

## **Sovereign Mercy**

### **Romans 9:14-18**

#### **Romans 9:14–18 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! <sup>15</sup> 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.”* <sup>16</sup> So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to the 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.”* <sup>18</sup> Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

#### **Introduction**

If there is one doctrine that is undeniably clear in Scripture and yet the most denied doctrine, it would have to be the Doctrine of the Absolute Sovereignty of God.

The Love of God is most universally accepted. The Grace and Mercy of God are the most expounded doctrines on a regular basis in pulpits throughout the

world. These are readily embraced and cherished by millions, and rightly so. God is a God of love and grace and mercy and the Bible is very explicit in its declaration of these truths.

But when you add the word Sovereign to Love or Grace or Mercy...It transforms into this hideous Monster that is despised by the masses and refuse by the majority of the Evangelical church. God can be Sovereign in every area of Universe and life, except in the dispensing of His Love, Grace and Mercy.

Yet it is this Kind of God that the Bible declares.....

He is a Sovereign God over all His creation and He is Sovereign over the dispensing of His attributes.

Just for clarity, let me remind you of a few verses that point out the Sovereignty of God.

First, what do we mean when we say that God is Sovereign....

We mean that God can do what ever He wants to do. He can do what ever pleases Him. The only restraint on the Absolute Sovereign pleasure of God is His own Character. He is governed by Perfect Holiness...and by Perfect righteousness, and within

this sphere of Perfect Holiness He has the power to do what ever He wills.

Psalm 115:3 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> But our God *is* in heaven;  
He does whatever He pleases.

Daniel 4:35 (NKJV)

<sup>35</sup> .....

He does according to His will in the army of  
heaven

And *among* the inhabitants of the earth.

No one can restrain His hand

Or say to Him, “What have You done?”

1 Timothy 6:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> .... *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

### **He is Sovereign in Creation**

Revelation 4:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> “You are worthy, O Lord,  
To receive glory and honor and power;  
For You created all things,  
And by Your will they exist and were created.”

## Proverbs 16:4 (NKJV)

4 The Lord has made all for Himself,  
Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.

*God created all that is according to His will. He did not consult with anyone. He did not get permission from anyone. He did debate or dialogue with anyone.*

*He decided to do it and He did it.*

*He chose to create angels*

*He chose to create the earth and the universe*

*He chose to create the stars and the planets and the solar systems.*

*He chose to create the mountains and the rivers the fish and the animals.*

*He chose to create all bugs and the beast*

*He determined their DNA and the boundaries of their habitation.*

*There is nothing in Creation that exist, that God did not will to exist. HE decided that long before man took his first breath.*

*And God decided to create man with the characteristics and features and abilities he has.*

*And some might ask.... Why did God do it the way he did. I mean, why not create man with 2 heads or 4 arms. Why not create him with wings. It sure would have saved an awful lot of jet fuel.*

*The answer is ultimately that God did it the way He did it because He wanted too. If you want to go a little deeper, it would mean that God did it the way He did it because it is the way that brought the most Glory to God.*

### ***He is Sovereign in Administration***

Job 23:13 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> “But He *is* unique, and who can make Him change?

And *whatever* His soul desires, *that* He does.

Psalms 33:6–11 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,  
And all the host of them by the breath of His  
mouth.

<sup>7</sup> He gathers the waters of the sea together as a  
heap;  
He lays up the deep in storehouses.

- 8 Let all the earth fear the Lord;  
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of  
Him.
- 9 For He spoke, and it was *done*;  
He commanded, and it stood fast.
- 10 The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to  
nothing;  
He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.
- 11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever,  
The plans of His heart to all generations.

#### Psalm 103:19 (NKJV)

- 19 The Lord has established His throne in heaven,  
And His kingdom rules over all.

#### Isaiah 46:9–11 (NKJV)

- 9 Remember the former things of old,  
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;  
*I am* God, and *there is* none like Me,
- 10 Declaring the end from the beginning,  
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet*  
done,  
Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,  
And I will do all My pleasure,’
- 11 Calling a bird of prey from the east,

The man who executes My counsel, from a far country.

Indeed I have spoken *it*;  
I will also bring it to pass.  
I have purposed *it*;  
I will also do it.

Acts 17:28 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> for in Him we live and move and have our being,.....

### ***He is Sovereign in Salvation***

*This is what Romans 9 is about. God's Sovereign election of a people for himself.*

*Paul has already made us aware of the Devine plan in Romans 8*

Romans 8:28–31 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called,

these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

*Paul makes it abundantly clear that God's Sovereign Selective purpose is what secures your salvation in Christ. That it all depends on Him and not you. That what God has promised, what God had predestined, what God has ordained and what God has Covenanted to do...HE will do.*

*But then, Paul brings up the obvious Elephant in the room..... Israel. The disastrous rejection of the Messiah by Israel.*

*His point is,*

*How can we be so secure in the promises of God when it looks like God has not fulfilled or kept his promise to Israel.*

## **Romans 9:1–6 (NKJV)**

### ***Israel's Rejection of Christ***

**9** I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, <sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart.

<sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to



the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service *of God*, and the promises; <sup>5</sup> of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen.

### ***Israel's Rejection and God's Purpose***

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

Being a true child of God is not dependent of Nationality, Heritage, Physical lineage or being part of some religion.

It is solely determined by the Sovereign Elective Purpose of God

*Paul argues that God's plan, purpose and promise to Israel has not failed*

*His Promise will be fulfilled*

*His Covenant will not be broken*

*The Reason it will not be broken and the reason it will be fulfilled is because*

**1. It does not depend on the flesh of men but rather the promise of God**

Romans 9:7–9 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “*In Isaac your seed shall be called.*”<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For this *is* the word of promise: “*At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.*”

**2. It does not depend on the Foresight of God but the Purpose of God.**

Romans 9:10–13 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> And not only *this*, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, *even* by our father Isaac <sup>11</sup> (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), <sup>12</sup> it was said to her, “*The older shall serve the younger.*”<sup>13</sup> As it is written, “*Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.*”

It is these arguments that set up Pauls anticipated question in verse 14.

## Lesson

I. The Antagonist

II. The Answer

### I . The Antagonist

**14** What shall we say then? *Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!*

This question is brought about because of

Romans 9:11–13 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> (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), <sup>12</sup> it was said to her, “*The older shall serve the younger.*” <sup>13</sup> As it is written, “*Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.*”

4 What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!

That's not fair

### **adikia: injustice, unrighteousness**

**Original Word:** ἀδικία, ας, ἡ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Feminine

**Transliteration:** adikia

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ad-ee-kee'-ah)

**Definition:** injustice, unrighteousness

**Usage:** injustice, unrighteousness, hurt.

93 adikía (a feminine noun derived from 1 /A "not" and 1349 /díké, "justice") – properly, the opposite of justice; unrighteousness, as a violation of God's standards (justice) which brings divine disapproval; a count (violation) of God's justice, i.e. what is contrary to His righteous judgments (what He approves).

This is the argument that is brought up all the time regarding Election.

It's not fair... that God would choose one and not the other.

This is one of the ways you know if you are interpreting the passage right.

If you get the same response that Paul anticipated then you are heading in the right direction in your interpretation

### **Let me explain:**

1 If all Paul was saying (as some say) is that God *elected a nation Israel* and not individuals to salvation.... you would not get the response...  
“That’s not fair”

No one cares that God chose Israel and not America or Canada or Germany or Iran.

2. If all Paul had in mind was a sovereign *election to service*.... you would not get the response...  
“That’s not fair”.

No one cares if someone has been selected or elected to serve in a certain capacity. I have never heard anyone say to me, wow, God chose you to be a pastor... that’s not fair, why didn’t he choose me. Or it’s not fair that God chose Paul to be an apostle and not me.

I never hear anyone respond like that. What I do hear is I glad it was them and not me.

3. If all Paul had in mind was God’s *choice of someone based on foreseen faith* or there

willingness to come to Christ ... you would not get the response .... “That’s not fair”

No... we would say, well that’s the person’s fault for not being chosen. After all he did not come to Christ so that God could choose him.

The point is the only reason that makes any sense that you would even attempt to bring an accusation against God of not doing something right is Sovereign Election.

He chose Isaac...not Ishmael

He chose Jacob...not Esau

He loved Jacob and hated Esau.

not based on what they did or would do but solely based on His own pleasure. He did it because He wanted to.

This is what brings the accusation against God. This is what makes the response to Paul’s argument

This is what brings a man to the point that they would be willing to accuse God doing something wrong.

We are content with God exercising His Sovereignty in every area of life and creation except this.

He can decide to create what ever He wills

He can decide to purpose the existence of Evil

He can decide the life span of any human or animal

He can decree to send the devil to Hell forever.

He can decide to send Jesus to die for sinners

But He CANNOT decide who will be saved and who will not

THAT IS NOT FAIR !!!!

<sup>4</sup> What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!

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*This is the strongest reaction Paul can give. May it never become. Absolutely no way. Perish the thought.*

*This response of the possibility of God being unfair or not just or not right betrays a HUGE lack of understanding of who God is and who man is.*

The assumption behind the response is that God is somehow arbitrarily choose some and not others of perfectly innocent people.

It starts from the wrong premise of God's Love instead of God's Holiness and assumes that the ones not being elected are just as worthy as the ones that are.

But this is all wrong.

This is why it is so important to have a Proper Theology of God i.e. Theology Proper to understand Salvation, Man and Election.

To many start with Love and not Holiness and

Too many have a low view of sin and mans deserving of wrath due to sin.

This is what Paul Answers how He does.

Look at the Answer.

**The Antagonist**

**The Answer**

**Romans 9:15 (NKJV)**



<sup>15</sup> For (gar) 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.”*

So Paul says, that you may conclude that there is this is Unfair or not right, or not Just

So He says NO WAY.

Because of the nature of God and the nature of Mercy and Grace.

### **Romans 9:15 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> For (gar) 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.”*

Exodus 33:19 (Brenton LXX En)

<sup>19</sup> And *God* said, I will pass by before thee with my glory, and I will call by my name, the Lord, before thee; and **I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have pity on whom I will have pity.**

This verse is taken from the context of the children of Israel at the base of mount Sinai and giving of the

Law and the children of Israel making a Golden calf and God's reaction in anger and wrath.....

Exodus 32:7–10 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, “Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*. <sup>8</sup> They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’ ” <sup>9</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and indeed it *is* a stiff-necked people! <sup>10</sup> Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.”

Exodus 32:11–14 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: “Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup> Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, ‘He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of

the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. <sup>13</sup> Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.' ” <sup>14</sup> So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.

#### Exodus 32:19–21 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf *and* the dancing. So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. <sup>20</sup> Then he took the calf which they had made, burned *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder; and he scattered *it* on the water and made the children of Israel drink *it*. <sup>21</sup> And Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?”

#### Exodus 32:27–28 (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> And he said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout

the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.’ ”

<sup>28</sup> So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

Exodus 32:30–31 (NKJV)

<sup>30</sup> Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” <sup>31</sup> Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold!

Exodus 32:34–35 (NKJV)

<sup>34</sup> Now therefore, go, lead the people to *the place* of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin.”

<sup>35</sup> So the Lord plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made.

Exodus 33:3 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you *are* a stiff-necked people.”

*So Moses is consumed with the wrath and justice of God against his people. He's wondering if God is going to be gracious to him. He is a sinner too and he knows that he's deserving of the same punishment.*

Exodus 33:13 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation *is* Your people.”

Exodus 33:18–20 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.”

<sup>19</sup> Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” <sup>20</sup> But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.”

*In this passage God's good goodness is displayed and defined as sovereign mercy or sovereign Grace.*

*It is in contrast to what verse 20 says the justice of God that we all deserve.*

*So Paul's point is that it is not unjust of God to choose one and not the other rather it is a display of God's goodness. That any would be chosen. All deserve death and hell and judgment but for God to be merciful and compassionate to any of them is the goodness of God on display.*

**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." <sup>1</sup>*

*A few things that needed to be noted about this text.*

*1. God has the right to show mercy to whomever he desires to show mercy to. All are deserving of the justice of God it should be put to death. Mercy is not something earned it is something divinely sovereignly granted.*

*2. The fact that mercy and compassion are discussed here and not love as being sovereign indicates that when God considers his choice he*

*considers it from a group of people that are fully deserving of his justice and his wrath because of their sin. Or their state and Adam.*

*Mercy is not deserved, that's why it's called Mercy. It is not earned or else it would not be mercy. It would be justice. And if we got what we earned and what we deserve it would not be mercy.*

**So the conclusion to the first rebuttal by Paul is**

**Romans 9:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> So then **it is** not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy

***it is***— —Mercy and compassion from God.

**or**

**Romans 9:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> (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)

*Paul is picking up on the story of Ishmael and Esau*

*Abraham desired that Ishmael receive the Blessing — did not get it*

Genesis 17:18–19 (NKJV)

18 And Abraham said to God, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!”

19 Then God said: “No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.

*Esau, pursued the Blessing— did not get it.*

*So it is not recieved just because you desire it.*

*Or*

*Because you put external effort in it to get it.*

This is not dependent on human volition; the sinner may desperately will that God will have mercy, but he cannot bring it about. Nor is it a matter of “him that runs” (NIV, *man’s ... effort*).



Like Paul, he is saying that it is not what people do that determines God's grace

Paul is saying that all human effort leaves us in condemnation. We cannot clear ourselves of sin. If we are saved it is because God chooses to show mercy on us

Morris, L. (1988). [\*The Epistle to the Romans\*](#) (pp. 359–360). W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

John 1:12–13 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:8 (NKJV)

**8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”**

1 Corinthians 1:26–31 (NKJV)

<sup>26</sup> For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. <sup>27</sup> But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to

put to shame the things which are mighty; <sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, <sup>29</sup> that no flesh should glory in His presence. <sup>30</sup> But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—<sup>31</sup> that, as it is written, “*He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.*”

James 1:18 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

1 Peter 2:9–10 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup> who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Election is one of the most blessed and Praise worthy doctrines in all the Bible. IF not for election, NO ONE would be saved.

Election is what put in motion the Redemptive plan of God.

It is one thing to say that God desires Glory in the Salvation of Sinners.

But those sinners have to be chosen to save

It is one thing to say that God is willing to send His Son to die for sinners

But those sinners have to be selected to die for.

Election takes the plan of God for Glory and the Salvation of Sinners through the cross and puts it in action.

### **3 Reasons Unconditional Sovereign Election is Praise worthy.**

#### **1. No one is beyond the reach of God's Election**

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Romans 9:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> (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),

2 Timothy 1:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

1 Timothy 1:13–16 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. <sup>14</sup> And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. <sup>16</sup> However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as

a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

2. No one will be able to receive Praise for their Salvation- It preserves the Praise and Glory of God

Romans 9:17 (NKJV)

*<sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to the 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.”*

Romans 9:23 (NKJV)

<sup>23</sup> and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,

Ephesians 1:11–12 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, <sup>12</sup> that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> ..., to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 2:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

3. No one will ever be lost that are the Elect of of God,

Romans 8:30 (NKJV)

<sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Romans 8:33 (NKJV)

<sup>33</sup> Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies.

Romans 8:35 (NKJV)

<sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...

Romans 8:39 (NKJV)

39....nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.