

THE BOOK OF ROMANS
"Israel's Rejection and God's Power"
Romans 9:19-29

INTRODUCTION

1. The Apostle Paul, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has three chapters (9-11) in this book to demonstrate that God has not abandoned His program for the nation Israel.
2. With all the privileges that Israel had, the nation still turned away from the Messiah Jesus. Over this, Paul had great personal burden (vv. 1-5).
3. This rejection led to a supposed objection: Are God's promises, therefore, of none effect? The answer is an emphatic "no" (vv. 6-13).
4. The sovereign choice of God--Isaac and not Ishmael; Jacob and not Esau raises a second supposed objection: Is God's justice sustained by such action. The answer is given by reference to Moses (Ex 32-34) and Pharaoh (Ex 1-11). The former illustrates God's mercy while the latter His judgment. So God is absolutely just--Scripture proves this! Moreover, He is sovereign.
5. Now, a new section introduces more objections and questions. Note:

1. GOD'S POWER vv 19-21

A. Questioned v 19

In view of God's hardening of Pharaoh, the question is raised: Since God hardens, then why does He still (!) find fault? The verb means "to blame." Moreover, who can really resist His will (perfect tense)? This all sounds legitimate, but is it?

b. Supported v 20

God's absolute sovereign power is vindicated. Who could possibly talk to God this way? Is there not an irreverence in equalizing man with God? To answer one's face is implied in the verb "reply." The quote is from Isa. 29:16. The second question anticipates a negative reply. The potter takes the clay as he finds it, but uses it as he wishes.

c. Illustrated v 21

This answers the third question in v 20 and expects an affirmative reply. This is another statement of God's sovereignty. God's power is exercised by His right to do as He judges what is best. Amazing! The "lump" is identical, but out of it He can make one part a vessel to ornament and from the other part a vessel for some base use. (cf. Moses and Pharaoh).

2. GOD'S CHARACTER vv 22, 23

a. His wrath v 22

The verb willing is concessive i.e. "although willing," God "endured." Thus God bore with the vessels of wrath. They were "fit" unto destruction. The verb means to equip (cf. Mt. 4:21). God is not said to have done this. Yet God's wrath is tempered by His long-suffering.

b. His glory v 23

God's long-suffering is also associated with His intent to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy. These are not vessels of favor, but vessels upon which mercy is shown. Thus men, being sinners, have no rights before God. In His justice He could destroy them all, but He chooses to show mercy towards some and restrains His wrath toward the rest.

3. GOD'S WORD vv 24-29

a. About God v 24

This verse points out those upon whom His mercy is shown. Jews and Gentiles are kept separate, albeit the main accent is on the Jew. Nationality is not an issue; God's call is.

b. About Gentiles vv 25, 26

The quotations are from Hosea 2:23 and 1:10. They are used to predict the call of the Gentiles. Hosea 2:23 speaks of believing Israelites (cf. 1 Peter 2:9), but 1:10 of Gentiles. What grace!

c. About Israel vv 27-29

The quotation to the end of v. 28 is from Isa. 10:22, 23, although the verses are divided differently. The remnant will be saved (v. 27). The short work is the tribulation period (v. 28). Should one object to the remnant doctrine, let him understand that if God had not intervened in sovereign grace, none would have made it. Rather, they would be like Sodom and Gomorrah. The quote in v. 29 is from Isaiah 1:9.

CONCLUSION No, God is not to be blamed. God is sovereign and man is responsible. This is an antinomy. Both are to be believed firmly, held tenaciously, proclaimed fully, and our lives are to be lived in the light thereof. Amen.