Paul's Responses To Jewish Objections To The Gospel

- ◆ Does Romans 9 prove unconditional individual election to salvation?
- ◆ Does Romans 9 teach that God directly makes men wicked and hardens them?
- Does Romans 9 teach that man is totally passive in his salvation or condemnation?

Romans

Romans 9



Answering three Jewish objections to the gospel as taught by Paul.

All three centered on the rejection of unbelieving Jews and God extending mercy equally to the believing Gentiles.

Romans 9

"On a literary level Romans 9-11 completes the exposition of the theme of the epistle (1.16-17), a summary statement of the gospel, by explaining the priority of the Jew and by defending the gospel Paul has presented at length against its most compelling objection ~ how the Christian gospel can be the fulfillment of Judaism/the Old Testament and its promises to Israel when the vast majority of Jews had rejected Christ and were therefore excluded from God's salvation and promises to them" (p. 31).

Brian Abasciano, Ph.D - Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9.1-9: An Intertextual And Theological Exegesis (The Library of New Testament Studies)

Paul's Expression of Sympathy & Sorrow For The Jews- (1-5)

Romans 9:1-5 (NKJV)

¹I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, ² that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, ⁴ who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service *of God*, and the promises; ⁵ of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen.

God's election of physical Israel was for the purpose of fulfilling the promise of Christ? (Rom. 1:2,3; 3:1; 11:28)

The First of Three Jewish Objections To The Gospel

If the Gospel is true . . .

God Has Been
Unfaithful To His
Promises To Us!

Romans 9:6 (NKJV)

⁶ But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel,

Answer:

God's Word Did Not Fail, His Purpose Was Fulfilled Through Israel in Christ –

(Romans 9:6-13)

Objection #1 Flesh = Promise

Romans 9:6-9 (NKJV)

⁶ But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, ⁷ nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." ⁸ That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. ⁹ For this *is* the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son."

- 1) The criteria for being benefactors of the promise is not based on fleshly descent. (cf. John 8:33,39)
- 2) The benefactors of the Abrahamic promise are those who are of faith, i.e. who believe in the Messiah (Gal. 3:7-29)

Romans 9:10-13 (NKJV)

¹⁰ And not only *this*, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, *even* by our father Isaac ¹¹ (for *the children* not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), ¹² it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." ¹³ As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

1) The choice of God in accordance with His divine purpose, (to bless all nations through the seed of Abraham), would stand through the lineage of Jacob, not Esau.

Romans 9:11

(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),

- ★ The reason God chose Israel as a nation was to fulfill His Messianic promise — (The belief or unbelief of Israel would not alter the purpose of God to offer mercy to all nations through Christ) - Romans 3:3
- ★ God's choice to use ethnic Israel to fulfill His purpose WAS NOT Dependent upon their goodness, evil, or works -Cf.; 9:16; 11:28

Romans 9:11

(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),

"The Purpose Of God According To His Choice WILL STAND" - Rom. 9:11

"The Word of Promise" – Rom. 9:9

Not based upon their goodness

Not based upon their works

Not based upon their EVIL

Romans 9:11

(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),

"The Purpose Of God According To His Choice WILL STAND" - Rom. 9:11

"The Word of Promise" – Rom. 9:9

Dependent Upon The Faithfulness Of God

God's Word Did Not Fail, His Purpose Was Fulfilled Through Israel - (6-13) Individual or National?

Romans 9:11-13
(NKJV)

12 it was said to her,
"The older shall
serve the younger."

13 As it is written,
"Jacob I have
loved, but Esau I

have hated."

Genesis 25:23 (NKJV)

²³ And the LORD said to her: "Two nations *are* in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; *One* people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."

God's Word Did Not Fail, His Purpose Was Fulfilled Through Israel - (6-13) Individual or National?

Romans 9:11-13 (NKJV)

¹² it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger."

¹³ As it is written,

"Jacob I have
loved, but Esau I
have hated."

Genesis 33:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴ But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. ⁵ And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who *are* these with you?" So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."

Individual or National?

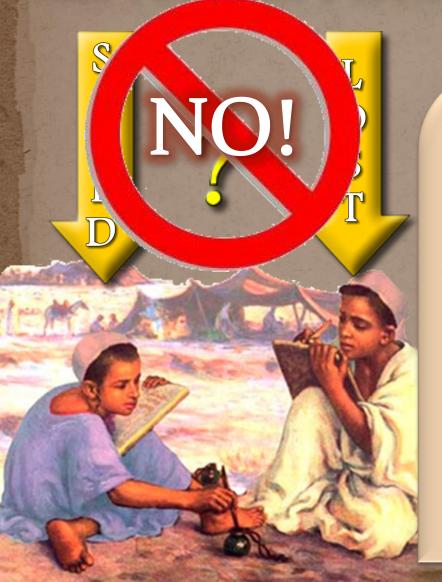
Romans 9:11-13 (NKJV)

12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger."

¹³ As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

Malachi 1:2-3 (NKJV)

² "I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' *Was* not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved; ³ But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness." (cf. 4)



- ★ God preserved the Messianic lineage through which Christ came.
- ★ The ones NOT chosen "Ishmael & Esau" are NOT thereby condemned to hell; they are simply excluded from having a part in the working out of God's redemptive plan.

Abraham

ISHM.

Isaac

ESAU

Jacob Genesis 25:23

Corporate Election

National Israel

Deuteronomy 7:6,7 Deuteronomy 26:18 Promise

Fulfilled In Christ (Eph 1)



The Second of Three Jewish 16 Objections To The Gospel

If the Gospel is true . . .

God Is Unrighteous In His Dealings With Us!

Romans 9:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!

Answer:

God Is Just In **Extending** Mercy To All Men Through The Gospel -

(Romans 9:14-18)

Objection #2
God is unjust!

Romans 9:14-18 (NKJV)

¹⁴ What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." ¹⁶ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." ¹⁸ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He

1) The Jews were insulted by the truth that believing Gentiles would be included in spiritual Israel whereas unbelieving Jews would be excluded.

God Is Just In Extending Mercy To All Men Through The Gospel - (14-18)

"That Is Not Right"

- → We are God's chosen people!
- → God gave His Law to us!
- → We are worshippers of God!
- ★ We are the ones to whom God gave His promises!
- ★ We Have Sought God Through The Law!



God Is Just In Extending Mercy To All Men Through The Gospel - (14-18)

Romans 9:14-18 (NKJV)

¹⁴ What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." ¹⁶ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." ¹⁸ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

1) This passage is expressing God's willingness and right to extend His mercy to all men that they may seek Him by faith, [After all, God had historically extended mercy to Israel].

(Ex. 33:4-23; Rom. 10:20,21)

P R O M I S

God Is Just In Extending Mercy To All Men Through The Gospel - (14-18)

God Has Been Faithful To His Promise

What If?

Romans 3:3 (NKJV)

³ For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?

Israel's unfaithfulness did not prevent God from fulfilling His promise to Abraham

Of God's Mercy

Romans 9:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

Israel could not set the criteria for the expression of God's mercy

God Is Faithful

Romans 11:28-29 (NKJV)

²⁸ Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.

²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

God Is Just In Extending Mercy To All Men Through The Gospel - (14-18)

Romans 9:14-18 (NKJV)

¹⁴ What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." ¹⁶ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." ¹⁸ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

Paul uses Pharaoh as an illustration of the futility of resisting God's purpose to extend mercy.

(Exodus 9:15-16)

God Is Just In Extending Mercy To All' Men Through The Gospel - (14-18)



Have I raised thee up.

"Margin, in Exodus 9:16, "made thee stand," i.e. sustained thee . . . That is, I have kept thee from death; I have preserved thee from ruin; I have ministered strength to thee, so that thy full character has been developed. It does not mean that God had infused into his mind any positive evil, or that by any direct influence he had excited any evil feelings, but that he had kept him in circumstances which were fitted to develop his true character."

— Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

(Rom 9:17,18)

God Hardened Pharaoh's heart

[Exodus 10:1] Now the Lord said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him,

Pharaoh Hardened his own heart

[Exodus 9:34] . . . when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants . . .

God Is Just In Extending Mercy To All Men Through The Gospel - (14-18)



- → The Lord confronts Pharaoh through Moses and sent the plagues.
- → Pharaoh responds by refusing Moses' demand.
- → Pharaoh hardened his own heart and rebelled against God.
- → The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, in that He provided the occasion.

God Is Just In Extending Mercy To All²⁵ Men Through The Gospel - (14-18)



Israel

God raised up Rejected God's word **God hardened** through His word & mercy

God's purpose was not thwarted by their rebellion



The Third of Three Jewish Objections To The Gospel

If the Gospel is true . . .

God is NOT fair in His dealings with us!

Romans 9:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ You will say to me then,

"Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"

Answer:

God has the Sovereign Right To Decree The Criteria of Justification -

(Romans 9:19-33)

Objection #3God is not fair

Romans 9:19-21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" ²⁰ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same

- 1) God established us (Israel) as His people through Abraham and through the Law. (6)
- 2) God is unfair if He rejects law-keeping, circumcised Jews who refuse to believe in Jesus Christ. (Rom. 2:17-24; 9:14)
- 3) How could God reject us if through our rejection of the gospel, God's purpose of extending mercy to all men is accomplished!

"That Is Not Fair"

- → We are God's chosen people!
- → God gave His Law to us!
- → We are worshippers of God!
- ★ We are the ones to whom God gave His promises!
- ★ We Have Sought God Through The Law!



If God is using us to extend His mercy to ALL – How can God reject us?

(3:3-8; 11:30-31; Ezekiel 18:20-32)



"That Is Not Fair"

- ★ The Jews accusation against the gospel according to Paul was slander against God.
- → To argue that God's use of unbelievers to accomplish His purposes renders Him responsible for their wickedness is slanderous.
- → The Calvinistic view that God is the "first cause of evil" and interpretation of this passage grants the Jewish argument Paul denies!



Romans 9:19-21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" ²⁰ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

- 1) The unbelieving Jews had no right to demand God to be answerable to them God sets the criteria for justification not them (Rom. 10:1-3)
- 2) The Jews were attempting to obligate God to fulfill their false concepts of His purpose which were contrary to OT scripture.



Isaiah 29:13-16 (NKJV)

¹³ Therefore the LORD said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men, 14 Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden."



Isaiah 29:13-16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD, And their works are in the dark; They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?" ¹⁶ Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; For shall the thing made say of him who made it, "He did not make me"? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?



Jeremiah 18:1-12 (NKJV)

¹The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. ⁴ And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:



Jeremiah 18:1-12 (NKJV)

⁶ "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel! 7 The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, 8 if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. 9 And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it,



Jeremiah 18:1-12 (NKJV)

¹⁰ if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it. ¹¹ "Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good." ' " 12 And they said, "That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart." (cf. Jer. 2:25; Rom. 10:1-3)



- ◆ God has sovereignly chosen what he will do regarding the clay, (sinner), in that he has chosen to respond to the clay, (sinner), according to its repentance or lack of repentance.
- → By quoting the potter/clay metaphor Paul essentially tells the Jews that God will deal with men based on their repentance as he has always said he would deal with them.

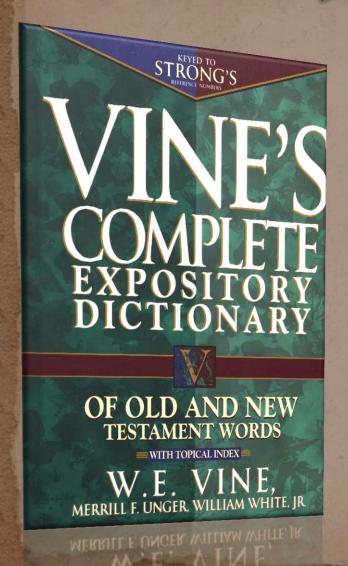
Romans 9:22-24 (NKJV)

- ²² What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?
- Paul exonerates God's treatment of unfaithful ethnic Israel – The fact that God was and is longsuffering with such persons does not suggest that He is either indifferent toward their sins or has accepted them.

Romans 9:22-24 (NKJV)

what if God, wanting to show *His* wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

1) It is an overt expression of God's love and mercy and an indication that the greater glory redounds to God by the salvation of sinners than by their destruction.



Fitted / Prepared

Usage Number: B-3 / Part Of Speech: Verb / Strong's Number: <G2675>
Original Word: καταρτίζω, katartizō
. . . in Rom. 9:22, . . . the Middle Voice signifies that those referred to "fitted" themselves for

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words.

destruction . . .

Romans 9:22-24 (NKJV)

What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ even us whom He called, not of the Jews only,

- 1) The nature of the categories /classes, i.e. "vessels of his mercy" and "vessels of his wrath," is unchanging.
- 2) But, the inclusion of an individual in either category / class is based on that individual's own response to the offer of

grace - Rom 10:1-3; 11:22



Unbelievers

(Jews or Gentiles who had fitted themselves for destruction)

The Distinction Is In The Class Of Persons



Believers

(Jews or Gentiles who had turned to God's mercy by faith)



Unbelievers

(Jews or Gentiles who had fitted themselves for destruction)

Romans 2:4-11; Ezekiel 18:20-32

Believers

(Jews or Gentiles who had turned to God's mercy by faith)



Unbelievers

(Jews or Gentiles who had fitted themselves for destruction)

Romans 11:11-32

Believers

(Jews or Gentiles who had turned to God's mercy by faith)

Romans 9:25-29 (NKJV)

- ²⁵ As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved." ²⁶ "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."
- Paul shows that the Jews chief objections to the Gospel were not in harmony with Old Testament Scripture
 The inclusion of the Gentiles was foretold!

Romans 9:25-29 (NKJV)

²⁷ Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. ²⁸ For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth."

- 1) Paul shows that the Jews chief objections to the Gospel were not in harmony with Old Testament Scripture
 - 2) The inclusion of the Gentiles was foretold!
 - 3) Paul shows from OT scripture that only a remnant of fleshly Israel would be saved

Romans 9:25-29 (NKJV)

²⁹ And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah."

1) Paul demonstrates from the Hebrew scriptures themselves that the Jews had no reason to count on ethnicity and adherence to the Law as THE means of justification before God.

Romans 9:30-33 (NKJV)

³⁰ What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; ³¹ but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. ³² Why? Because *they did* not *seek it* by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. ³³ As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

Romans 10:1-3 (NKJV)

¹Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ²
For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³
For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

Boiling It Down

Why Paul Uses The Illustrations He Does

God chose Jacob over Esau?

God raised up Pharaoh –

The potter clay metaphor - To demonstrate that God did not choose Israel as a nation for salvation, but that He chose Israel as a nation to provide the Savior.

Boiling It Down

Why Paul Uses The Illustrations He Does

God chose Jacob over Esau?

God raised up Pharaoh –

The potter clay metaphor -

To demonstrate that God sets the terms of mercy and not Israel.

Boiling It Down

Why Paul Uses The Illustrations He Does

God chose Jacob over Esau?

God raised up Pharaoh –

The potter clay metaphor - To demonstrate from Old Testament scripture man's need and ability to repent and God's sovereign right to demand that he do so.

Consequences of Calvinistic 52 INTERPRETATION

Which is Lacking: Power or Love?

If Some Men Are
Unconditionally
Elected –



Then God does not will or desire to save the LARGE majority

But - 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4

Consequences of Calvinistic 53 INTERPRETATION

GOD OF CALVINISM

Partial

Unjust

Unfair

Unholy

Responsible -

All Evil / Lost Men

GOD OF THE BIBLE

Impartial

Just

Fair

Holy

Responsible –

Good / Salvation

He Chose Us In Him

Charts by Don McClain

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