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OUR SOVEREIGN GOD Decatur, IL

INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **Romans 9:16-24**.

So then it *does* not *depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. **17** For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." **18** So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. **19** You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" **20** On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? **21** Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? **22** What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? **23** And *He did so* in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, **24** *even* us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

B. Romans, chapter 9 is difficult to understand because we are forced to try and reconcile the sovereignty of God with the free choice of man.

C. God is sovereign; that is, He is above or superior to all others in power, rank and authority.

D. The practical application is that we must learn to trust God so than we understand the God of our salvation.

I. **SALVATION IS NOT IN OUR FLESHLY DESCENT.**

A. Scripture text: Rom. 9:1-9.

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, **2** that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. **3** For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, **4** who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises, **5** whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. **6** But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; **7** neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." **8** That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. **9** For this is a word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON."

B. Paul begins by discussing that God had rejected Israel and they are no longer His chosen people. The Jews were putting their trust in their relationship with God in the fact that they were children of Abraham.

C. But the apostle teaches them more perfectly that the descendants are named through Isaac and not Abraham. Ishmael was a child of Abraham, but not according to the promise.

D. Our practical application:

1. May we never put our trust in our physical families as a means of salvation.
2. Some people are used to Mom and Dad "bailing them out of trouble" and have developed that attitude about God.
3. We must have our own faith and commitment to God to be acceptable to Him (Rom. 9:8).

That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

E. Salvation then and now is in God's choice not through fleshly descent.

II. **SALVATION IS NOT BY WORKS.**

A. Scripture text: Rom. 9:10-13.

And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac; **11** for though *the twins* were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to *His* choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, **12** it was said to her,

"THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." **13** Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

B. In the above case, the Jews might argue that Ishmael was not chosen because of his evil works. So, Paul must argue that salvation is not based on our works.

C. The apostle can make such an argument by looking at the case of Jacob and Esau. God made His sovereign choice while they were still in Rebekah's womb and had nothing good or bad (Gen. 25:23).
And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples shall be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger."

D. Our practical application:

1. Salvation is not according to works but according to God's grace (Eph. 2:8-9).
For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; **9** not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

2. Even if we could do everything that is commanded and our works were complete, we would be unworthy servants (Lk. 17:10).
"So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done *only* that which we ought to have done.'"

3. Let us always realize that JC is the just and the justifier (Rom. 3:24,26).
(Rom 3:24) being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
(Rom 3:26) for the demonstration, *I say,* of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

III. SALVATION IS NOT ON OUR OWN TERMS.

A. Scripture text: Rom. 9:16,18,20-24.
(Rom 9:16) So then it *does* not *depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.
(Rom 9:18) So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.
(Rom 9:20-24) On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? **21** Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? **22** What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? **23** And *He did so* in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, **24** *even* us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

B. It does not depend on the man who wills (sets his own standard) or the man who runs (has great works) but on God, who chooses and gives grace.

C. God gives mercy to whom He desires through one plan, and God hardens those whom He desires by that same plan. When man obeys God, God extends mercy, and those who disobey God He refuses mercy.

D. Is this fair? Is God being unreasonable? Before you answer 'yes' look again at 9:20-21.
On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? **21** Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?
What right do we have to question God?

E. Our practical application:

1. Life is not fair (Peter needed to learn this lesson), see Jn. 21:18-23.

2. Bad things are going to happen to good people and good things are going to happen to bad people.

3. Instead of trying to comprehend God, let's learn to trust Him (Rom. 9:22-24; Jn. 9:1-4).
(Jn 9:1-4) And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. **2** And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" **3** Jesus answered, *"It was* neither *that* this man sinned, nor his parents; but *it was* in order that the works of God might be displayed in him. **4** "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.
(Rom 9:22-24) What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? **23** And *He did so* in order that He

might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, **24** *even* us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

F. If God can take care of those who cannot take care of themselves, just think of what He can do for you!!! (Eph. 3:20-21).

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, **21** to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

IV. SALVATION IS BY FAITH.

A. Scripture text: Rom. 9:30-32a.

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

B. Paul said the following:
   1. Salvation is not by right of physical descent.
   2. Salvation is not by means of our works.
   3. God is not unfair by setting His own standards, but SALVATION IS BY TRUST AND FAITH.

C. The problem was that the Jews pursued righteousness by works, and not by faith.

D. We are to trust in God, His system, His word, and His Son for salvation.

E. Stop asking 'why,' and begin asking 'how.'

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

A. It is by grace we are saved through faith. If your faith will motivate you to trust God, do so by becoming a Xian tonight.

B. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.