's choice of certain sinners for salvation, as for a piece of pottery to question the purposes of the potter.

Until we can say, not my will be done but thine O Lord, we are truly not His. One of the first things a Christian must do is let God cut away all the rough edges. We must get on the wheel and let God form us into what He would have us to be. He has a perfect plan for us, if we will just submit and let Him fulfill it.

Isaiah 64:8 "But now, O LORD, thou [art] our Father; we [are] the clay, and thou our potter; and we all [are] the work of thy hand."

2 Timothy 2:20-21 "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 honor, and some to dishonor." "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, [and] prepared unto every good work."

It is not our job to figure out what we are to do for God. He chooses what position we are to have and we must conform to His wishes.

Romans 9:22 "[What] if God, willing to show [his] wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:"

This verse begins with a rhetorical question, "What if". "Willing" means "wanting". The Greek word speaks of divine intention, not passive resignation.

"Endured": God could justly destroy sinners the first time they sin. But He patiently endures their rebellion rather than giving them what every sin immediately deserves: eternal punishment.

"Vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" are those whom God has not chosen for salvation, but rather allowed to incur the just penalty for their sin.

"Fitted to destruction:" By their own rejection of Him. God does not make men sinful, but He leaves them in the sin they have chosen.

Ephesians 5:5-6 "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

We deserve the wrath of God. Only those who accept full pardon through the shed blood of Jesus Christ will be spared the wrath of God which will surely come.

Romans 9:23-24 "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?"

This scripture is speaking of the greatness of His character, seen especially in the grace, mercy, compassion and forgiveness He grants sinners in Christ.

“Afore prepared unto glory” is speaking of God’s divine election.

The “vessels of mercy” are those He has chosen for salvation.

Ephesians 2:3-5 "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us," "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"

You see, the mercy of God is so great that He holds back His wrath until all who will accept Jesus as Savior have come into the kingdom.

Romans 9:25-26 "As he saith also in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved." "And it shall come to pass, [that] in the place where it was said unto them, Ye [are] not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God."

Hosea spoke of the ultimate restoration of Israel to God, but Paul’s emphasis is that restoration necessarily implies her present alienation from God. Therefore, Israel’s unbelief is consistent with the Old Testament revelation.

This scripture quotes from Hosea:

Hosea 1:9-10 "Then said [God], Call his name Loammi: for ye [are] not my people, and I will not be your [God]." "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, [that] in the place where it was said unto them, Ye [are] not my people, [there] it shall be said unto them, [Ye are] the sons of the living God."

Hosea 2:23 "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to [them which were] not my people, Thou [art] my people; and they shall say, [Thou art] my God."

1 John 3:1 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

We see in all of this, that God is speaking of the Gentiles who become spiritual Israelites through faith in Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Romans 9:27-28 "Isaiah also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:" "For he will finish the work, and cut [it] short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth."

Isaiah prophesied that the southern kingdom of Judah would be conquered and scattered, temporarily rejected by God, because of her unbelief. Paul's point is that the scattering Isaiah described was only a preview of Israel's rejection of the Messiah and her subsequent destruction and scattering.

Psalms 9:8 "And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness."

Acts 17:31 "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by [that] man whom he hath ordained; [whereof] he hath given assurance unto all [men], in that he hath raised him from the dead."

2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Romans 9:29 "And as Isaiah said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrhah."

"Lord of Sabaoth" is an Old Testament title for God is translated "Lord of hosts" and refers to His all-encompassing sovereignty.

This scripture is telling us that a seed or a remnant of Israel will survive God's wrath, solely because of His mercy.

These 2 evil cities were destroyed by fire and brimstone. We know that God will not always look the other way. Sin of the same nature as that of Sodom and Gomorrah is rampant in the U. S. today. The day of reckoning is coming. America better stop homosexuality, lesbianism, drugs, and all the other related sins of our nation or the wrath of God will fall on the U.S.

Romans 9:30-32 "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith." "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." "Wherefore? Because [they sought it] not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone;"

Paul concludes the lesson on God's divine choice by reminding his readers that although God chooses some to receive His mercy, those who receive His judgment do so not because of something God has done to them, but because of their own unwillingness to believe the gospel. Sinners are condemned for their personal sins, the supreme one being rejection of God and Christ.

Matthew 21:42 "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

Matthew 21:44 "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

We see in all of this that the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah. Faith is what pleases God. By faith the elders received a good report. Abraham's faith was counted unto him as righteousness. Our faith in Jesus is what saves us. We cannot be good enough to be saved and neither could the Jews who had the law. We all need a Savior and His name is Jesus Christ the Righteous.

Romans 9:33 "As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

1 Peter 2:6-8 "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." "Unto you therefore which believe [he is] precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner," "And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, [even to them] which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

And just one more Scripture makes it very clear.

1 John 2:28 "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

There is little to add to this, except to say that our faith in Jesus Christ is our salvation, whether we are Jew or Gentile believers.

Long before His coming, the Old Testament prophets had predicted that Israel would reject her Messiah, illustrating again that her unbelief is perfectly consistent with the Scripture.

Isaiah 8:14 "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

Isaiah 28:16 "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner [stone], a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."

Romans Chapter 9 Continued Questions

1. We learn in Romans 9-18 that God can do what 2 things without explaining to anyone?
2. Why can God do with us whatever He wishes?
3. What name immediately comes to mind when we think of someone whose heart God hardened?
4. What lesson can we learn from the 2 instances of God hardening someone's heart?
5. In 2 Chronicles 20:6 who can resist God?
6. Can our opinion differ from God's opinion?
7. Shall the thing _____ say to him that _____ it, Why hast thou made me thus?
8. Woe unto him that _____ with his maker.
9. In Romans 9:21, we find that God makes 2 kinds of people out of one lump, what are they?
10. Until we can make what statement, we are not truly God's?
11. Name the vessels that God made in 2 Timothy 2:20.
12. In 2 Peter 3:9, we find that God is not slack, but _____?
13. Name the people in Ephesians 5:5 who will not inherit the kingdom of God.
14. Why is God's wrath going to come on the earth?
15. In Romans 9:24 we find that God not only called the Jew but the _____ as well.
16. Before we were saved we were by nature children of _____.
17. The people who come to God will be called what that we find in Romans 9:26?
18. Why does the world not know the Christian?
19. Who are truly Abraham's seed?
20. What one word describes the physical house of Israel?
21. Who does the author think the 7000 mentioned in Romans 11:4 grew into?
22. Where do we find the Scripture (many are called, but few are chosen)?
23. How shall He judge the world (Psalms 9:8)?

24. What 2 cities were destroyed by God for the sins they committed?
25. How did God destroy them?
26. What were the sins they were guilty of?
27. First Corinthians 6:9 names a number of sins that will keep you out of heaven, what are they?
28. All have sinned and deserve death, what saves the Christian?
29. How did the Jews fail in their search for righteousness?
30. Who is the Cornerstone?
31. Abraham's _____ was counted unto him for righteousness.
32. 1 John 2:28 little children _____ in Him.