

Romans – An In-Depth Study

[Chapters 9-16]

[Part 2]

Romans 9:10-13 [NIV] *“Not only that, but Rebekah’s children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad, in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls, she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”*”

Here we have another example of God Sovereign choice as our Creator.

Genesis 25:21-26 [NIV] *“Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, “Why is this happening to me?” So she went to enquire of the LORD. The LORD said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.” When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.”*

The first lesson we can learn from the example of God desires we plead with Him for our most personal and important to us, requests.

Isaac undoubtedly knew that the promises made by God to Abraham, his physical father, were to be fulfilled through him and his offspring.

This gave him a strong pleading point with God.

We need to give God as many reasons as we can, based on what we know is His will for us and all of humanity.

Isaac had to wait many years before God broke the barrenness of his wife Rebekah.

Why does God do this?

- a) To deepen our insight into what we really need and should be asking God for.
- b) To broaden our application of what we are asking for and to increase our appreciation when He answers.
- c) To allow us to mature so that we use the answer, when it comes, more wisely.

Why did God love Jacob and hate Esau?

Malachi 1:1-3 [NIV] *“An oracle: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi. “I have loved you,” says the LORD. “But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’ “Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” the LORD says. “Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals.”*”

The Greek word translated “hate” is “*misēō*” which means to love less by comparison.

God loves every human being that He has given life to.

God by nature cannot hate a person only what that person does.

God hates the actions we do that in the end will bring us pain, suffering and possible eternal death.

Genesis 25:27-34 [NIV] *“The boys grew up, and Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, **Esau came in from the open country, famished.** He said to Jacob, **“Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I’m famished!”** (That is why he was also called Edom.) Jacob replied, **“First sell me your birthright.”** **“Look, I am about to die,”** Esau said. **“What good is the birthright to me?”** But Jacob said, **“Swear to me first.”** So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. **So Esau despised his birthright.**”*

The last five words in this passage of scripture tells us why God hated Esau’s actions; he despised the greatest gift that any human being can receive, their birthright to the family, Kingdom of God.

Esau was the first-born of these twins so should have inherited the greater part of what Isaac passed on to his children.

This is what Esau rejected.

Romans 8:16-17 [NIV] *“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”*

When we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives we share the inheritance God has given to His Son Jesus Christ.

That is all of God’s creation both physical and spiritual.

Hebrews 1:1-2 [NIV] *“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, **whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.**”*

Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, is the appointed heir to the whole of the creation that God made through Him as His Son and spokesman, the Word. [See **John 1:1-2**]

Romans 9:14-15 [NIV] *“What then shall we say? **Is God unjust?** Not at all! For he says to Moses, **“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”**”*

Remember God is sovereign over all things as He is our Creator and Sustainer.

The Creator God is **not** an unrestrained despotic.

1 John 4:8 [NIV] *“Whoever does not love does not know God, because **God is love.**”*

God is love, the Greek word translated “love” is “*agapé*” – a spontaneous love, irrespective of the rights or response of the person receiving this love.

2 Peter 3:9 [NIV] *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, **not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**”*

It is God’s desire that every human being will repent of their rebellious nature towards Him.

Job 14:15 [NIV] *“You will call and I will answer you; you will long for the creature your hands have made.”*

God longs for us to be moulded into a being, who bases their life on love, just as He does.

Only then can God give us the gift of eternal life.

How is this moulding of our lives to take place?

Galatians 5:22-25 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”*

By allowing the Holy Spirit to live in us and direct our thoughts and produce the God-like fruits in our lives.

2 Corinthians 5:10 [NIV] *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*

Every human being will be rewarded by Jesus Christ as to whether we have allowed the Holy Spirit to mould us or not.

The choice is ours, in this life we are choosing either eternal life or eternal death, by how we respond to the call of our Creator God and as how we respond to His Word, the Christian Bible, that expands on His very nature.

Galatians 6:7-10 [NIV] *“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”*

How is it that we cannot deceive God as so often we do our fellow human beings by putting on a façade?

Psalms 139:1-4, 15-16 [NIV] *“O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.” ... “My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”*

God knows us far more than we even know ourselves.

2 Chronicles 19:7 [NIV] *“Now let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the LORD our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery.”*

Because of His perfect knowledge our Creator God always gives perfect judgement.

Exodus 33:19-20 [NIV] *“And the LORD said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no-one may see me and live.”*

God is so Holy and perfect that we cannot look upon Him as human beings and not be vaporised.

Romans 9:16 [NIV] *“It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.”*

As a result of God being who He is, we can only approach Him if we seek His mercy.

Luke 18:9-14 [NIV] *“To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Only when we realise our total dependency on God’s mercy will we ever be made righteous before our Creator God.

The Pharisee did **not** go to the temple to pray to God but to announce to all within earshot how good he considered himself to be.

The tax collector went into the presence of God in humble prayer, recognising his sins and begging God for mercy.

Self-righteousness is very dangerous, it prevents a person from learning anything from their Creator God, and causes them to despise other people, who are created in the image of God.

Romans 9:17-18 [NIV] *“For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.”*

Paul is quoting **Exodus 9:16** where God foretold how He would use Pharaoh to declare his power.

Paul uses this argument to show that salvation was God’s work **not** the accomplishment of any human beings.

God’s judgement on Pharaoh’s sin was to harden his heart to confirm his disobedience.

Romans 11:7-8 [NIV] *“What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, as it is written: “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.”*

The Jews sought to find God’s favour through seeking to keep the law and rituals that were designed only to point them towards faith in Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah, who would be their Saviour from God’s wrath.

They were blinded to this salvation by faith and when the Messiah did come they rejected Him and murdered Him.

Romans 9:19 [NIV] *“One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?”*

This is how human beings argue against God and His ways from a human viewpoint.

This is a very natural human reaction, as there is at the back of the whole human/God relationship a selection and rejection by God.

How can God blame humans who have been rejected by Him and blinded by Him?

Isn’t the fault of their rebellion down to God?

Paul's reply to this question was blunt and to the point.

Romans 9:20-21 [NIV] *"But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?"*

Paul reminds us what was written in God's Word to His people Israel.

Isaiah 29:16 [NIV] *"You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, "He did not make me"? Can the pot say of the potter, "He knows nothing"?"*

God puts the human/God relationship the right way up.

Isaiah 45:9 [NIV] *"Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'He has no hands'?"*

A warning against us ever considering that God doesn't know what His is doing in the creation of His spiritual family, or Kingdom.

2 Timothy 2:19-21 [NIV] *"Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness." **In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.**"*

God has prepared a place in His Kingdom for every human being.

A place in which we will find the most joy and fulfilment.

But if we respond to God with great determination and desire to please Him, God may give us a greater responsibility than He at first determined was to be ours.

Matthew 25:14-30 [NIV] *"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. **The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'** "His master replied, **'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'** "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' "His master replied, **'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'** "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, **'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'** "His master replied, **'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. "Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."***

The more effort we put into serving God the more opportunities God will give us when we enter into His Kingdom.

Romans 9:22 [NIV] *“What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the **objects of his wrath, prepared for destruction?**”*

The word translated “*destruction*” is “*apōlēia*” referring to ruin or loss of wellbeing, a wasted life.

This is **not** referring to eternal death.

Romans 9:23-24 [NIV] *“What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the **objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory, even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?**”*

Remember that God in His Sovereignty has every right to choose when He calls a person to have their opportunity to receive salvation.

With such rightful authority He may use the lives of those He is **not** yet calling to prompt those He has chosen to call, to respond to His mercy.

God deliberately darkened the minds, blinded the eyes and hardened the hearts of those whom He is **not** as yet calling to seek salvation.

This is God’s responsibility as Sovereign Creator, who does have all the power needed, and more, to ensure that in the end every human being will have a chance to accept His mercy, repent and through faith in Him receive eternal life.

Paul then uses the prophecies of God’s prophets to confirm that God had planned this to happen from the very beginning, in His perfect wisdom.

Romans 9:25 [NIV] *“As he says in Hosea: **‘I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,**”*

We find this prophesied in:-

Hosea 2:23 [NIV] *“I will plant her for myself in the land; **I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one’.** I will say to those called ‘Not my people’, ‘You are my people’; and they will say, ‘You are my God.’”*

Hosea warned Israel that they would **not** always be His **only** people.

1 Peter 2:10 [NIV] *“**Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**”*

Peter was telling Christians who did **not** come from a Jewish background that God was reaching out to them also as a people selected by Him to receive mercy.

Romans 9:26 [NIV] *“and, **‘It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’**”*

Hosea was inspired to prophecy about a uniting of Jews and Gentiles under the leadership of Jesus Christ.

Hosea 1:10-11 [NIV] *“Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people’, they will be called ‘sons of the living God’. **The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.**”*

Hosea when he uses the term “*Israelites*” is generally referring to the northern tribes of Israel, who after being taken into captivity did **not** return to Jerusalem as did Judah [Jews] and part of the tribe of Benjamin.

Some of the northern tribes eventually set up their own place of worship in Samaria, mixed with Gentiles who had returned from captivity with them.

Jews looked on all these people as Gentiles and would **not** have any relationship with them.

Hosea prophesies that all Israel and all Gentiles will eventually be united under the rule of Jesus Christ.

Romans 9:27-28 [NIV] *“Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: ‘Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, **only the remnant will be saved. For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.**”*

This scripture is pointing towards what will happen at the second coming of Jesus Christ as described in the revelation given to the apostle John by Jesus Christ.

The devastating plagues and woes will leave only a small remnant of humans alive [see **Revelation 15:1** and **Revelation 16:1-21**].

Isaiah 10:20-23 [NIV] *“In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God. Though your people, O Israel, be like the sand by the sea, only a remnant will return. Destruction has been decreed, overwhelming and righteous. The Lord, the LORD Almighty, will carry out the destruction decreed upon the whole land.”*

Isaiah foretells this final return of the remnant of people saved out of the tribulation and brought back to the New Jerusalem. [See **Revelation 7:1-14**].

Genesis 22:15-18 [NIV] *“The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, ‘I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that **because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.**”*

This remnant will be the “*children of the promise*” those who had faith in the promises that God makes, just as Abraham did.

Romans 11:5-6 [NIV] *“So too, at the present time there is **a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.**”*

This remnant will be all those who have accepted the grace of God to receive salvation by faith and **not** by personal righteous acts.

Romans 9:29 [NIV] *“It is just as Isaiah said previously: ‘**Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.**”*

If God did **not** protect those who He chose to call at this time for their chance of salvation, all humans on earth would be destroyed.

Matthew 24:21-22 [NIV] *“For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now, and never to be equalled again. **If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.**”*

Only because of this remnant, the “*elect*” will the total destruction of humanity **not** take place.

Isaiah 1:9 [NIV] “*Unless the LORD Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.*”

A prophesy quoted by Paul.

Note the context, a description of the vast majority of people who God inspired Isaiah to liken to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Among these people were religious people who performed rituals and kept certain days as religious feast days.

In doing this they thought they were pleasing God [**verses 10-15**].

What God wanted was repentance, love and compassion for other human beings. [**verses 16-17**].

Even the most wicked of people would then be offered forgiveness and cleansing from the penalty of their sins [**verses 18-19**].

If however they do **not** repent they would not be among the survivors, the remnant that God will protect from the tribulation to come at Christ’s return. [**verse 20**].

Romans 9:30-31 [NIV] “*What then shall we say? That **the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.***”

Paul draws a contrast between two ways of approaching God in our desire to please Him.

The Jewish or religious way:-

This view was that we could have a right relationship with God by strict obedience to the law and religious rituals.

Such people considered that the right relationship with God was something that could be earned by these practices and that God would then owe us salvation, because of this human effort on our part.

We may think that attending church services, doing “*church*” work, giving offerings and being a “*nice*” person will be enough.

But Paul tells us that this approach never succeeds.

God’s way:-

God’s plan is **not** for people to try to earn His favour by just being good.

It is that we realise that we can **never be good enough** because of weak human nature and all our past sins.

We must depend on Jesus Christ to be our Saviour from eternal death.

We can **only** be saved by putting our faith in what Jesus Christ has done for all humanity.

Jesus Christ did this saving work for us through His death being a substitute for our deserved death and some of His righteousness being credited to us as a result of our faith in Him.

Romans 9:32 [NIV] “*Why not? **Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling-stone.”***”

The Jews, as all religious Christian people, have a worthy goal to honour God.

But they all try to achieve this in the wrong way.

God cannot be controlled by people keeping laws and performing rituals, however meaningful such rituals may be.

Human salvation **only** comes from a total submission to God by looking to His Son, Jesus Christ, as our Saviour and Lord [Master].