

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Romans 9:19-33**.
- B. This morning I began a series of lesson concerning the sovereignty of God. Topics were:
 - 1. Accept God for who is He--sovereign Lord and Creator of all.
 - 2. Accept His blessings both material and spiritual.
 - 3. Accept God's faithfulness in His bringing about salvation in X.
 - 4. Accept God's righteousness--grace and mercy found in X, by being obedient.
- C. Tonight, we discuss two more attributes of our sovereign Father: God is Just and God is Gracious.

I. GOD'S JUSTICE.

- A. As we left off in this morning's lesson we pondered the question of Rom. 9:18. This fact of God's sovereignty seems to create a new problem. "If God is sovereign, then who can resist Him?" And if one does resist Him, what right has God to condemn him?" How does the justice of God work w/His sovereignty in human history?
- B. The relationship of God's sovereignty and human responsibility is a mystery. God had mercy on Moses but condemned Pharaoh. Is this just? He elected Israel and rejected the other nations. Is this just? Paul gives three answers to this charge.
- C. **Who are we to argue with God?**
 - 1. This is a logical argument (Rom. 9:19-21).
You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" 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? 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?
 - 2. God is the Potter and we are the clay. God is wiser than we are and we are foolish to question His will or to resist it (1Cor. 1:19-20).
For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE." Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?
 - 3. It is God who determines whether a man will be a Moses or a Pharaoh. Neither Moses nor Pharaoh nor anyone else, could choose his parents, his genetic structure, or his time and place of birth. We have to believe that these matters are in the hands of God.
 - 4. Paul developed this thought because his theme is divine sovereignty, not human responsibility.
- D. **God has His purposes.**
 - 1. This is an argument of intent. "Man rules, God over-rules" (Rom. 9:22-24).
What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 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, even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.
 - 2. The fact that God was long-suffering indicates that He gave Pharaoh opportunities to be saved (2Pet. 3:9). The word *fitted* in 9:22 does not suggested that God made Pharaoh a "vessel of wrath." The verb is in the middle voice, making it a reflexive action verb. So it should read: "*fitted himself* for destruction."
 - 3. God prepares men for glory (9:23), but sinners prepare themselves for judgment.
- E. **All of this was prophesied.**
 - 1. This is an argument from Scripture (see Rom. 9:25-29).
 - 2. Paul quotes from Hosea 2:23, a statement declaring that God would turn from the Jews and call the Gentiles (Rom. 9:25).
As He says also in Hosea,

“I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, ‘MY PEOPLE,’
AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, ‘BELOVED.’”

3. He then cited Hosea 1:10 to prove that this new people being called would be God’s people and “children of the living God” (Rom. 9:26).

“AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, ‘YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,’
THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD.”

4. The apostle then quoted from Isa. 10:22-23, to show that only a remnant of Israel would be saved, while the greater part of the nation would suffer judgment. If God had not willed that the remnant of Israel would be saved, then the nation would have become like that of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Rom. 9:27-29).

And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD UPON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY.”

And just as Isaiah foretold,

“EXCEPT THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY,
WE WOULD HAVE BECOME AS SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH.”

5. Now, what does all of this prove?

God is not unjust, He would be unjust, however, if He did not keep His own word. God was not unjust in saving some and judging others, because he was only fulfilling the OT prophecies given centuries ago.

II. GOD’S GRACE.

- A. Paul now moves from divine sovereignty to human responsibility. Our faithful, righteous, and just God makes salvation our choice. By His sovereignty there is only one choice to make, but it is up to us to make that choice (Rom. 9:30-33).

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

“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE,
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”

- B. Here is the paradox:

the Jews sought for righteousness but did not find it,
while the Gentiles, who were not searching for it, found it!

- C. The reason for this is that Israel tried to be saved by their works and not by faith. They pursued a “Law righteousness” and not a “faith righteousness.”
- D. Instead of using all of their religious privileges (9:1-5) to lead them to X, they used them as a substitute for X. Israel’s rejection then became the Gentiles salvation.
- E. God’s sovereign choice is salvation in X. The Jews made it a stumbling block and a rock of offense, rather than the cornerstone of their faith.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Our topic in this lesson and the ones to follow is the sovereignty of God.
Some conclusions in our lesson today:

1. God is just in His dealings with all people.
2. As humans, are not in a position to argue with God.
3. God is always true to His word--if He was not he would not be sovereign.
4. Salvation is by grace that is found in X. There is no other choice, but we must make a choice.

- B. Again, there are always some difficulties in understanding how the divine sovereignty of God works with human responsibility. But “never try to reconcile friends!”

- C. Accept the sovereignty of God by being obedient to His son (Rom. 8:29).
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.