

Romans 9:14-18: Salvation and the Jews—Pt 2

Does God Eternally Predestine Some Individuals to Mercy
and Others to Hardening?

Calvinists' View of Romans 9:14-18

- God's statement to Moses and Paul use of it show mercy is arbitrarily and unconditionally given to some and withheld from others – Romans 9:14-16
- Paul's use of the example of Pharaoh shows that God predestines some to mercy and salvation, and others to hardening and condemnation – Romans 9:17-18

Was God Unjust? – 9:14

- This verse anticipates the Jews' objection that if they are no longer the children of promise, God is being unrighteous.
 - Such a choice would mean God unjustly ignored who Israel *was* and *what Israel had done*.
 - God's choice to save all by faith did not mean God was against Israel – Rom. 3:1-2; 11:11-12, 23
- Paul's answer: "Certainly not!"
 - God has the right to choose those through whom His purposes are served!
 - The problem was not with God, but with Israel unjustly refusing to accept Jesus as God's Messiah to them and the world.

Proof: God's Words to Moses – 9:15

- God said to Moses that He has mercy and compassion on whom He chooses – 9:15; Ex. 33:19
 - Here God showed mercy to wicked, idolatrous Israel – Ex. 32; 33:12-18
 - God is a God that *chooses* to show mercy – Ex. 33:19
- Thus, this passage teaches us that...
 - God chooses to show mercy.
 - God's choice to show mercy is not determined by man's actions or dictates, seeing mercy is shown to *sinner*s—the *undeserving*.
 - The Jews' attempt to claim rights to God's mercy by birth and works of the Law is contrary to God's way and to mercy itself.

Calvinists' Objection – 9:16

- Calvinist: God's mercy is *bestowed unconditionally* – 9:16
 - Remember the context: National Israel feels unjustly slighted by God new Israel being *one of faith*.
 - Contextually, the application should be that God shows mercy by His choice, not according to what man wills or his efforts to earn it.
- Thus, again, the Jews had no *claim* to God's mercy, seeing mercy is for the *undeserving* and given by God's choice.
 - Israel may have thought they wanted justice from God, but their *works* had brought them *condemnation* – Acts 7:52-53
 - Israel should have been happy that God chose to show them mercy conditioned on faith, not their works – Rom. 3:20-23

Is Mercy Applied Unconditionally?

- God choosing to whom He shows mercy does not negate God putting *conditions* upon receiving that mercy.
- God put conditions on Israel receiving His mercy.
 - The Jew had to confess and forsake his sin – Prov. 28:13
 - The Jew had to forsake his wicked ways and thoughts and return to God – Isa. 55:7
- God has put conditions upon receiving His mercy today – Rom. 11:22-23
- If God by sovereign choice has placed conditions on receiving His mercy, who has the right to question it?

Rom. 9:17-18 – God's Choice to Show Mercy to Israel...

Hardened Pharaoh's Heart

God Uses Pharaoh - 9:17

- Calvinism claims these verses teach that God predestines some to mercy and others to hardening/condemnation.
- God put Pharaoh on the throne to show His power through him—he was chosen for God's purposes – 9:17
- God was not unjust...
 - In making him the Pharaoh – Rom. 13:1
 - Using Pharaoh for purposes.
 - Demanding that Pharaoh obey so that God's mercy could be shown to Israel.

How Did God Harden Pharaoh?

- There is not a word about an eternal decree.
- Context: God hardened Pharaoh by forcing him to make a choice between submitting to God or else.
 - Pharaoh's bristling at God's demands allowed God's power to be shown through the plagues – Ex. 7:14-18, 22-23
 - Pharaoh did not act contrary to his own will, seeing he hardened his own heart – Ex. 8:15, 32; 9:34
 - Thus, the plagues upon Egypt were Pharaoh's own fault, seeing that God knew he would serve His purposes, even in His *rebellion*!

Paul's Conclusion – 9:18

- God has mercy on whom He will, and hardens whom He wills!
- This is not saying that God *arbitrarily* dispenses mercy – Gen. 15:13-14
- The truth:
 - If God chooses to show mercy to those of *faith in Christ*, He is just in doing so.
 - If requiring faith in Christ for salvation causes some to be hardened, God is still just in doing so!
 - In the end it was Israel's **choosing to reject the Christ** that caused their demise and continued to harden them against God.