

Israel: A Case Study in the Mysteries of Election

Romans 9:1-33

Introduction: At the end of Romans 8, Paul declares that nothing can separate us from Christ's loyal love, but that raises a question: "What about Israel? Hasn't God rejected them?" In Romans 9-11 Paul argues that God chose Israel in the past (ch. 9). But, they are under judgment at present because they are rejecting Christ (ch. 10). However, in the future they will be saved as a national entity (ch. 11). Today we look at Romans 9 and the mysteries of God choosing Israel – *and us*.

1. OUR PROBLEM – We don't like mysteries.

- A. The sovereignty-free will debate has had a heated history.
- B. The sovereignty-free will debate seems to present two essential options.
- C. The sovereignty vs. free will debate is an invitation to a third option: exploration and worship.

2. 1ST ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM – Paul takes free will seriously. Romans 9:1-5

- A. Because people have the capacity to choose, Paul longs to see his Jewish brothers and sisters come to Christ. 9:1-3
- B. The tone of Paul's language suggests that God is indeed sovereign but also that real choices have real consequences. 9:4-5
- C. Paul holds these ideas in constant tension. God sovereignly chooses, but people have real choice.

3. 2ND ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM – After affirming the reality of free will, Paul also presents the reality of sovereignty. Romans 9:6-29

- A. First facet: God in his sovereignty always keeps his word. 9:6-13
- B. Second facet: God in his sovereignty always has a heart to show mercy. 9:14-18
- C. Third facet: God's sovereign choice is a mystery that we'll never fully comprehend. 9:19-21
- D. Fourth facet: God's sovereign choice is always for his glory and the salvation of the majority. 9:22-29
- E. Insight: What precisely has Paul done in these verses?