



## BALANCE!

### Maintaining the Mystery of Romans 9 • Part 2

Lesson 16

*"Life should be lived on the edge! See every day as a true challenge, then you live your life on the tightrope."* ~Philippe Petit

*"Life is on the wire, the rest is just waiting!"* ~Karl "Papa" Wallenda

### How Do We MAINTAIN the MYSTERY in ROMANS 9? KEEP A BIBLICAL BALANCE!

Don't over-emphasize **HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY** to the extent we eliminate divine sovereignty from the chapter.



Don't over-emphasize **DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY** to the extent we eliminate human responsibility from the chapter.

God's sovereignty and human responsibility **are not equals**, because the Bible **clearly exalts** God's sovereignty over human responsibility, but does so in way that **does not eliminate** human responsibility!

#### Three Suggestions for Walking the Tightrope of Romans 9

1. Allow Paul to **FOCUS ON** what the Holy Spirit led him to write in Romans 9. *2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy*
2. Do not **ELIMINATE** God's unconditional election of individuals to salvation from Romans 9.

Corporate or Individual Election?	Election to Service for God or Salvation by God?	Conditional or Unconditional Election?
BOTH but the emphasis in Rom 9 is on individuals <i>Individuals are chosen to become a part of God's corporate people.</i>	BOTH but the emphasis in Rom 9-11 is on salvation <i>Chosen by God for salvation to serve His purposes.</i>	ONLY unconditional election in Rom 9-11 <i>God's choice is based on His merciful &amp; just character not on foreknowing we would choose Him.</i>

#### Three Ways People Attempt to Do This

#1 They attempt to see **only CORPORATE** election in the passage and not the sovereign choice of individuals.

- People who want to champion human responsibility in Romans 9 claim Paul's only concern is **groups of people** in the chapter and **not individuals**.

But God's sovereign choice of **individuals** cannot be eliminated from the passage, because...

- (1) Paul repeatedly refers to **individuals** by name: *Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, (Ishmael by implication), Rebekah, Jacob, Esau, Moses, Pharaoh. and "even us whom He has called"*
- (2) Paul repeatedly uses **singular** instead of plural words at key times in his argument.
- (3) While the unconditional choice of the nation of Israel is addressed in these chapters, Paul does not address groups of people **without also** considering them as individuals.

#2 They attempt to see **only** sovereign election to **SERVICE** in the passage and not the sovereign choice of individuals to salvation.

- People who want to champion human responsibility in Romans 9 argue that Paul is not talking about eternal salvation (whether individuals or groups) but about special roles in fulfilling God's purpose of salvation.

But God's sovereign choice of **individuals for salvation** cannot be eliminated from the passage, because...

(1) Paul's **BURDEN** is salvation by God and not just service for God. *Romans 9:1-5; 10:1; 11:1-2*

(2) Paul's **LANGUAGE** means salvation by God and not just service for God. *Romans 9:6-11*

*"children of Abraham" (9:7); "children of God" (9:8); "children of promise" (9:8); "God's purpose of election" (9:11); "him who calls" (9:11)*  
*Compare Romans 8:28-39 where Paul uses similar words in the context of eternal salvation and security.*

(3) Paul's **APPLICATION** of various OT passages relates to salvation by God and not just service for God, without violating their meaning in the OT.

#3 They attempt to overlook the fact that the basis of God's choice of individuals for salvation in Romans 9 is not based on God **knowing** ahead of time who would choose Him (**foreknowledge**), but on God **choosing** ahead of time who would choose Him (**foreordination**).

**Conditional Election** teaches that "before the world ever existed God **conditionally** predestined some specific individuals to eternal life and the rest to eternal condemnation, based on His foreknowledge of their freewill responses to His law and to His grace."

Jack Cottrell, *Perspectives on Election: Five Views*, p. 72

**Unconditional Election** teaches that "before Creation God selected out of the human race, foreseen as fallen, those whom He would redeem, bring to faith, justify, and glorify in and through Jesus Christ... This divine choice is an expression of free and sovereign grace, for it is unconstrained and **unconditional**, not merited by anything in those who are its subjects."

J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology*, p. 149

➤ In other words, those who would like to champion human responsibility over divine sovereignty in Romans 9, have to try very hard to overlook the obvious in this passage.

(1) There are several times in Romans 9 that Paul could have very easily mentioned God's foreknowledge of who would **choose to receive** the offer of salvation and who would **choose to reject** it. (9:11, 13, 14-15, 16, 18, 19-20, 24-26)

(2) We know we are rightly understanding Paul's argument when the result of our teaching is to raise these very same objections, none of which are the result of thinking God that chooses us **because we first chose Him**, but are all a result of Paul's teaching that God chooses us **so we will choose Him!**

**God's choice of individual sinners for salvation is based solely on His merciful and just character, not on foreknowing they would choose Him.**

*"Arminians [champions of free will] who read Romans 9 in terms of election to salvation assume and assert that this election is conditional, or corporate, or according to foreknowledge. In my judgment, though, such qualifications are difficult to sustain in view of the teaching of Romans 9 itself."*

~Jack Cottrell, a classical Arminian, *Perspectives on Election: Five Views*, p. 124

*"Election keeps no one out of heaven who would otherwise have been there, but it keeps a whole multitude of sinners out of hell who otherwise would have been there." ~Mark Webb*

**NEXT WEEK ~ How Not to Fall Off the Tightrope in the Other Direction!**  
*Don't Eliminate Human Responsibility by the Extreme of Double Predestination*