

# Israel Elected

## Romans 9 (an overview)

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### Introduction

Romans 9 is one of the most controversial chapters in the entire Bible. It touches on two topics that deeply disturb those who profess to be saved -- election and Israel.

It is instructive to see just how Romans 9 fits in the context of the book of Romans. A simple outline of the book of Romans is:

- Doctrine -- chapters 1-8
- Dispensation -- chapters 9-11
- Duty -- chapters 12-16

In fact, the three great divisions of Romans can be outlined also around the words faith, hope, and love (see I Corinthians 13:13):

- Faith -- chapters 1-8
- Hope -- chapters 9-11
- Love -- chapters 12-16

Within the middle section of Romans, Israel is obviously the subject. The outline of these three important chapters is:

- Israel elected -- chapter 9
- Israel rejected -- chapter 10
- Israel restored -- chapter 11

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The three chapters, Romans 9, 10, and 11, form a section that is concerned with God's dealings with Israel. These three chapters stand as absolute proof that God is not through with the nation of Israel. They clearly prove that the Body of Christ and the chosen nation are not the same. In addition, they prove that this distinction will hold throughout eternity. This view -- that the nation of Israel and the Body of Christ are distinct -- is called the 'dispensational' view.

Unfortunately, this has not been the view of the majority of Bible students over the centuries. They have held that Israel no longer has a place in the kingdom of God. They posit that scriptures dealing with future things must be spiritualized.

Proving that this is the **majority** view on the subject is fairly easy. For example, in the book The Meaning of the Millennium, edited by Robert Clouse, four authors present their views concerning the millennium and Israel. Three of them hold to variations of the idea that the nation Israel does not have an eternal position in the kingdom of God. Each of these men makes the point that a literal interpretation implies the dispensational view. George Ladd points this out on page 19 and Loraine Boettner says as much on page 95.

One of the strengths of the dispensational view -- that Israel and the Body of Christ have

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distinct places in the kingdom of God -- is that it follows naturally from the scriptures. Far out spiritualizations are not required. In fact, no 'spiritualizations' are required.

This is particularly true when considering Romans 9, 10, and 11. Some years ago, this author had the privilege of meeting often with one who did not agree on this subject. He felt he had an answer to most of my points. However, he had nothing to say about these three important chapters. In fact, he admitted that his seminary omitted these chapters. One might suggest that if chapters are purposely omitted from the study of the Word of God, they might as well be cut out. To omit them is to essentially claim that they are not inspired.

In the study of the Word of God, one should be very careful to be consistent. If a person ignores a passage because it is embarrassing to his doctrine, then he clearly does not really believe that passage is inspired. He may protest this conclusion but his actions speak for themselves. If he fails to study an important doctrine, then he has said something about his attitude toward scripture. In this case a person doesn't really hold to the inspiration of every line and word in the Word of God.

### Israel means physical descendants of Jacob

That 'Israel' means physical descendants of Jacob is evident the minute we start reading the ninth chapter of Romans. Here Paul says (Romans 9:1-5),

"I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen."

There is absolutely no other way to read this portion of scripture. This is 'literal Israel' not some spiritualized form that is meant to refer to the church.

Again, turn to chapter 10 where we read, "Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation."

Hence, it must be the case that it is descendants of Jacob that are mentioned in Romans 11:25-29,

"For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentile has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.' And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.' From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of **God's** choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."

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You see, Romans 11 records the restoration of the very people who were elected in Romans 9. They were rejected in chapter 10 but they were not rejected for all time. God's Word teaches that they will be restored. There is no way that any sincere Bible student can do anything but conclude that Israel has a very definite future in the program of God.

### God's promises never change

Note that in Romans 11:29 there is a very important principle in God's dealings with men - **the gifts and callings of God never change.**

There is no way that you or I or anyone could ever trust a single promise of God if this weren't the case. God has made some very clear promises to each believer.

What is the assurance that God intends to keep that promise? You believe that God has promised you a home in heaven! What makes you think that He won't change that to Florida or the moon? Maybe, mars?

Absolutely riot! For the gifts and callings never change. And the proof of that is the Jew. God *will* keep His promises to Israel so you can rest assured that He will keep His promises to you.

You may say that Israel was a disobedient nation. Yes, indeed they were. But, we are told that they are beloved for **the sake of the fathers.**

Yes, it is true that the history of Israel is a history of sin and of degradation. Look at this nation who had the very Word of God. Their kings worshipped idols. They did horrible things. But, for the sake of the fathers who had been faithful, God will give the kingdom to Israel.

To those who wonder how it is that any in Israel will even want to obey the Lord in the future, turn to Psalm 110:3 where we read, "Thy people will volunteer freely in the day of Thy power ..."

The people of Israel will indeed follow the Lord at that time. God will cause them to. But, that is another part of the story.

### The Literal Hermeneutic

The dictionary definition of hermeneutic is 'interpretive, especially of Biblical texts.'  
(Webster's New World Dictionary, 1984)

It is clear from a study of Romans 9 (as well as just about any passage in the Word of God) that the only hermeneutic that fits is the *literal* or *natural* hermeneutic.

Those who wish to make a detailed study of this very important subject should read Milton, S. Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics. It bears no copyright date but has been reprinted in 1974 by Zondervan in Grand Rapids.

The literal or natural hermeneutic is called the 'GrammaticoHistorical' method. This method applies to the scriptures the same principles that would be applied to other books. This

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means that we use the same grammatical process and exercise of common sense and reason which we normally apply in our interpretation of any writing.

This is the only way that we can let God speak to us. Any other procedure means that we come to scripture with preconceived notions of what it must say.

The prejudice that we have toward scripture is that it is of God and must be followed (II Timothy 3:16,17). This means that it is more important than ever that we let God speak to us that we do not tell God what He intended to say. Any other attitude is that of rebellion, and God calls rebellion demonic (I Samuel 15:22-23).

The unbeliever can understand *intellectually* what the Bible says. He can't follow it. He will not obey it.

It is commonly objected that there are many figures of speech in the Bible. In fact there are such in virtually any book you might read.

However, those who use this as an excuse to not study the Bible (or the prophets) literally are obligated to set down the rules for recognizing and using figures of speech. This they have never done.

As a matter of fact, the only English book of any consequence on this subject was written by a literalist in Biblical interpretation. While we do not agree with some of his views, we highly recommend this book -Figures of Speech Used in the Bible by **E. W. Bullinger**. This book is encyclopedic in scope and very helpful. It is published by Baker in Grand Rapids.

### What about Typical Fulfillments?

The above on literal interpretation is so straightforward and clear that you might wonder just how a person who claims to love the Lord and His Word might think otherwise.

It may sound trite though we believe it to be true that those who spiritualize prophecies on the second coming do so through unscriptural and shallow thinking.

To begin with, what scriptures allow us to take literally those prophecies related to Christ's first coming but not those related to the second coming? Think of the minute detail in the fulfillment of many prophecies on the first coming.

Here is a short list of some of the prophecies about our Lord's first coming:

- Born in Bethlehem -- Micah 5:2
- Had a forerunner -- Mal. 3:1
- Rides into Jerusalem on a colt -- Zech. 9:9
- Betrayed, wounds in hands -- Zech. 13:6
- Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver -- Zech. 11:12
- Crucified -- Ps. 22:16

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- Year to be 'cut off' -- Dan. 9:25, 26

These all came to pass as prophesied. The language is so precise that their fulfillment stands as one of the clearest proofs of the inspiration of the Word of God. (The reader might be interested in how this is shown in the book **Science Speaks** by Peter Stoner, published by Moody Press.)

In addition, if God's promises to Israel are not meant to be taken in their normal sense, then we can't count on any promises that God has given to us. This needs to be emphasized. The same God who has promised us a home in heaven is the one who promised so many things to Israel.

In Ezekiel 40-48 there are nine chapters devoted to certain things that are predicted to happen to Israel that have **never** happened. If God's Word is to be interpreted in such a way that these *nine* chapters can't be taken as a normal reading of them would imply, then by what rule can we believe that God will take us to be with Himself. There are, by comparison, only a few verses that teach us such a precious truth. The **normal** method of interpretation **is the only basis** for our understanding of the promises God has given us.

### A Common Argument against Our View

Since several have written against this method of interpretation, let us take a few minutes to address the main point of at least one writer. He asserts that the New Testament writers do not take prophecy literally in all cases. In fact, this writer does an analysis of Matthew and concludes that prophecy is taken literally in less than 40% of the cases.

To see how foolish this is, take his explanation of Matthew 2:14-15 where we are told, "And he arose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed for Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod, that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'Out of Egypt did I call My Son.'"

There is absolutely no question that this is a quotation from Hosea 11:1. Turn in your Bible to Hosea 11:1 and you will find, "When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son."

The author of the book then states that this is an example of a fulfillment that is not literal but is typical. But, wait just one minute.

This typical fulfillment has **absolutely nothing** to do with how a person interprets Hosea 11:1. Is it true or is it not true that Hosea speaks of a literal event in a literal fashion? It is absolutely true that Hosea speaks of a literal event in a literal fashion.

The Holy Spirit chooses to speak of a typical fulfillment many years later that **no Bible student no matter how devout could have discovered apart from divine inspiration.**

Thus, this type of reference does nothing to refute the literal meaning of Hosea 11:i . Examples like this occur frequently in this man's book. Time and time again they confirm the literal meaning of the Old Testament reference.

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### Apostle of the Gentiles -- Romans 11:13

The relationship of Paul to the twelve is an important doctrine that is related to the issue of the Body of Christ versus Israel.

Paul declares clearly in Romans 11:13 that he is apostle of the Gentiles.

This is never said of the twelve apostles. Instead, we are given many scriptures to the contrary.

To begin with, the commission of the twelve was clearly that of the earthly kingdom. For example, in Matthew 19:28, Christ said to the twelve apostles, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

In addition, in Luke 22:28-30, Christ told the same twelve apostles, "And you are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Second, notice also that the ministry of Peter and the twelve is fully consistent with the earthly kingdom. In Acts 1:6, it was the twelve who were asking the Lord, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" And, Christ avoided the issue. In this same period, He had taught them many things about their ministry and His work (Lk. 24:44-49).

When we examine the ministry on the day of Pentecost, we find that there is no way that this event can be connected to the Body of Christ. The events of the day were said by inspired apostles to be a direct fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:16-21 compared with Joel 2:28-32). In fact, the break in God's program must occur between the Pentecostal era and the tribulation. Read verses 17-21 (quoted from Joel 2):

"17 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;  
18 Even upon My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy. 19 'And I will grant wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. 20 'The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come. 21 And it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Note that the break <sup>in</sup> the dealings of God with men comes between verses 18 and 19. We live during that break. The ministry of the twelve was clearly consistent with that of verses 17 and 18. The events of verses 19 and 20 are clearly those of the tribulation period. This passage in Joel 2 (and Acts 2) is often neglected.

In Acts 3:17-26, the earthly kingdom was actually offered to Israel. This is the consistent

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ministry of the twelve. Peter wrote his letters to comfort Jews who expected the kingdom and did not really understand the postponement.

We also note that the new Jerusalem has at its gates the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and on its foundation the names of the twelve apostles (Rev. 21:12-14).

It is clear from these verses that the twelve are eternally linked to the nation of Israel. At no time did they talk or write about a Body of Christ in which there was neither Jew nor Gentile. Their hope was and is and will be that of Israel.

What a contrast with the ministry of Paul. In his ministry, we find the full equality within the Body of Christ of both Jews and Gentiles. Read very carefully Eph. 3:6, "... that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

Paul asserts in Ephesians that God had given to him the revelation of a new mystery. This mystery was hidden in times past (Ephesians 3:5, 9). Paul's letters abound with references like this. And it is in his epistles alone that we find the truth of a Body in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile (Galatians 3:28; compare Isaiah 60:10-20). It is in these letters alone that we read of a hope located in heaven (Ephesians 1:3; compare Matthew 6:10). It is in these letters alone that we read of the salvation of Gentiles apart from the agency of Israel (Romans 11:11, 12, 15, 25; compare Isaiah 2:4).

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The scriptures teach an unconditional election by a sovereign God. Nowhere is this more evident than in Romans 9.

This is an extremely basic issue. Those who deny God His sovereignty actually worship a God not found in the Bible. They literally worship a false god. This is taught in John 8: 30-44 where we read:

"As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine: and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You shall become free'?' Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ... If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham's offspring; yet you seek to kill me, because My word has no place in you. ... You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father ...'"

Clearly, these believers had a false faith for it was not a faith consistent with two crucial Biblical truths -- the total depravity of the lost and the irresistible work of God. These believing (verse 31 says they were) Jews objected to the notion that they had ever been slaves of sin. They objected to the doctrine that they had to be liberated by a miraculous act of God in order to be saved.

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This still happens among those who profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. They hate the doctrines that teach that they once were helpless slaves of their hatred of God. They prefer to think of some spark of good in man even if that good is simply some 'small' ability to believe.

### **The Doctrine of a Remnant**

Several times in the Bible, we are reminded that only a remnant of Israel will be saved. This issue is pressed home in Romans 9:6 where we read. "For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel." Paul then goes on to show that those who are truly Israel are such by the sovereign choice of God.

While we are on this point, it should be mentioned that the Greek word that is translated 'church' is 'ekklesia.' This word comes from two words meaning 'the called-out ones.' Thus, this word emphasizes that saved people are a remnant of grace -- those called out by God.

### **God's Choice of Isaac**

The argument that God's choice is sovereign is first illustrated in Romans 9:7-9 with the choice of Isaac. By all laws of that time, Ishmael was the logical and legal choice. Often in scripture, God purposely goes against the normal choices that men make to prove that He is absolutely in control.

Abraham actually had a number of descendants. He had a number of children from a mistress (concubine) named Keturah (Genesis 25) but these had no legal standing.

However, by the law of the land, Ishmael would have been the choice. We will not fully explore this issue, but if you carefully study the record in the book of Genesis you will be struck with the fact that Sarai and Abram were never told that the child of promise had to be from Sarai. The first record of that part of the promise is in Genesis 17.

Careful study suggests that Isaac was actually Abraham's youngest descendant, legal or otherwise. (It is an amusing sidelight to consider what would happen in the courts of modern America. No doubt the Supreme Court would rule that the children of Keturah would share equally in all that was Abraham's and, if anything, would give Isaac the least.)

It is also in this great chapter that Abram and Sarai become Abraham and Sarah. The only two occasions of permanent name changes are here and Acts 13.<sup>11</sup> (The others were alternate names -Jacob is still called both Jacob and Israel, et al.)

In addition, Ishmael was Abraham's choice. In Genesis 17:18, Abraham pleads with God that Ishmael would be the one who would inherit the promise.. No doubt, the custom of the time was a part of this. After all, Abraham had had about 12 years to consider Ishmael as the one who would inherit the promise. The legal firstborn was very special to a man of that culture. Abraham did not easill shed that emotion.

But, God said otherwise. God said that H; choice was Isaac.

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There are those who would point out that Ishmael's mother was not a believer and Isaac's mother was a believer. On this basis, perhaps, God was making His choice. But Paul's next point emphatically proves that this is not the case.

### God's Choice of Jacob

God's choice of Jacob over Esau is even more mysterious. Both had the same parents. Thus the issue of godly parents doesn't arise in this case. Both parents were elect. In fact, both in Romans 9:11,12 and in Genesis 25:22-28, God gave His decision to *Rebekah*, not to Isaac.

Once again, both the law and the father (who is the head of a house) wanted Esau. He was born first even though the boys were twins. Also, Genesis 25:28 makes it clear that Isaac had a clear preference for Esau.

But, God had a different idea. Paul deals with those who claim that God's choices are based on His foreseeing or forecasting interest in spiritual things or obedience. Read carefully and prayerfully Romans 9:10-13,

**10** And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins by one man*, our father Isaac;

**11** for though *the twins* were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to *His* choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls,

**12** it was said to her, 'THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.'

**13** Just as it is written, 'JACOB HAVE I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.'

The apostle, under inspiration, clearly dispels all notions that God's choices are based on anything but His own sovereignty. The passage clearly states that God made the choice **before** the twins had done anything good or bad. To argue that God made his choice based on foreseen goodness or badness is to violate anything that this passage is trying to teach.

But, that is not what makes believers upset about Romans 9. It is verse 13 that upsets so many people because they can't stand what it obviously is teaching.

### Comments on Election

We might spend a few minutes commenting generally on election. First, the apostle assumes that anything that God does is righteous. This is a fundamental approach to scripture. When God used a bear to kill children who made fun of His prophet, this was right because God did it. Sending men to hell and to the lake of fire is right because God does it.

Read what the Lord says about His love of Israel in Deut. 7:6-8. God does not base His love on anything but the fact that God loved them and intended to fulfill His promises to their fathers. These are the same fathers which Paul in Romans 9 says were chosen sovereignty. And this selective and undeserved love is right because God does it.

The next point that should be mentioned is that God's sovereign election is imposed on a

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world of sinners who hate God and are totally depraved. The wonder of Romans 9:13 is not that God hated Esau but that God loved Jacob. It is a wonder that God loved anyone. Men will not come to God unless God intervenes and changes their hearts. This is the clear teaching of John 6:44, 65.

Another point that must be mentioned is that total depravity and predestination were **the** issues of the reformation. Calvin, Zwingli, and Luther were united on most that relates to these issues. Indeed, Calvin and Zwingli were united on all of the five points of what we call 'Calvinism.' It is incredible that men will commend these men for their opposition to Rome but side with Rome on what was the issue.

Read The Bondage of the Will by **Martin Luther**. He states that this is the issue and does so repeatedly. Notice particularly what he states in the conclusion (page 319 of the edition published by Fleming H. Revell Co.), "Now, my good Erasmus, ... Moreover, I give you hearty praise and commendation on this further account -- that you alone, in contrast with all others, have attacked the real thing, that is, the essential issue. You have not wearied me with those extraneous issues about the Papacy, purgatory, indulgences and such like -- trifles, rather than issues -- in respect of which almost all to date have sought my blood (though without success); you, and you alone, have seen the hinge on which all turns, and aimed for the vital spot."

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

This is no doubt one of the most hated verses in all of scripture. We might paraphrase the attitude of most believers as, "John 3:16 have I loved but Romans 9:13 I hate."

That this is the attitude can be observed anytime that Romans 9:13 is quoted in a conversation. Let us first set one thing straight in the record. The wonder of wonders is not that God hates Esau but that He loves Jacob. So terrible is our sin to a holy God that for God to love any person is itself an amazing teaching of the Word of God. Anytime you think that you deserve the love of God, read carefully and prayerfully Romans 3:10-23. It is in Jer. 17:9 that we read, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" It is crucial that we study the love of God with an understanding of the awful depravity of the human heart.

Some feel that they can resolve the problem by declaring that God loved Esau less than Jacob. This doesn't solve anything. Clearly, redemption and the work of Christ is pictured in scripture as the highest form of God's love. If God doesn't love a man redemptively, then that man is clearly lost no matter what.

God does love his entire creation in a providential manner. This is taught in Matthew 5:43-48. However, God's providential care for him will not save him.

### **Others God Hates**

The common assumption by those who profess our Lord is that God loves all men but hates their sin. However, the scriptures teach otherwise. Here in Romans 9, it expressly declares that God hates Esau.

What else is there in the unregenerate but sin?

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When scripture states that God hates the wicked (Psalm 5:5; 11:5), we have no right to change it. God hates them. Someday, we will know just who the non-elect are and we too will be right in hating them.

### God is Immutable

There are other doctrines of God that suffer when men declare that God loves all men redemptively. One of them is the doctrine of immutability.

First, we are taught that absolutely nothing and no one can separate from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:32-39).

Second, we note that the meaning in Romans 8:32-39 is very clear. To be separated from the love of God is to be lost and go to hell. To be the object of His love is to be saved and to go to be with Him. No other meaning can be given to these verses and no other meaning has ever been proposed,

Third, we discover that God *never* changes. We read in James 1:17 that God doesn't change even so much as a shifting shadow. God *declares in Malachi 3.6, "I charge not."*

There is only one conclusion -- God has loved certain ones from eternity past and His love for them will never change.

One further note before we leave this subject. It is nearly a disgrace that men will often sacrifice this crucial doctrine of the *immutability of God in order to try to teach that God loves all men* redemptively. They actually are teaching about a god not found in the Bible. When men abandon the God of the Bible and go after a false god who changes they are manifesting that they never knew the God of the Bible (see I John 2:19). This is a serious thing to say and we do not say it lightly. Many profess to know the Lord who are unsaved (Matthew 7:21-23) and we have no basis for denying that this is true in our day as well.

Dear professing believer, let me urge you to study the scriptures and learn about the God whom you profess to know. Your old nature will rebel against Him. But, if you are really saved, then you will not find it possible to deny Him His attributes.

### The Word 'World'

But, you say, doesn't the Bible say that God so loved the world? And, isn't it natural to interpret 'world' as all men who ever lived?

While the answer to the first question is, "Certainly," the answer to the second question is, "No!"

Before we list some meanings from a lexicon, let's look at Romans 1:8 where we read, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world." What is the 'world' in this passage? Clearly, it is only men living at

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that time. Secondly, it did not include the Western Hemisphere so it is restricted geographically. Indeed, it only includes only people in the Roman Empire. Finally, it certainly does not include all within the Roman Empire. It only includes believers and possibly some who had contact with believers. Yet, this passage talks about the 'whole world.' We conclude that the presumption that the Greek word 'kosmos' means all men who ever lived is not based on a study of the New Testament.

The presumption that the word translated 'world' must always have the meaning 'all men who ever lived' is not based on anything found in the lexicons. The Bauer (Arndt-Gingrich) Lexicon lists eight categories of meanings and a number of subcategories. These are (briefly):

1. adornment, adorning
2. the (orderly) universe
3. all beings above the level of animals -- angels and men
4. the earth, the planet upon which we live
  - a. generally -- Mk. 16:15
  - b. the habitation of mankind
  - c. earth as contrasted with heaven
  - d. the world as contrasted with one's home
5. mankind
  - a. generally
  - b. of all, but especially of believers
6. scene of earthly joys
7. that which is at enmity with God
8. totality

It is the usage of 'adorning' that has given us the English word 'cosmetic.' We also get the word 'cosmic' from this Greek word because it can mean the universe.

We listed the meanings so you can see for yourself that this word does not have just one unique meaning. In fact, very few common words have just one unique meaning. Think of some common English words like 'run' and 'set.' Or even the English word 'world.' The latest New World Dictionary lists eight meanings and a variety of sub-meanings for this rather common word.

Like most common words, the meaning of 'kosmos' or 'world' must be induced from the context. (Many have written on this and related topics. The reader is urged to obtain a copy of John Gill's The Cause of God and Truth.)

### Men Miss the Point of John 3:16

Sermons and books have been written on this wonderful verse. We can only mention a few things.

First, the scriptures teach that there is unanimity in the works of the triune God. Please

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read Ephesians 1 to see that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work with reference to the same persons. This is mentioned because John 3:16 is presented as the universal work of the Son. However, the One Who loves in John 3:16 is the Father. God so loved the world -- this is the Father. This is obvious because He gives His Son. Thus, the scope of the work of the Father and that of the Son is the same.

Second, there is a purpose clause. The purpose of the giving of the Son is that those who believe might have eternal life. It is therefore imperative that the subject of this purpose clause has the same scope as the clause itself. We summarize this way: God so loved the world in order that believers might have eternal life. The scope of the purpose clause is clearly the believers and only the believers. Therefore, the scope of the intent clause must be the same. That is, God loved the elect in order that they might be saved.

This is reinforced in the context. In John 3:17, it is God's intent that the world might be saved through the work of Christ. In verses 14 and 15, it is the intent of the lifting up of the Son that believers might have eternal life.

At no point do the non-elect benefit from the work of Christ. In fact, quite the opposite. In II Corinthians 2:14-16 we read, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?"

You see, it is the case that even the preaching of the cross to the non-elect takes them from death to death. The sun softens wax and hardens clay. So, the gospel it (through the Spirit's inner work) saves the elect. But, it brings further condemnation to the non-elect.

What a message. God so loved the elect that He gave His only Son in order that they might be saved!

### God's Love is Particular

There are many passages of scriptures that teach that the objects of God's love are particular. For the sake of brevity, we will only list three. However, we urge the reader to take his concordance and look up every passage that mentions the love of God.

First, it is clear from Romans 8:36-39 that this is so. It has never been proposed in this writer's presence that these verses refer to other than saved individuals. Yet, they teach that those who are the objects of His love can never be otherwise.

Second, Romans 8:32 teaches that those for whom Christ died are given **all things**. To talk of Christ dying for Esau or Hitler and yet not being given faith is a clear violation of this passage.

Finally, turn to Ephesians 5:25 where we read, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ..." The husband is told that he must love his wife above all others. And this love is parallel to that of Christ for the elect. There is no room for

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saying that Christ also gave Himself for others anymore than there is room for teaching that a husband is to show the same dedication to others. The passage is conclusive.

### Vindication - Romans 9:14

Let us now read Romans 9:14, "What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!"

While space does not permit us to go through this marvelous chapter, let us understand one thing immediately. Romans 9:14 proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that we read verse 13 correctly. For, if the way some read the verse is appropriate, there is nothing to explain.

Suppose God loved all men redemptively and did everything He could to save them but they were so stubborn that even the God of the universe could not save them? Such a God would not need defending in the minds of men. This is the God men would love to have. This is the God they proclaim day and night. But, this is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible does some things that seem on the surface to violate our (fallen) sense of justice. And this is precisely why this verse is here.

And, just what is Paul's magnificent defense of this. He resorts to quoting what God has said and done in the past. God said to Moses (Romans 9:15; Exodus 33:19), "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." Paul then concludes that (Romans 9:16), "It does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who shows mercy.

To our fallen nature, this is no defense at all. It merely repeats the problem. God chooses; God saves; God does it all. Salvation is of the Lord. Man does not contribute either in deed or word or even the will. It is of the Lord **alone**.

### The Example of Pharaoh

And, if that isn't enough, the apostle gives us the example of Pharaoh. Quoting from Exodus 9:16, Paul says, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."

A careful reading of the passage in Exodus proves that God's claim to Pharaoh was that Pharaoh was preserved so that God could display His awesome power.

Think of it. God kept the very man in power who caused untold suffering for the people of Israel. And, God knew that many 'innocent' Egyptians would suffer if Pharaoh stayed on the throne. But a sovereign God can do as He pleases and He wished to preserve Pharaoh.

And, He says He did it to manifest His power.

In addition, God says several times that He hardened Pharaoh's heart. Look at Exodus 7:13, 14, 22; 10:20, 27. God even says (Prov. 16:9), "The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps." Yes God is in charge of every person and everything.

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The conclusion of the matter is Romans 9:18, "So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires."

To those who object to this doctrine, the apostle says (Romans 9:20), "... who are you, O man, who answers back to God?"

Like it or not, the God of the Bible is sovereign.

### Summary

This has been a very brief introduction to this very important passage. It clearly teaches some doctrines that are considered very controversial:

1. God is not through with Israel.
2. God sovereignly chooses for salvation whom He pleases.

The question now is, "What is your response?" Are you willing to bow to the authority of God's word and believe what it teaches? Are you willing to really study these things and see what God really says on these pivotal issues?

Or are you, like so many, going to go your own way on the teachings of the scriptures? If you rebel against the teachings of the scriptures, then this is a most serious matter.

The prophet told Saul (I Sam. 15:23). "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry." This was said because Saul had rejected complete obedience to the word of God.

When our hearts appear to rebel against the teachings of scripture, we really should examine our hearts as to our salvation.

Are you saved? Romans 10:9 teaches, "... if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

Have you trusted Him for your salvation? Have you turned your life over to Him (lordship)?

Our prayer is that you have or that you will.