

Twisted Title

Good afternoon Redemption Church! Or whatever time you are watching or listening to this online.

We are in the 2nd week of our Twisted series. Last week we talked about Jeremiah 29:11. This week we are going to talk about the entire Chapter of Romans 9. If you have any questions **text** our anonymous line at 214 856 0550.

I want to remind you of our working definition of **twisted scripture**. .”
To alter the meaning of a scripture passage from its original intent.

In correctly handling God’s word, never assume you know what it means. Just because you heard it taught one way doesn’t mean it is or isn’t correct.

Romans 9 is often used to support pre-destination. A belief that God predetermines everything that happens. It is also referred to as Calvinism. Using scripture in Romans 9, some try to say that God creates people that He predestined to go to Hell and other people that He predestined to go to Heaven. There are variations of Calvinism and we don’t mean to lump all of them together... nor do we mean to suggest that people that adhere to Calvinism are less than absolutely loved by God. There is room in heaven for Calvinists... We aren’t here to do anything but attempt to correctly handle the “Word of Truth.”

Many people who don’t claim Calvinism, end up actually believing in a predetermined view of God. They reveal it every time something bad happens.. they try to explain happenings away by saying “Well God is still on His throne... we just have to trust that this is in His plan...” It’s very subtle, but predestination is there...

How does God work? Is it through control & coercion or through influence & relationship? This is at the heart of today’s sermon.

Are we free? Is it just the appearance of freedom? Are all things determined for us by God? Does this include our eternity? Some would use Romans 9 to say God absolutely determines where we will spend eternity. What is also scary is that you might not know if you were created for his mercy or for His wrath. The term eternal security

is used in Calvinistic circles... but it seems anything but secure to me... It is more like eternal insecurity. If you have 2 children... How do you know if one was created for damnation and one was created for Heaven. And if there is nothing we can do about it... How are we to really love God? Do we actually love God... or is He causing us to love Him like a puppet master pulling strings?

So what does Romans 9 mean? Let's get right into the thick of it...

Some might think Paul is concerned with individual salvation in Romans 9. Paul is concerned with 2 related things in Romans 9.

#1 Israel. Romans 9:2-5

Romans 9:2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.(NIV)

Romans 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race,(NIV)

Romans 9:4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.(NIV)

Romans 9:5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.(NIV)

#2 The Word of God hasn't failed. Romans 9:6

Romans 9:6 It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.(NIV)

The point of Romans 9 is not individual salvation. It's that Israel, although chosen of God and having experienced great things in God is not following God. And because Paul and other Christian believers see the people of Israel turned away from God, they might be tempted by the notion that the Word of God has failed! That based on what they see in Israel... God's promise to Abraham had come to nothing...

In the times that Romans was written and even still today... It is commonly held in Judaism that they are saved through #1 their family lineage and nationality and #2 their obedience to the Law.

Because they thought their nationality and religious observance would save them they rejected the saving Messiah. Romans 9:32 says they stumbled over the stumbling stone. That stumbling stone is Jesus Christ! (Isaiah 8:14, 1 Peter 2:8)

Romans 9 makes reference to hardened hearts. I believe Paul is trying to tell us that it is our own rejection of God's plan... the rejection of Christ that causes hearts to be hardened.

So let me make this clear. Romans 9 is NOT about individual salvation... it is about an entire group of people, a nation... Israel.. and God's faithfulness toward Israel. It's a question of God's fidelity to Israel as a nation and the basis by which God makes anyone a covenant partner. If we keep this in mind it will help us correctly handle the "Word of Truth."

Romans 9:6 It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.(NIV)

Not all who are Israel are descended from Israel. This maybe needs some explaining. There were people who BECAME a part of Israel but were not born from Abraham. There are people born of Abraham that aren't part of Israel. This happens many times in your Bible.

Prominently Rahab, a prostitute living in Jericho, joined Israel. She becomes a part of the lineage of Jesus Christ. She wasn't added to Israel because of her nationality or law adherence.. She of free will decided she wanted to join Israel and God who is rich in mercy brought her into His household of faith!

Romans 9:7 Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."(NIV)

Abraham had 2 sons! One was a receiver of the promise and the other wasn't. The 1st born Ishmael did not receive the promise, the 2nd born Isaac did. Paul is pointing out that Abraham had a son who wasn't a part of Israel.

You want a deterministic, preordained philosophy... it would be that you have to be born of Abraham's lineage. That would be predestined. You have no free will involved. You are either in... or you are out. God decided you would be born in the saved family lineage or that you would be born into the direct pipeline to hell family. ...Paul refutes this!

Romans 9:8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.(NIV)

God's covenant is not based on who your parents are... That would be predetermined and out of your control. Instead God's covenant is based on who will of their own free will receive the promise. Are there any children of the Promise here today? You are Abraham's seed. This is why you would sing about "Father Abraham" in Sunday school.

Paul goes on to talk about Isaac's seed. And I have to tell you... these next few verses use to bother me a lot.

Romans 9:10 Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac.(NIV)

Romans 9:11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand:(NIV)

Romans 9:12 not by works but by him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger."(NIV)

Romans 9:13 Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."(NIV)

I can completely see how someone would get a deterministic preordained theology from these scriptures. I also found it bothersome that it says God hated Esau. I have heard this verse used in a way that suggests that God loves some people but that He hates some people. Before you are born God decides if He loves you or hates you... Sure God is a God of love... God is love... but He hates some people.

BUT when we look at the context of the apostle Paul's writing some things become clear.

Romans 9:11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand:(NIV)

Before the twins were born... before they had done anything good or bad.. Paul is supporting his claim that being a child of promise has nothing to do with your family line or law adherence. One of these children will be the child of promise and through their seed give birth to the Messiah Jesus Christ. (You do know that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise right??) It doesn't mean the other child is predestined to be cursed and unloved. If you look at the life of Esau, he was not cursed by God. He becomes very wealthy and fathers a large nation called Edom. Esau who sold his birthright became Edom while Jacob became Israel. Many generations later, Israel and Edom became enemies and fought wars. It is after Israel had defeated Edom in battle that Malachi utters the statement...

Malachi 1:3 Jacob I have loved but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."

Paul is quoting Malachi 1:3 in Romans 9:13. Malachi is referring to the nations of Jacob & Esau. Jacob's nation brought blessing on themselves through obedience to God... Malachi typifies this as LOVE... And Esau's nation brought a curse on themselves through disobedience... Malachi typifies this as HATE. This scripture itself, Romans 9:13 is often twisted! We stand by the Word of God that proclaims God to be Love and that He loves the entire world. If you have questions about it... chat us up on the text line. 214 856 0550

Paul is not making a point that God loves some people and hates some people in Romans 9.

The point of Jacob and Esau is this. Although they had the same LINEAGE God chose one of them to carry the promise. God made this choice, not based on merit or through measuring their ability to follow scripture and commandment.. Because they were babies, neither of them had done good or bad. Paul goes on to say this election... this choice is...

Romans 9:12 not by works but by him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger."(NIV)

God's Word had not failed! This is what Paul is telling us. His covenant promises had not failed, because His covenant promises were never

based on nationality or law adherence. Instead, Paul argues that God had always exercised His sovereign right to choose whomever he wanted... to show mercy to whomever He wanted.

Romans 9:14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all!(NIV)

Romans 9:15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."(NIV)

ELECTION

Election means to choose. To pick out.

One of the truths of Romans 9 is God's right to choose. God has the right to choose whoever he wants and do whatever He wants. He is God. He can do anything and everything He sees fit to do. You agree right?

But the point of God's election Paul is making, is not on an individual level for salvation... that is to say, God picks you and you and you. Congrats ya'll are saved. Sorry to all of you other sorry suckers. You have been chosen for wrath and judgment.

Instead this election is for vocation. It is for a special use and jobs. As in when God selected Paul to be a vessel to the Gentiles. The same Hebrew word was used in Acts 9:15... eklogē (ek-law-gay)

Here is the point of Romans 9!

God elected, chose, Isaac to carry His covenant. Not based on him being Abraham's first born. God included Jacob into His covenant promise, not based on merit. And now God is choosing you! God is electing you for special purpose to carry the promise! Jesus is the promise we carry!

Paul is talking to Gentile Christians in Rome! Why would he be talking to them about ancient Jewish history... except to show them where and why they fit into this Promise. Just as God chose people who were not of lineage... He is now choosing you! Just as God chose people in spite of their merit and in spite of their disobedience... He is now choosing you! Not based on your works, but on his love and mercy! Not because you deserve it... but because HE GETS TO CHOOSE! AND HE CHOOSES YOU! God's valentine says "I choo choo choose you."

God's Word has not failed! God is not UNCHOOSING Israel. God still loves Israel, but they are, of their own free will, rejecting the promise of Jesus Christ the Messiah. God still shows mercy to them and is not done with them yet... BUT AS FOR YOU of the Gentile race. You don't have the right lineage – But God chooses you anyway! You have done wrong things – But God chooses you anyway! And God has never UNCHOSE you! God loves you so much He gave His only son for you and He has never looked back. YOU ARE CHOSEN!

It is nothing new! Because God's covenant was never based on nationality or law adherence. His covenant is based on mercy.

Again let's point out that Romans 9 isn't talking about individual salvation. Paul is talking about God choosing the entire NATION of Israel. Paul is talking about God extending His covenant and election to all Gentiles. Wait a second... that leaves no one out. God's mercy is extended to whoever He chooses and He is extending it to all.

God's promise is to everybody!

Acts 2:39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."(NIV)

God is not electing people to salvation and damnation. He does in some cases elect us to vocation and specific tasks. But heaven and hell is a free will issue.

KEY TO INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE **Look for the summary**

Sometimes Scripture is difficult to understand. Many times the writer will sense this themselves and do something to help the reader. The writer will summarize their argument. **So look for the summary**

Romans 9 has a small summary in **Romans 9:8** It is clearly marked by the words IN OTHER WORDS...

Romans 9:8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.(NIV)

Also at the end of the chapter Paul marks a summary with the words..
WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY

Romans 9:30 What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith;(NIV)

Romans 9:31 but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.(NIV)

Romans 9:32 Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone."(NIV)

Paul summarizes everything he was trying to say. He reveals that he was not talking about those that are predestined for Heaven and Hell. Paul instead reveals he was talking about Israel & Gentiles... a righteousness that is fulfilled by faith and a righteousness that isn't accomplished through the law! His summary comes back to Jesus the stumbling stone!

Look for the summary

I want to end today's sermon by untwisting Romans 9:19-23 where Paul talks about the Potter who is working with difficult clay.

Romans 9:19 One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?"(NIV)

Romans 9:20 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?'"(NIV)

Romans 9:21 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?(NIV)

Romans 9:22 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?(NIV)

Romans 9:23 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--(NIV)

Upon reading this I think we can all agree that we can see why some interpret this scripture in a predetermined way. Paul asks if God has the right as the potter makes some vessels/people for special purposes

and some for common use. The original Greek reads honorable & dishonorable use. And then Paul asks what if God made objects/people prepared for wrath. This is where some think God has created some people and predestined them to go to hell. What if God created people predestined for hell to make known His glory to the objects of mercy... ? ...Oh man.. Do you think God creating people for hell reveals God's glory to us that are created for heaven? Easy for you to say if you think you are saved.... Not so easy to say if you are predestined for Hell.

Now this scripture is tricky. Here are 3 things to consider..

#1 The context. We have already shown using Paul's own words that he is writing concerning Israel and God's word not failing.

#2 We have already shown you Paul's summary which doesn't even hint of this chapter being about individual salvation. Instead shows that it is about Gentiles & Israel with the deciding factor not being a predetermination... but the deciding factor is Jesus the stumbling stone. Whether or not we receive Jesus.

#3 And lastly we will look at the context of the Potter.

The Word of God is all connected. So when something is referenced we need to see what the reference is.

Paul references a **Potter**. So we need to ask if there is something deeper to that reference that can speak to this scripture. And there is..

Isaiah twice mentions God as our potter.

Isaiah 29:16, Isaiah 64:8 both show that God is our Potter and who are we to argue with Him. Which makes you wonder how predestined vessels could argue with their creator... unless he created us to argue with him...?

Then there is one more Potter reference.. Jeremiah 18.

The contextual reference to the Potter mentioned in Romans 9 is found in detail here in Jeremiah 18. Let's see what it says and if it supports a deterministic interpretation.

Jeremiah 18:2 "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message."(NIV)

Jeremiah 18:3 So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel.(NIV)

Jeremiah 18:4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.(NIV)

God the potter is forming a piece of clay into a pot, but the clay messed up... The plan the potter had for the clay was not being seen because the clay was fighting the potter... refusing to be molded as the potter desired.

Wait a second... That sounds like free will. The Potter doesn't seem to be working a pre-determined plan with the clay.. He appears to be trying to shape the clay, to influence it, to mold it... and His plan is not always received by us, the clay.

So what does the potter do with this piece of clay that has become marred... does he throw it away... is this clay a vessel prepared for His wrath?? NO! God the Potter places it back on his wheel and begins to work again.

MUSICIAN

God is a Patient Potter

God's plan is not marked with a predetermined idea... His plan is marked with patient love.

Jeremiah 18:5 Then the word of the LORD came to me:(NIV)

Jeremiah 18:6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.(NIV)

Jeremiah 18:7 If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed,(NIV)

Jeremiah 18:8 and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.(NIV)

Jeremiah 18:9 And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted,(NIV)

Jeremiah 18:10 and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.(NIV)

That doesn't sound predetermined to me. If a nation is to be destroyed... but repents... God will relent! God will forgive. We see this happen in the story of Jonah in the city of Nineveh. And this is the reference that Paul is drawing from in Romans 9! This is the hope for Israel! This is our hope. That we can turn back to God in repentance.

2 Peter 3:9 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.(NIV)

God's plan is not marked with a predetermined idea... His plan is marked with patient love. Even went we are not allowing Him to mold us... He places us back on His wheel.. He doesn't say.. well I created these people for destruction anyway and toss us aside..

Ok Bible Scholars... look at **Jeremiah 18:4** and tell me where the clay is when it becomes marred...

The clay messes up IN HIS HANDS. Let me give some hope today. Even though you have messed up. Even though you have fallen short of what God would have you to be. Even though you have been disobedient and fought God... YOU ARE STILL IN HIS HAND!

He's got the whole world in His hands. He has not given up. You have never been out of His hands.

You are are clay IN THE POTTERS HANDS! It's time to yield to the Potter today and let Him mold us into whatever He decides best.