



BALANCE!

Maintaining the Mystery of Romans 9 • Part 3

Lesson 17

How Do We MAINTAIN the MYSTERY in ROMANS 9?

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 3:16-17
2. Do not eliminate divine sovereignty in the unconditional election of individuals to salvation from Romans 9.
3. Do not _____ human responsibility by going to the extreme of double predestination in Romans 9.

Extreme Double Predestination Claims that God...

- God not only chose who would be saved but also who would be damned before they were created _____ **any reference to them being sinners by birth and by choice.**

"The distortion of double predestination looks like this: There is a **symmetry** [perfect balance] that exists between election and reprobation. God works in the same way and same manner with respect to the elect and to the reprobate [those hardened in their sin]. That is to say, from all eternity God decreed some to election and by divine initiative works faith in their hearts and brings them actively to salvation. **By the same token**, from all eternity God decrees some to sin and damnation...and actively intervenes to work sin in their lives, bringing them to damnation by divine initiative...Stated another way, we can establish a **parallelism** of...predestination by means of a **positive symmetry**. We can call this a **positive-positive view of predestination**. This is, God positively and actively intervenes in the lives of the elect to bring them to salvation. **In the same way God positively and actively intervenes in the life of the reprobate to bring him to sin...**"
~R. C. Sproul, Double Predestination

- God was as _____ and directly involved in people becoming sinners and being damned as He was active and directly involved in sinners becoming saints (sons!) and being saved.
- God not only unconditionally chose to save some for Himself but He also _____ chose to damn others in the exact same way.

Extreme Double Predestination Falls Off the Tightrope of the Text because...

- God is sovereign over both salvation and judgment, **but** the Bible is careful to reveal that God's sovereignty over salvation is _____ from His sovereignty over judgment in the following ways:
 - (1) God _____ chooses to _____ show mercy to some who are undeserving sinners = **Sovereign grace and mercy.**

(2) God _____ chooses to _____ pass over and condemn some who are deserving sinners = *Sovereign justice and wrath*.

(3) God considers both as undeserving sinners, but He only actively, unconditionally chooses some be saved, while justly leaving the rest to suffer the consequences of their sinful nature and choices.

Jacob and Esau – *Romans 9:10-13*

Moses and Pharaoh – *Romans 9:14-18; Exodus 1; 4:21; 5:1-2; 7:3-5, 13, 22; 8:15; 9:7, 12, 27-28, 34-35*

God **does not harden** Pharaoh's heart so he would _____ a sinner against his own willful choices.

God **does harden** Pharaoh's heart so he would _____ to be a sinner in keeping with his willful choices, **in order to proclaim the fame of His name and save His chosen people.**

Same Lump of Clay – *Romans 9:19-21*

Vessels of Mercy and Vessels of Wrath – *Romans 9:22-24; Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46*

The vessels of wrath that are worthy of judgment are **passively prepared for destruction.** (9:22)

The vessels of mercy that are equally worthy and deserving of judgment are **actively prepared** _____ by God Himself for a glorious salvation that is rich in mercy. (9:23; Ephesians 2:1-7; Titus 3:3-7)

- Romans 9 does **not** teach **double** predestination/unconditional election to salvation **and** damnation, but it **does** teach _____ predestination/unconditional election to salvation.

*"The weight of biblical and historical evidence rests in favor of a single unconditional election to life. This position holds that out of the mass of fallen and responsible humanity—for reasons known to Himself—God in grace chose some to be saved and to permit the others to persist in their sin...the biblical evidence leads us to posit an **asymmetrical** view of [God's salvation] purpose—namely, **unconditional election to life and conditional election to damnation**. When we speak about damnation, we mean that God predestines persons not to sin and disobedience but to the **condemnation** that issues from sin."
~Bruce Demerest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation**

Note: Other than Romans 9, especially 9:13, there are really only two other passages in the entire Bible that even come close to teaching the extreme of double predestination (Jude 4; 1Peter 2:8). Both verses can be understood in ways very similar to Romans 9, especially 1Peter 2:8, which shares many parallels with Romans 9.

Why Does God Actively Save Some and Passively Pass Over Others?

- To maintain His purpose of election not on the basis of works but on the basis of Him who calls. *Rom 9:11; Eph 1:11*
- To proclaim the fame of His name—God always acts in a manner consistent with His holy character as revealed in the Bible. *Rom 9:15-18, 22-24; Eph 1:9*
- To reveal the amazing, riches of His glorious mercy against the backdrop of His longsuffering wrath. *Rom 9:22-24; Eph 1:4-6*

THIS is the MYSTERY of HIS MAJESTIC MISSION of MERCY!

Next Week • Why Pray for the Lost If God Is So Sovereign? *Romans 10:1*