

God Has No Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked; The Divine Decree of Reprobation and the Responsibility of the Sinner.

Romans 9:21-24

Romans 9:21–24 (NKJV)

²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

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?

Introduction:

The sovereignty of God in salvation is and has been one of the most hotly debated and divisive doctrines in all the Bible. Its ability to polarize Christians is astonishing to say the least.

And the tendency of genuine believers to go to extremes on this doctrine are notable.

Genuine friendships have broken and entire denominations and churches have split over these doctrines.

There is no doubt that these doctrines are not easily digestible for the faint of heart or the new believers and those who do not have a good grasp of the character of God and the Holiness of God, cannot put their minds around this.

There are some very hard doctrines taught in the Bible, that for me, support the fact that this Book was not written just by men, but inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

No man would write a book condemning himself and leaving himself at the full disposal of God to do with him as He wills.

No man would write a book that does not allow him to do something in works or effort to save himself.

No man would write a book that teaches a God that predestines everything and everyone.

No man would write a book that teaches that millions will be in a place of eternal torment in Hell forever with no possibility of ever getting out.

What men do is,

Make God Love everyone unconditionally
Make God dependent on the actions of men
Make men basically good.
Make God unwilling to send anyone to Hell.

But this book does teach a God who

1. Ordains everything
2. Plans sin and evil in His universe.
3. Desires, purposes and predestines to save sinners by his Mercy and Grace
4. Graciously Loves some and justly hates others
5. Justly, sends millions to Hell.
6. Holds sinners fully responsible for their sins.

One of the most difficult doctrines of Scripture is the the doctrine of Reprobation. And specifically that God would decree before the world began a person for reprobation, or destruction.

Especially when we see the heart of God for the sinner and knowing at the same time that salvation is solely of the Lord, and that no one will come and be saved unless God acts first.

Verses like these

Ezekiel 18:32 (NKJV)

³² For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says the Lord God. “Therefore turn and live!”

Ezekiel 18:23 (NKJV)

²³ Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?” says the Lord God, “*and* not that he should turn from his ways and live?”

Ezekiel 33:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’

Lamentations 3:31–34 (NKJV)

³¹ For the Lord will not cast off forever.

³² Though He causes grief,
Yet He will show compassion
According to the multitude of His mercies.

³³ For He does not afflict willingly,
Nor grieve the children of men.

³⁴ To crush under one’s feet

All the prisoners of the earth,

Hosea 11:7–9 (NKJV)

- ⁷ My people are bent on backsliding from Me.
Though they call to the Most High,
None at all exalt *Him*.
- ⁸ “How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, Israel?
How can I make you like Admah?
How can I set you like Zeboiim?
My heart churns within Me;
My sympathy is stirred.
- ⁹ I will not execute the fierceness of My anger;
I will not again destroy Ephraim.
For I *am* God, and not man,
The Holy One in your midst;
And I will not come with terror.

Micah 7:18–19 (NKJV)

- ¹⁸ Who *is* a God like You,
Pardoning iniquity
And passing over the transgression of the remnant
of His heritage?
He does not retain His anger forever,

Because He delights *in* mercy.
¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us,
 And will subdue our iniquities.
 You will cast all our sins
 Into the depths of the sea.

Luke 19:41–44 (NKJV)

⁴¹ Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

This wept is not the same of John 11:35

dakruó: to weep

Original Word: δακρῦω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: dakruó

Phonetic Spelling: (dak-roo'-o)

Definition: to weep

Usage: I shed tears, weep.

1145 dakrýō (from 1144 /dákry, "tear-drop") – properly, to shed quiet (actual) tears; to weep silently (with tears).

Luke 19 41 is

klaió: to weep

Original Word: κλαίω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: klaió

Phonetic Spelling: (klah'-yo)

Definition: to weep

Usage: I weep, weep for, mourn, lament.

2799 klaiō – properly, weep aloud, expressing uncontainable, audible grief ("audible weeping," WP, 2, 88).

Matthew 2:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ *“A voice was heard in Ramah,
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted,
Because they are no more.”*

Matthew 26:75 (NKJV)

⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, **“Before the rooster crows, you will**

deny Me three times.” So he went out and wept bitterly.

Paul had the same kind of sorrow

Romans 9:1–2 (NKJV)

9 I 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.

God has a heart and love for the sinner to save, and yet will also condemn millions to Hell for sin and rejection of His Son.

Our text we have been studying in Romans 9 has raised some very important and complex questions in relation to the Sovereignty of God in Salvation and Reprobation.

Paul anticipates the 2 questions that always come up if you are rightly understanding these Doctrines.

1. That is not fair, right or just?

Romans 9:14 (NKJV)

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

2. How can God hold the sinner responsible if you cannot resist the ordained will of God?

Romans 9:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?”

The First Question

1. That is not fair, right or just?

Is in response to the arguments of

Romans 9:11–13 (NKJV)

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.*”

This is answered by Paul in verse

Romans 9:15–16 (NKJV)

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.

Paul, says God is not unjust at all!!!

Quite the contrary, HE is MERCIFUL.

Mercy presupposes that the sinner is deserving of punishment, but it is withheld.

Paul is not talking about God Saving some and damning others of a innocent group of people. NO, all are worth of judgment and worthing of being damned to Hell.

In His mercy He saves some.

The Second Question

2. How can God hold the sinner responsible if you cannot resist the ordained will of God?

Romans 9:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ 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.”*¹⁸ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

Romans 9:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?”

This is no doubt the harder of the two objections to answer. And it seems that the answer Paul does give only complicates the matter more.

What does Paul say?

Romans 9:20–23 (NKJV)

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?

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,

If we just rapidly read through this, we might get the impression that Paul is saying is,

God is God and He can do anything He wants with His creation, and so what if he wants to pour out some wrath on people, what does it matter to you..... so sit down and shut up!

For clarity Paul is saying

1. God is the Potter and you are the clay and just like there is an infinite distance in character and quality of the Potter vs the clay so there is with God and sinners.

2. God can do and will do what ever he pleases with the entire lump of human sinners.

3. God does have a desire to show his character, all of it, through wrath and mercy.

But what Paul is not saying is

1. God created people for Hell.

2. God is acting unjustly

3. God is wrong to hold men responsible for their sin.

The key to understanding these verse are 2 fold.

1. You must first have a complete understanding of the character of God

Loving, Forgiving, Merciful, Gracious, Longsuffering. Savior of sinners.

But also

Holy, Just, righteous, vengeful, wrathful
Judge of sinners.

2. The Words that are used indicate that all of this is to be understood from the context of a people justly deserving of judgment.

First notice 2 words in verse 21

Romans 9:20–23 (NKJV)

²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for **honor** and another for **dishonor**?

Now notice the words in verse 22-23 that determine what makes a vessel of honor and a vessel of dishonor.

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,

IF we have a proper and biblically saturated understanding of the Character of God and the sinfulness of man, then we will understand these words

*wrath, destruction and long-suffering
and mercy.*

refer to a lost humanity of sinners, rebels against the laws of God.

___ So the predetermined Preparation of vessels of dishonor for destruction (vessel of wrath) is God reacting justly to a fallen sinful people.

And the preparation of the vessels of Mercy that God will save is God predetermining to save underserving sinners deserving of His wrath.

Where so many go astray on this text is to assume that God is making vessel of wrath of innocent people, or that He is predetermining People to go to Hell who are not deserving of this.

God cannot do anything UNHOLY or UNJUST
v. 14. Is there unrighteousness with God
God Forbid.

Therefore Gods preparing vessels of wrath or vessels of mercy all are with the understanding these are sinful rebels against God.

So does Paul answer the question?

2. How can God hold the sinner responsible if you cannot resist the ordained will of God?

Romans 9:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?”

Yes, I believe he does.

Look at verse 19 again

Lets see if we can answer these 2 questions with v.20-23 in mind.

Answering the second question first.

1. who can resist His will?

answer—- no one at any time. What is decreed is decreed....period.

2. Why does He still find fault.

How can God hold man responsible when God had already determined that he is a vessel of wrath deserving of destruction.

Answer. — — He can find fault because man is deserving of fault and blame and deserves to be vessel of wrath because of his sin and that he is a sinner.

Remember the lump of clay is not a lump of innocent people . They are all sinners.

I believe that one of the other themes running through this text is the assumption that God is not fair if He is not merciful to all. He has somehow done something wrong to only save some. When He has a right to make out of the same lump sinners some for salvation and some for Judgment.

I don't find this text hard to understand.... The one that is more mysterious to me is Romans 5:12—

Romans 5:12 (NKJV)

¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Romans 5:18–19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation,

¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,.....

The hard text is not Romans 9 for me. The hard text is Romans 5.

The Federal Headship of Adam, In Adam we are all condemned and born as sinners. He made the choice for us.

The only solution I have for this and help I find is that Adam was our perfect representative. We would not have been and could not have been any better or made a better decision. Therefore we are all condemnable in our Head.....Adam.

The Divine Decree of Reprobation is **not unjust** but **rather Just, True and Righteous altogether**. It is the Natural and Righteous response of a Holy God to a fallen Humanity

If God had decreed to send all of Fallen sinners to Hell, He would not have done anything unfair or unjust.

And the The Responsibility of the Sinner is based in the clear teaching of mans culpability and guilt in Adam and his fleshing out of the nature of fallen Adam in his life.

However there are times when we in the Bible a Command to believe and be saved, yet it is impossible for them to believe, and it is even stated that they want believe unless God grants it. And man will be held responsible for his unbelief that he cannot do.

Here are some examples

Matthew 11:27–30 (NKJV)

We have Divine Sovereignty.

²⁷ All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.

Then the very next verse we have human responsibility.

²⁸ Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”

John 6:35–37 (NKJV)

We have human responsibility.

³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.

We have Divine Sovereignty.

³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

John 6:40 (NKJV)

We have human responsibility.

⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

We have Divine Sovereignty.

John 6:44 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:47 (NKJV)

We have human responsibility.

⁴⁷ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.

John 6:63–66 (NKJV)

We have Divine Sovereignty.

⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they are life.*

We have human responsibility

⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

We have Divine Sovereignty.

⁶⁵ And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”

Then we have human responsibility.

⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

⁶⁷ Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?”

⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

⁶⁹ Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Then we have Divine Sovereignty.

⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?”

God is not making them condemned. They are condemned because they are unwilling to believe and unwilling to come.

Christ is their only Savior and they are unwilling to believe in him and come to Him.

God is not making them not believe. They do this willingly.

He is not causing them to live in unbelief, this is their nature and they are condemned for their disobedience in Adam and the unbelief in time.

Jesus, I believe, gives us some very helpful information to add some clarity to this the Divine Sovereign work of Salvation and how God can at the same time hold a sinner responsible for his unbelief.

John 3:1–8 (NKJV)

3 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

³ Jesus answered and said to him, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**”

⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

⁵ Jesus answered, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 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.**”

John 3:15–21 (NKJV)

¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

The solution to the Sovereignty of God in the reprobation of the sinner and the responsibility of the sinner....

lies not in accusing God of doing something wrong or unfair because he had decreed to harden a sinner

and make him a vessel of wrath, or in his unwillingness to believe, because God did not grant him faith....

But in recognition of the fact that men are in Adam and would have done exactly as he did in the Garden and are unwilling to come because they love darkness and sin more than God and Christ.

Hence they are already condemned and are vessels of wrath prepared by God for destruction.