



PREDESTINED FOR HELL? ABSOLUTELY NOT!

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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Predestined For Hell? Absolutely Not!

SERMON REFERENCE: Romans 9

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2065

As followers of Jesus, our greatest mission in this life is the pursuit of lost souls. Adrian Rogers says, "We are to evangelize or we will fossilize."

In the Book of Romans, the Apostle Paul expresses sincere, steadfast, and sacrificial concern for lost souls. In Romans 9:1-2, he says, "I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart." Are some predestined for Hell? Absolutely not! There are three things we need to know about the character and nature of God that will bring our theology into sharp focus.

We first need to recognize God's sovereign choices. In this passage, Paul uses the Jewish nation to explain the concept of God's sovereignty. Jews are God's chosen people; they have been given a name of honor, adoption, glory, covenants, law, service, promises, and the coming Messiah. The purpose of God's choice is not for salvation, but for service. His choice also deals with preference. God has preferences for nations, but He does not predestine individuals for Hell.

Second, we need to know God's spotless character: "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!" (Romans 9:14) Despite what we may feel about His sovereign choices, God answers to no one and He owes us nothing but judgment.

Yet, God pardons according to His sovereign will; He has decided to show us mercy when we don't deserve it. It is not rooted in our merit but in His mercy. Punishment is according to man's stubborn wickedness.

God has every right to punish sin because He is God. But God does not create people in order to destroy them. If we want mercy, God will give us mercy. But if we harden our hearts, God will further harden our hearts.

Finally, we need to be certain of God's steadfast concern. He wants us to have salvation. If we want to be saved, He will save us, and keep us and present us spotless before His throne.

LIFE APPLICATION

As you meditate on Romans 9 today, ask God to reveal His heart to you. Let the Holy Spirit affirm in your heart God's sovereign choice, spotless character, and steadfast concern.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Does the Bible teach that God has created, predestined and ordained some people to go to Hell and that there is nothing they can do about it?
 - i) Absolutely Not!
 - ii) No one is predestined to Hell.
- b) Romans 9:1-3
- c) Ours is the greatest mission on Earth, and that is the salvation of lost souls.
- d) Our message is the greatest message, and that is the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- e) Our Master is the greatest Master, and that is Jesus Christ Himself.
- f) The church that is not interested in evangelism and soul winning is not worthy of the ground that it occupies.
 - i) We are to evangelize, or we will fossilize.
 - ii) Our mandate is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person.
- g) Acts 6:1
 - i) This is what the Bible said of the early church.
 - (1) Today's churches do so little with so much.
 - (2) The early church did so much with so little.
 - (a) They had no colleges or seminaries.
 - (b) They had no printing presses or finances.
 - (c) They had no prestige.
 - (d) They went out to tell the message of a Galilean peasant who was crucified.
 - (e) They went out against the imperial might of Rome and the intellectual sophistication of Greece.
 - (f) It was said of them that they turned the world upside down.
- h) One of the leaders of the early church was Paul, and we see the concern that he had.
 - i) The Apostle Paul had a sincere concern for souls.
 - (1) Romans 9:1
 - (2) Most of us would say that we are concerned for souls, but our conscience would not bear us witness.
 - ii) He had a steadfast concern for souls.
 - (1) Romans 9:2
 - (2) The Apostle Paul did not blow hot and then cold.
 - (a) He wasn't up and down.
 - (3) He didn't get under conviction and then forgot about it.
 - iii) He had a sacrificial concern for souls.
 - (1) Romans 9:3



- (a) The Apostle Paul was willing to die and go to Hell if it meant that his Jewish brothers and sisters would be saved.
 - (b) Paul was so full of Jesus that he was willing to take their Hell if they could take his Heaven.
 - (i) That's what Jesus did on the cross for us.
 - (2) Jesus had a sacrificial concern for souls.
 - i) As Paul addressed the Jewish nation in this passage in Romans 9, he also had a great message to the church.
 - i) In this Scripture, we learn something of the character and nature of God.
 - ii) In today's message we will learn three things about God from this Scripture.
 - (1) When we learn these three things about God, our theology will come into focus.
- 2) GOD'S SOVEREIGN CHOICES (Romans 9:3-5)
- a) God is the God of sovereign choices.
 - b) Romans 9:3-5
 - i) The Jews are God's chosen people.
 - c) In Romans 9:3-5, we see that the Jews were chosen for purpose, and they were given privilege.
 - i) They were given a name of honor.
 - (1) They are called Israelites.
 - (2) "Israel" means "prince."
 - ii) They have the adoption.
 - (1) God spoke of Israel as a son.
 - iii) They had the glory.
 - (1) This speaks of the Shekinah glory of God that led them out of Egypt and into the land of Canaan.
 - (2) This is the Shekinah glory that dwelt in the tabernacle and in the temple.
 - iv) They had the covenants.
 - (1) These are the special agreements that God made with Abraham, Isaac and David.
 - (2) God has made solemn promises to the Jews.
 - v) They were given the law.
 - (1) The Old Testament law is still the standard for all good jurisprudence and the foundation of all true law.
 - vi) They were given the service.
 - (1) This is the service of God, the Levitical rituals.
 - (a) These pointed toward the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - vii) They were given the promises.
 - (1) God made great and wonderful promises to the Jews.
 - viii) They were given the Messiah.
 - (1) This the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (2) Romans 9:5
 - d) The Jewish nation is a God-ordained, God-decreed, God-blessed, God-preserved and God-



protected nation.

- i) And God is not through with them.
 - (1) If you want to know what God is doing in the world today, just keep your eyes on Israel.
 - (2) The Jewish people are God's yardstick, His blueprint and His prophecy of what He is doing in the world.
- ii) They are the ones who gave us the Messiah.
 - (1) We worship a Jewish Messiah.
- e) Romans 9:7
 - i) Not all of the children of Abraham were chosen.
 - (1) Abraham had Ishmael and Isaac.
 - (a) God sovereignly chose Isaac, but He did not choose Ishmael.
- f) Romans 9:10-13
 - i) God didn't choose all the sons of Abraham.
 - (1) He chose one son, Isaac.
 - ii) God didn't choose all the sons of Isaac.
 - (1) He chose one son, Jacob.
- g) Why does the Bible say that God loved Jacob but hated Esau?
 - i) Romans 9:11, 13
 - ii) It is national and not personal.
 - (1) God did not love one of these little babies and hate the other.
 - (2) God did not choose one to go to Heaven and the other to go to Hell.
 - (3) When God is talking about Jacob and Esau, He is not talking about one boy or another boy but about two whole nations.
 - (4) Genesis 25:23
 - (a) The descendants of Esau are one nation that will serve another nation, the descendants of Jacob (the father of the twelve tribes of Israel).
 - iii) It is service, not salvation.
 - (1) God is not talking about salvation in this passage but about service.
 - (a) Romans 9:12
 - (i) This Scripture does not say anything about saved or lost.
 - iv) It is preference, not despite.
 - (1) In Romans 9:13, it states that God hated Esau but loved Jacob.
 - (a) The way we use the word "hate" today is completely different from how they used that word in Bible times.
 - (b) God is saying in this passage that He has preferred one, not that He abhors the other.
 - (2) Luke 14:26
 - (a) Jesus is not saying in this passage that we are to despise our loved ones in order to be His disciples.
 - (i) In fact, we love others more because we love Jesus.
 - (3) The word "hate" in the Bible simply means "preference."
 - (4) God had a preference and a sovereign choice for Jacob.



- (a) He did not have a preference for Esau.
 - (b) This doesn't mean that He despised Esau or that He created Esau for Hell.
 - h) God is a sovereign God, and He loves lost sinners.
 - i) Romans 5:8
 - ii) God did not predestine Esau or anyone else for Hell.
 - iii) God chooses individual and has preferences for nations in the realm of service.
 - (1) John 15:16
 - (2) Because God chooses one person for His service does not mean that He is going to send others to Hell.
- 3) GOD'S SPOTLESS CHARACTER (Romans 9:14-23)
 - a) Romans 9:14-23
 - i) Some might not like God's choices in any realm.
 - (1) But God is sovereign.
 - (2) God does as He pleases.
 - (3) God answers to no one.
 - (4) God is God.
 - (5) God is not fair; He is just.
 - (a) God does not owe us anything but judgment.
 - (b) When we realize that God is just, then mercy will be important to us.
 - ii) God is free to pardon and free to punish.
 - (1) That does not mean that God does so arbitrarily.
 - iii) God does as He pleases, but He always pleases to do right.
 - (1) There is no unrighteousness with God.
 - b) God pardons according to His sovereign will.
 - i) Romans 9:15-16
 - (1) If you are saved, then you're going to be saved by grace.
 - (2) God's mercy is not rooted in man's merit.
 - ii) God's mercy is found in God because He is a merciful God.
 - iii) Titus 3:5
 - iv) Psalm 32:10
 - (1) If we trust God, then He will give us mercy.
 - v) Proverbs 28:13
 - (1) If you want mercy, you can have it.
 - (a) It is according to God who wills to show mercy, and God wills to show us mercy.
 - (b) God is a merciful God.
 - vi) God has decided that He will show us mercy when we don't deserve it.
 - (1) It is not rooted in our merit but in His mercy.
 - c) Punishment is according to man's stubborn wickedness.
 - i) Romans 9:17-18
 - (1) When the Bible says that "God raised up Pharaoh," that doesn't mean that God grew him from a child.



- (a) It means that God put him on the highest throne.
 - (b) God gave him place, power and prestige that He might bring Pharaoh down.
 - (2) God will be glorified by His judgment on Pharaoh.
 - (a) Exodus 9:16
 - ii) God did not override Pharaoh's will.
 - (1) Eighteen times in Exodus, we find the phrase, "And Pharaoh hardened his heart," or "Pharaoh's heart was hardened."
 - (a) About half of those times, Pharaoh hardened his own heart.
 - (i) Pharaoh hardened his own heart before God hardened his heart.
 - (b) Exodus 8:15
 - (c) Exodus 8:32
 - (2) Pharaoh was already lost.
 - (a) God did not make him lost.
 - (b) Pharaoh had a heart set against God.
 - (c) All of the judgments of God upon Pharaoh only crystallized Pharaoh in his sin.
 - (3) God witnessed to Pharaoh and warned him.
 - (a) God sent a messenger to him.
 - (b) God sent the plagues, but Pharaoh hardened his own heart.
 - iii) God did not choose Pharaoh to go to Hell.
 - (1) Pharaoh hardened his own heart; and as a reciprocal action, God sent plagues that further hardened his heart.
 - (2) God used Pharaoh as an example of His punishment.
 - iv) God is in the business of getting glory to Himself.
 - (1) God's love will be magnified in Heaven.
 - (2) God's justice will be manifested in Hell.
 - v) The reason why God hardened Pharaoh's heart is because Pharaoh had already hardened his own heart.
- d) God has every right to punish sin.
 - i) Romans 9:15
 - ii) If we want mercy, God will give us mercy.
 - iii) If we harden our hearts, God will further harden our hearts.
- e) Romans 9:19-23
 - i) No potter would ever make a vessel just so that he could destroy it.
 - ii) God did not ordain some people to Hell.
 - iii) The reason some vessels were destroyed is because they did not realize the purpose of the Potter.
 - (1) Romans 9:20
 - (a) This verse does not say "the thing created" but "the thing formed."
 - (i) God is shaping, and some will not take the shaping.
 - (2) Romans 9:22
 - (a) God, who is longsuffering, is forming and working; but these vessels of wrath are not yielding to the hands of the Potter.



- iv) 2 Peter 3:9
 - (1) The word “longsuffering” here is the same word that is used in Romans 9.
 - v) “They were fitted for destruction.”
 - (1) This is in the middle voice, which indicates that the vessels of wrath fitted themselves for destruction.
 - (2) God does not create people in order to destroy them.
 - (a) God is a God of love.
 - f) 1 Timothy 2:4
 - g) The Bible warns against people being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
 - i) Hebrews 3:15
 - ii) If you harden your heart against God, then you will crystallize in your sin.
 - (1) God’s judgment upon you will then harden your heart even more.
 - h) Romans 9:15
 - i) God will show mercy to those who repent of their sin; to those who want mercy.
 - i) Some people think that God is too good to punish sin, but He is too good not to punish sin.
 - i) God is righteous.
- 4) GOD’S STEADFAST CONCERN (Romans 9:23-26)
- a) Romans 9:23-26
 - i) “Osee” is Hosea.
 - ii) God’s steadfast purpose was to take both Jews and Gentiles and make them His children.
 - (1) The highest privilege on Earth is to be a son or daughter of God.
 - b) God wants all people saved; He does not create anyone for Hell.
 - i) John 3:16-17
 - (1) This passage does not say, “For God so loved the elect.”
 - (2) This passage does not say, “that if a certain number would believe on Him.”
 - ii) Isaiah 53:6
 - (1) Jesus died for us all.
 - iii) Romans 8:32
 - (1) Jesus died for everybody.
 - iv) 1 Timothy 2:4
 - v) 1 John 4:14
 - vi) 1 John 2:1-2
 - (1) “He is the propitiation for our sins” means that Jesus is the satisfaction for our sins.
 - c) If you want to be saved, you can be saved.
 - d) Revelation 22:17
 - i) Whosoever will may come.
- 5) CONCLUSION
- a) If you want to be saved, then God will save you and keep you.
 - b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.



- c) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Would you take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter 9. Let me ask you a very serious and a very somber question. Has God created, has God predestined, has God ordained that some people are born to go to Hell? That there's nothing they can do about it. It is all settled. They are a pawn on the chessboard of faith. Is that what the Bible teaches? Absolutely not! The title of our message today is, "Predestined for Hell?" Predestined for Hell? Question mark! Answer; No! Exclamation point. You're not predestined to Hell.

Let's read here in Romans chapter 9, the first three verses, verses 1 through 3, "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, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

May I say this, friend, that ours is the greatest mission on the face of this Earth, and that is the salvation of lost souls. Our message is the greatest message; that is the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And our Master is the greatest Master; that is, Jesus Christ Himself. The church that's not interested in evangelism and soul winning is not worthy of the ground that it occupies. We are to evangelize or we will fossilize. Our mandate is to preach the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ to every creature. The Bible says of that early church in Acts chapter 6 verse 1, "In those days, the number of the disciples was multiplied." In many churches, it doesn't even make good addition. We do so little with so much. They did so much with so little. They didn't have any colleges. They didn't have any seminaries. They didn't have any radio and television stations. They had no printing presses. They had no finances. They had no prestige. They went out to tell the message of a Galilean Peasant, a Carpenter's Son, who was crucified. And they went out against the imperial might of Rome. They went out against the intellectual sophistry of Greece. They went out against the stiff-necked bigotry of the Jewish religion. And it was said of them that they turned that world upside down.

Now one of the leaders of that crew was a little Jew named Paul. And what you have here in the Scripture that I just read to you is the heartbeat of a soul winner, the heartbeat of a man who is interested in evangelism and getting souls saved. And I want you to notice the concern that he had. Look, if you will, in verse 1 of this chapter, Romans 9. He says, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." The apostle Paul had a sincere concern for souls. He said, "I'm telling you the truth. I'm not telling a lie."

If I were to ask, "Lift up your hands. How many of you have a concern for souls?" almost every one of you would lift up your hand. But you would have a twinge of conscience because your conscience would not bear you witness. He had a sincere concern for souls.

And look, if you will. He had a steadfast concern for souls. Romans 9 verse 2, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart." The apostle Paul didn't blow hot and then blow cold.



He wasn't up and down. He didn't get under conviction when the preacher preached about it and then forgot about it when he got home and turned on the television. He had a steadfast concern for souls.

And he had a sacrificial concern for souls. Look if you will in Romans 9 verse 3, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." If I understand plain English, what the apostle Paul was saying is this, "I would be willing to die and go to Hell if my Jewish brothers and sisters could get saved." That's sacrifice. Now I don't believe I could say that. I don't believe I've come to that place. But I believe that Paul was so full of Jesus that that's what Paul said. Paul said, "I'd be willing to take their Hell if they could take my Heaven." That's exactly what Jesus did on the cross. Jesus had a sacrificial concern for souls. And Paul is so full of Jesus that he is concerned about lost souls.

But notice, as we tighten the focus, he's talking about his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. He's talking about the Jewish nation, because the Jews, when they heard about God saving the Gentiles, they were saying, "Well, what happened? What happened to all the promises to the Jews? We're the chosen people. Has God forgotten us? Or has God failed to keep His word and His covenant?" And Paul is going to address that. But when Paul addresses this message to the Jew, he has a great message to those of us who are Gentiles and to the church of the living God, because in this we learn something of the character and the nature of God. All true theology has to learn something, it has to know something about the nature of God. So that's what we're going to learn today as we look in this passage of Scripture; three things about God. And when you learn those three things about God, your theology will come into a focus.

Number one; you need to recognize that God is the God of sovereign choices. Now write that down; sovereign choices. Beginning now, look if you will in Romans 9 verses 3 through 5. He says, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from 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 forever." Now what Paul is just simply saying is that the Jews are the chosen people. God chose the Jews. Whether you like it or not, whether you believe it or not, it is absolutely true. There is a special people chosen and blessed of Almighty God. They were chosen for purpose and they were given privilege.

And I want you to see the nine special privileges that they had. Number one: He calls them Israelites. That's a name of honor. Israel means prince. And then it says they have the adoption. That is, God said of this nation, God spoke of Israel as a son. And then it says they had the glory. That's speaking of the Shekinah glory of God that led them out of Egypt and into the land of Canaan, and the Shekinah glory that dwelt in the tabernacle and in the temple. Then they had the covenants. That is the special agreements that God made with Abraham and God made with Isaac and God made with David. God has made solemn promises to the Jews. And then, they were given the law. That's the Old Testament law that is still today the standard for all good jurisprudence and the foundation of all true law. And then, they were given the service. That is, the service of God, the



Levitical rituals and all of this that pointed toward the Lord Jesus Christ. And they were given the promises. God made great and wonderful promises to the Jews. And then, last of all, as He saves the best for last, they were given the Messiah, of whom Christ came, the Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 5 He's just saving the best for the last.

I want to tell you, the Jews are God's chosen people. The Jewish nation is a God-ordained, God-decreed, God-blessed, God-preserved, God-protected nation. Never forget it. And God is not through with the Jew. We're going to see more about that in chapter 10 and chapter 11. The Jew is God's chosen people. If you want to know what God is doing in the world today, just put your eyes on Israel. The Jew is God's yardstick, God's blueprint, God's program, God's prophecy of what He is doing in the world. Now, they are the ones that gave us the Messiah.

I was talking to some Jewish rabbis and they said, "We don't believe that you ought to be trying to win Jews to Jesus Christ." And I said, "Now, wait a minute." I said, "My Savior has commanded me to witness. Are you telling me I can't practice my religion? If so, that's religious persecution. Don't tell me that I can't practice my religion." I said, "By the way, I'm not trying to proselytize you; the Jews proselytized me. I worship a Jewish Messiah. He is the One that came into the world. He is the Messiah, Israel's Messiah, that I love and worship." So God chose the Jew.

Now let's continue to read here. And we're talking about God's sovereign choices. Notice how God chose the Jew. Beginning now in Romans 9 verse 7, "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but, in Isaac Thy seed shall be called." Now what he is saying is that not all the children of Abraham were chosen, because Abraham had Ishmael and he had Isaac. And what he is saying is that God sovereignly chose Isaac. God did not choose Ishmael.

And then go on. God did not choose all the sons of Isaac, but Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. And God chose Jacob. Look, if you will, as we continue to read in this passage of Scripture where, look in Romans 9 verses 10 through 13, "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 Him that calleth; It was said unto her, 'The elder shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated.'" So God didn't choose all of the sons of Abraham. He chose one son, Isaac. God didn't choose all the sons of Isaac. He chose one son; that was Jacob.

Now let's just pause right here because some people are going to get blown out of the water right here. When God says in Romans 9 verse 11, "Before these children were born, having done neither good nor evil," God chose one of them. And God says, "Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated." Now somebody says, "Now, wait a minute, pastor, you're telling me these little babies, before they were born, God said, 'I love this one, and I hate that one?'" And that God chose one to go to Heaven and one to go to Hell?" No, that isn't what it says. Now listen very carefully and pay attention. What we're talking about here is national and not personal. God, when He's talking about Jacob and Esau, God is not talking about one boy or another boy. God is talking about two whole nations. Put this in the margin of your Bible, Genesis chapter 25 and verse 23, "And the Lord said unto her, 'Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one



people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.” That is, those descendants of Esau are going to be one nation that will serve another nation, the descendants of Jacob, which is the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. Now He’s not talking about just two little babies. God here is talking not personal, but national.

And God here is not talking about salvation. God is talking about service. Look if you will in Romans 9 verse 12, “It was said unto her, ‘The elder shall serve the younger.’” Doesn’t say anything about saved or lost; one going to Heaven and one going to Hell. It is national, not personal. It is service, not salvation.

Well, you say, “But what about that where it says that, ‘He hates one and loves the other.’” Well, I want you to pay attention to that also. Look in Romans 9 verse 13, “Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.” Now, folks, the way we use the word hate today is completely different from the way they used the word hate in Bible times. What He is saying is, “I have preferred one, not that I abhor the other.”

Now listen very carefully. I want to give you a Scripture. I want you to jot it down. In Luke chapter 14 and verse 26 Jesus is talking about our being disciples of Himself, and He says this, “If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.” Now come up close, I want to ask you a question. Do you think that Jesus is teaching us to despise our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters? Do you think that Jesus is telling us to despise our little children in order to be His disciples? No! Listen. I love Joyce more than I could ever love Joyce because I love Jesus. I mean, I love Joyce with a love I could not love her with if I did not love Jesus. The word hate, as it is used in the Bible, simply means preference. God had a preference, God had a sovereign choice for this man Jacob, and He did not have a preference for Esau. It doesn’t mean that He despised Esau. He doesn’t mean that it says, “Esau! I created you to go to Hell! I hate you!” No, that’s not what it’s meaning at all.

Friend, number one; this is national, not personal. Number two; it deals with service, not salvation. Number three; it deals with preference, not despise. Now, if you don’t understand that, you’re going to get all mixed up and all confused. But God is a sovereign God, and God loves lost sinners. You’ve just read there in Romans chapter 5 verse 8, “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God loves sinners. Don’t get the idea that Esau was predestined for Hell or anybody else is predestined for Hell. God chooses individuals. God has preferences for nations. And it deals in the realm of service.

I have two brothers. God called me to preach. God did not call, so far as I know, either one of my two brothers to preach. God said, “I want Adrian to preach.” Now that’s God’s choice. God chose me. I didn’t choose to preach. I’d been called to preach. Does that mean because God called me to preach that God’s going to send my two brothers to Hell? No! He called me into His service. He said, “You’ve not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit.” John 15 verse 16.

What we’re talking about here, friend, I want to tell you, is national, not personal. It is service, not salvation. It is preference, not despise. Now, if you don’t understand that, you’re going to get mixed



up. And so, what we're talking about here is God's sovereign choices. Got it? All right, let's move to the second thing.

The second thing I want you to see is not only God's sovereign choices, but I want you to see God's spotless character. Begin reading now in Romans 9 verse 14 on through verse 23, "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.' So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the Scriptures saith unto Pharaoh, 'Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, that My name might be declared throughout all the Earth.' Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. Wilt thou say then unto me, 'Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?' But nay, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto Him that formed it, 'Why hast Thou made me thus?' Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? 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; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath afore prepared unto glory."

Well, let's just pause right there and talk about God's character. Somebody might not like God's choices in any realm. And the Jews might say, "What right does God have to break His promises to us? We're the chosen nation, as one preacher said, "Your arms are too short to box with God." "Who are you that replies to God?" Now listen to me, folks. God is sovereign. God does as He pleases. God answers to no one. Respect this, that God is God! And also remember this, that God is not fair; God is just. If you think that God has to be fair, you're thinking that God owes you something. And if you don't get it, you're all upset if you don't get it. And if somebody else gets it before you do, or gets more than you do, then you're upset because you think that God owes you something. God doesn't owe us anything but judgment. God is not fair; God is just. And when you realize that God is just, then mercy is going to mean something to you.

Now what is He saying here? He's saying, "Listen, I am free to pardon, and I am free to punish. I am God, and I will pardon whom I will pardon. And I will punish whom I will punish." Now does that mean that God does that arbitrarily? No! God does as He pleases, but He always pleases to do right. There is no unrighteousness with God.

Now, God pardons according to His sovereign will. Look again, if you will, in this passage of Scripture, Romans 9 verses 15 and 16, "For He saith unto Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.'" Now what is He saying here? Does that mean that God says, "I'm not going to have mercy if you ask for mercy?" No! Does that mean that if you ask me for mercy, I'll not give you mercy? No, not at all. God is just simply saying that, "If you're saved, you're going to be saved by grace. It's not because you will to have, that I should be merciful to you. It's because I will it." It's not to, "Him that willeth, but of God that has mercy." You see, listen. God's mercy is not rooted in man's merit. Pay attention. God's mercy is found in God



because God is a merciful God. Put these verses down, Titus chapter 3 and verse 5, "It is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." Now that's what He's talking about here. Put this verse down, Psalm 32 verse 10, "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but to him that trusteth the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." If you trust God, He'll give you mercy. Now look at this one, Proverbs 28 verse 13, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Let me tell you something. If you want mercy, you can have it. You say, "Well, it's according to God who wills to show mercy." That's right! And God wills to show you mercy. God is a merciful God.

Now listen to me. Pardon is according to God's sovereign will. God has decided that He will show us mercy when we don't deserve it. It doesn't root in our merit, but in His mercy. But punishment is according to man's stubborn wickedness. Begin to read now in Romans 9 verse 17 and 18, "For the Scripture saith also unto Pharaoh," now you know who Pharaoh was. He was the vile, wicked king of Egypt. And God now is speaking to Pharaoh. "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the Earth. Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth." Now people have raced their theological motors on this. They say, "Oh, God made Pharaoh, raised him up so He could knock him down. God created him so He could send him to Hell." No, that's not what this says at all.

Now listen, when the Bible says that, "God raised up Pharaoh," that doesn't mean that God grew him from a child. That's not what the language means. It means that God put him on the highest throne. God gave him place and power and prestige that He might bring him down. God set him up in order to bring him down. God raised him up to the very highest throne. Now, now what He's talking about is that He's going to be glorified by His judgment on this man. Put in your margin Exodus 9 verse 16, and here's what God says to Pharaoh, "And in very deed and for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee My power; that My name may be declared throughout all the earth." And by the way, Cecil B. DeMille made a movie of this called, "The Ten Commandments," God judging Pharaoh, and it's been seen all over the world. Many people who haven't read the book have seen the movie.

Now God did not override Pharaoh's will. Eighteen times in this passage in Exodus we find this phrase, "And Pharaoh hardened his heart," or "Pharaoh's heart was hardened." Eighteen times. About half of those times, Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Now you have to understand this, that Pharaoh first hardened his own heart before God hardened his heart. Put these verses down, for example, Exodus 8 verse 15, "But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them." Or Exodus chapter 8 and verse 32, "And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go."

Now what happened is this; that Pharaoh was already lost. God didn't make him lost. Pharaoh was vile, wicked, cruel. He was a despot. He had murdered thousands of people. He had a heart set against God. All the judgments of God upon Pharaoh, all they did was to crystallize Pharaoh in his sin. Listen, God did not harden his heart when he was young and tender, when he was a child.



God witnessed to him. God warned him. God sent a messenger to him. God sent the plagues, but Pharaoh himself hardened his own heart. God did not create Pharaoh and say, "I have chosen you, that I'm going to send you to Hell." No! God said, "I'm going to make an example out of you. I am going to show My power in you. You harden your own heart. Now, as a reciprocal action, I'm going to send plagues that will even further harden your heart, will crystallize you in sin, and I'm going to use you as an example of My punishment."

Now listen to me, folks, God is in the business of getting glory to Himself. God is in the business of getting glory to Himself. God's love will be magnified in Heaven, and God's justice is going to be manifest in Hell. God said, "I raised you up, that I might show My power in you." But the only reason that God hardened Pharaoh's heart is that Pharaoh had already hardened his own heart.

Now, God has every right to punish sin. And God says in Romans 9:15, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and whom I will, I will harden." Of course He does, because He is the God who will give to us. If we want mercy, God will give us mercy. If we hardened our hearts, God will further harden our hearts.

Now let's give another illustration here. Begin in Romans 9 verse 19 through verse 23, and this is one that has caused many people to have difficulty. "Thou wilt say then unto me, 'Why doth He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will?'" If God is sovereign, we're just victims. There's nothing we can do about it. Notice verse 20, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto Him that formed it, 'Why hast Thou made me thus?' Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? 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? And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath afore prepared unto glory."

Now here's the idea; some people have the idea that God says, "I'm going to make two vessels. I'm going to make a vessel and send that vessel to Heaven. I'm going to make another vessel and send it to Hell. People are just like clay, weak, helpless, insensible clay, and I'm the Potter. So I'm just take a lump of clay and I'm going to make a vessel." God made Adrian for Heaven. God made you for Hell. Nothing you can do about it. Is that the kind of a God that is displayed in the Bible or in the book of Romans? Listen carefully, folks, and understand what the apostle Paul is saying here. God did not ordain some for Hell. What potter, what potter would ever make a vessel just so he could destroy it? Can you imagine a potter in a potter's shop making a bunch of vessels and setting them on a shelf, and then making a bunch of other vessels and setting them on a shelf, and then taking a stick and just breaking them all to pieces? I mean, that he set out to do that? Of course not! God did not ordain some people to Hell. No. Listen. The reason that some vessels were destroyed is they did not realize the purpose of the Potter.

Look in verse 20, if you will, of this same chapter, Romans 9, "Shall the thing formed say unto Him that formed it, 'Why hast Thou made me thus?'" It doesn't say the thing created, but the thing formed. Here God is shaping, and some will not take the shaping. Look in Romans 9 verse 22, "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering



the vessels of wrath." God, who was longsuffering; God is forming, working, but these vessels of wrath are not yielding to the hands of the Potter. Put down this verse, Second Peter chapter 3 verse 9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering," same word that's used over here in Romans 9, "is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." But you say, "Pastor, it says here that they were fitted for destruction." Look at this verse again, and he talks about some vessels of wrath fitted to destruction in verse 22.

Let me tell you what W. E. Vine in his Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Word says, and listen carefully to this, "The middle voice." I know you've been wanting to hear something about the middle voice. But now listen carefully, "The middle voice indicates that the vessels of wrath fitted themselves for destruction. It is not the Potter who fits them for destruction. They fitted themselves for destruction. The Potter was longsuffering. He did not create them; He formed them. But they were fitted; that is, they made themselves fit for destruction."

God does not create people in order to damn them! God does not create people in order to destroy them! God is a God of love. Now, if you think that God wants some to go to Hell, just listen to this Scripture, First Timothy 2 verse 4. It speaks of God, "Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Now, you can harden your heart. The Bible warns against people being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Put this verse down, Hebrews chapter 3 verse 15, "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart." I'm telling you, if you harden your heart against God, you will crystallize in your sin and God's judgment upon you will harden your heart even more. But God hardened Pharaoh's heart after Pharaoh first hardened his own heart against the Lord. And God destroyed Pharaoh. Yes, He did. Because in the longsuffering of God and the warnings that God sent to Pharaoh, Pharaoh would not accept those warnings. And, yes, indeed, he was made an example of God's wrath. And remember this; God is going to get glory with those in Heaven, and God is going to get glory by judgment in those who go to Hell.

Now here's the third thing I want you to see today; remember God's sovereign choices; God is sovereign. God can choose whomever He wants for His service. God chose Abraham, and God chose Isaac over Ishmael, and God chose Jacob over Esau. God chose these for service, not salvation. That's not what He's talking about. And He's not talking about individuals, per se. He's talking about nations. God is moving. There's God's sovereign choices. Friend, the second thing I want you to see is God's spotless character. You'll never point a finger at God and say, "God is unrighteous." No, God is not unrighteous. God shows, "Mercy upon whom He will show mercy." Romans 9:15. To whom will God show mercy? To those who repent of their sin, to those who want mercy. If you want mercy, you can have it. And "God gives judgment to those to whom He will give judgment, those who refuse Him." God is a sovereign God. And some people say, "Well, God is too good to punish sin." No, God is too good not to punish sin. God is righteous.

Now here's the third and the final thing I want you to see. Not only God's sovereign choices, and not only God's spotless character, but I want you to see God's steadfast concern. What is God's steadfast concern? Well, notice in Romans 9 verses 23 to 26. What is God all about? "And that He



might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy," that is, the people who are saved, "which He hath afore prepared unto glory." That's what He's doing. He's preparing us for glory. He's, all things are working together for good to make us like the Lord Jesus. "Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only." He's trying to say to the Jews, "Look, you've not cornered the market on this thing," "But also of the Gentiles? As He saith also in Osee," that is, in Hosea, "I will call them My people, which were not My people," He's talking about us, Gentiles, "and on her beloved, which was not beloved." God is saying, "I'm just going to take a bunch of folks that are not part of the covenant promises of Israel, and I'm going to include them in." "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.'" He's talking about us, folks. What He's saying is, "I am in the purpose of taking both Jews and Gentiles and making them children of God." This is God's steadfast purpose. The highest privilege on Earth is to be a son, a daughter of God.

Now I'm going to give you a lot of Scriptures. You write them down very carefully. I'm just going to show you that God wants all people saved, that God didn't create anybody to go to Hell. The first one you've known since you were a child; John 3:16 and 17. Listen to it, "For God so loved the elect." Something wrong there, isn't it? "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son," "that if a certain number would believe on Him." No, "That if whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."

Put this Scripture down, Isaiah 53 verse 6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him," on Jesus, "the iniquity of us all." Jesus died for us all.

Romans 8 verse 32, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" There're some people say Jesus didn't die for everybody. He did! He did!

First Timothy 2:4. It speaks of God, "Who will have all men to be saved."

First John 4 verse 14, "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."

First John 2 verses 1 and 2, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the propitiation," that is, the satisfaction, "for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." That's the reason I'm glad that I'm a Gospel preacher. Friend, that's the reason I can say to anybody, any place, anywhere, "If you want mercy, you can have mercy. If you want salvation, you



can have salvation. If you want to be saved, I'm telling you, on the authority of the Word of God, that you can be saved."

And God closes the blessed book, the book of the Revelation in chapter 22 verse 17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come. And let him that heareth say, 'Come.' And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.'" Now, friend, whosoever will!

"Whosoever heareth," shout, shout the sound! Spread the blessed tidings all the world around; Tell the joyful news wherever man be found, "Whosoever will may come." And whosoever cometh need not delay. Now the door is open; enter while you may; Jesus is the true, the only Living Way, "Whosoever will may come." "Whosoever will," the promise is secure, "Whosoever will" forever must endure; "Whosoever will," 'tis life forevermore, "Whosoever will may come." "Whosoever will, whosoever will!" Send the proclamation over vale and hill; 'Tis a loving Father calls the wanderer home, "Whosoever will may come."

It is a libel to the character of God, that God would say to a little baby, never ever having been born, done good nor evil, "You! Are going to Hell, and there's nothing you can do about it." I don't believe that for one skinny minute. I preach a Gospel of, "Whosoever will."

God is a sovereign God, and there's God's sovereign choice. There's God's spotless character. But, friend, there is God's steadfast concern. He wants people saved. And He wants you saved. And if you want to be saved, I'm telling you, He will save you today, and He'll keep you and present you spotless before His throne.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Would you begin to pray for those who may not know Jesus? How many would say today, "Pastor Rogers, I've given my heart to Jesus. And by His grace, and I thank Him for it, but by His grace I know that I'm saved. And God's Spirit bears witness with mine that I'm a child of God. And I have a Bible reason for believing it also."

Now, if you did not have that full assurance, I want to pray for you right now. Father, I pray, I pray that You'll just open hearts. And I pray, God, that many today will say an everlasting yes to Jesus Christ. Thank You, Lord.

And, friend, right now I want to invite you to be one of those, "Whosoever wills." I want to invite you right now to receive Jesus. Would you pray a prayer like this, "Dear God, I need You. My sin deserves judgment, but I want mercy. And Lord, You said, 'You show will mercy upon whom You will show mercy.' Show it to me, Lord. Come into my heart. Forgive me. Cleanse me. Save me, Jesus." Pray that and mean it. "Save me, Lord Jesus. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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