

Romans 9:14–18  
Is Predestination Fair?

**Monday, November 20, 2023 • Read Romans 9:14–18**

Questions from the Scripture text: With what question does v14 begin? What have some apparently said/asked? How does the apostle answer? To whom has God spoken (v15)? What does He say that He will have? Upon whom? What else does He say that He will have? Upon whom? Of what two types people is the difference not produced (v16)? Who produces it? What does He show? What speaks to whom in v17? What does God say that He has done? In order to show what? And so that what else will happen, where? Upon whom does He have mercy? Whom does He harden?

**Is it unrighteous of God to make the difference between the saved and the unsaved?** Romans 9:14–18 prepares us for the sermon in the midweek prayer meeting. In these five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **it is merciful of God to save from among sinners who all deserve to be hardened.**

**The opposite of unrighteousness.** Notice how the apostle deals with the question (v14) of whether there is unrighteousness with God. He does not reason about whether he thinks God is righteous. That would be to make ourselves the judges of God. Anyone who thinks or speaks this way shows themselves to be impious and arrogant and self-condemned. Instead, the apostle takes God at His own Word. What does God say about God? God says that He is merciful and compassionate (v15)!

This is what makes the difference between the elect and the reprobate: the mercy of God. If there had been any injustice, it would have been on account of not destroying the elect in their sin. But, the apostle has already told us the way by which the Lord could show mercy and be just at the same time (cf. 3:24–26).

**God makes a merciful difference.** So, v16 goes on to restate the point that neither Rebecca and Isaac's will, nor Jacob and Esau's running, was what made the difference. What made the difference? God Himself did! When v11 said this, it referred to Him as "Him who calls." Now, v16 refers to the difference-making God as "God Who shows mercy."

He is a just God, but apart from mercy, that justice would give to all men equally. Apart from mercy, God's justice would rightly give all men wrath, would give all men Hell. It is His mercy that has intervened.

**God rightly does harden.** Though the great difference-maker is mercy and compassion, it is not wrong for God to show His power and declare His Name by the judgment of His enemies. This He declared to Pharaoh, which He put in writing for our sakes (v17). Pharaoh is a sinner, and it is absolutely right for God to be glorified upon him.

The will of God is exercised in both cases in v18: both in the showing of mercy and the hardening. But notice that the latter is "hardening." God does not make them wicked. Rather, He hardens them in wickedness. They are already wicked. God justly hardened, solidified, Pharaoh in being what he already was.

Is there unrighteousness with God? No! NO! NO!! There is mercy with God! Mercy to sinners! Mercy to sinners that He would have been right to harden in their sin. Mercy unto whomever He wills. Free mercy, motivated by His mere good pleasure. Each of us ought to know, before God, that He would have been right to harden me, but instead He has shown me mercy, simply because He wanted to!

**What do you deserve? What is the only way that this wouldn't happen? What does God show, when He makes the difference between the unsaved and the saved?**

*Sample prayer: Lord, we thank you for making the difference for us. Truly, You are just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. Grant unto us to be Yours in Him, and conformed to Him, by Your Spirit. We confess that we deserve to be hardened, but we bless Your Name for Your free mercy toward us in Jesus Christ, through whom we pray, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP130 "LORD, From the Depths to You I Cried" or TPH425 "How Sweet and Awesome Is the Place"**

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))**

Romans 9, 14 through 18. These are god's words. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with god? Certainly not For he says, to moyses. I will have mercy. On whomever, i will have mercy. And i will have compassion on whomever. I will have compassion. So then it is not of him who wills nor of him who runs But of god, Who shows mercy?

For the scripture says to pharaoh. To the pharaoh. For this very purpose, i have raised you up. That i may show my power in you. And that my name may be declared in all the earth. Therefore, He has mercy on whom he will. And, Whom he wills. He hardens.

So far, the reading of god's. Inspired and inherent worked. There have been several points in. Uh, the Book of romans in which the apostle has quoted something that those who hear the preaching of the gospel in their flesh, have raised as an objection. Like let us do evil. Then that good may come or Uh, let us sin that grace may abound or that grace may increase.

And to such things, he has said things like Their condemnation is just, And may it not even be begotten. Which is the same. Response, that latter one. Uh as here in verse 14, when he says, certainly not. But this time the fleshly responds to the gospel is that's not fair.

In response to the fact that to a humanity or from a humanity, all who deserve To be hated by god, all who deserve the wrath of god. God has yet chosen just out of his mere. Good pleasure to love some to elect some to for know, some to use the language.

Of the previous chapter and therefore in this electing love. He has purposeed and in accordance with the purpose or to make stand rather the purpose that is according to election. He effectually calls those whom he has lovingly elected to saving faith in jesus christ. And the way the flesh responds to that doctrine is that's not fair.

Or. To take the colloquial phrase and put it in the language of verse 14. God is unrighteous. That's what people are saying. When they say, that's not fair. There can be no question. That god actually does this. And so we must be very careful when we come to the bible, as it teaches us that god does elect to save out of his mere good pleasure from among those who deserve his hatred, who deserve his wrath.

Because if we say that's not fair, if we allow ourselves to think or to feel, that's not fair, we are placing ourselves and judgment upon god and saying, i am more righteous than god is. He is unrighteous and i am so just and so fair. As to. Cast judgment on make my authoritative determination of What is fair or not?

In the willing, and in the acting. I've got. Now that sounds like it is. It is grotesque But because we lack the self-awareness. To see how grotesque it is. We may be tempted to allow ourselves to think things like, That's not fair. And so the apostle here, having experienced that fleshly response to the doctrine that he has, just opened up in verses 10 through 13.

Takes the pains by the spirit. To declare that, this is actually the opposite of unrighteousness. And notice that he doesn't reason about whether or not Um, it is righteous. What's shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with god, certainly not for. He says, To moyses, etc. In other words, He?

Completely avoids. The trap. Of putting ourselves. In the place of determining, what is true about god? And says, if you want to know, What is true about god? Don't listen to what your thoughts. Think or judge about god, don't listen to what philosophers or other people. Reason together. About god.

If you want to understand or think truly about what god is like then you listen to what god says about god. And so that is the way he begins. To consider this. He leads us by the spirit, addresses us. Under divine inspiration. Considers this for he says to Moses.

I will have mercy on whomever. I will have mercy. And I will have compassion. On whomever, I will have compassion. And there are two marvelous well more than that. But at least these two. In fact, I probably added a third. In my mind when I was saying more than that.

At least these two things. God has declared about himself one. Is that the reason those who deserve And many, who will receive and many, who would have otherwise received his wrath exists. Is so that he may show mercy. And so that he may show compassion. That his mercy and compassion.

Which are expressions of the divine love within the godhead. And the commitment within god in that love. And so there are creatures to whom god's love goes out as a derivative of or an expression of the love that god has within himself. And in order to show how great that love is these creatures actually deserve the divine wrath In order that he may show mercy and compassion.

So great does his mercy. And compassion. And of course, you know, this is the sort of calculus that Uh, man should be careful not to dabble in and go only as far as the scripture says, and as we pointed out in the midweek, sermon this past week, and we'll be seeing again, Um, Seeing soon in in the scripture.

God emphasizes his mercy. He's willing to show his wrath. And yet, he endures the vessels prepared for that wrath patiently because he places a priority upon showing his mercy. And that is exactly. What we would expect if we think carefully about God and the way he reveals himself. And scripture because he alone is god, he alone is eternal And therefore, The commitment of god to himself in love is one that he has independent of the creature.

And the expression that comes out of that commitment in wrath is one that actually requires The creature. So that we may say in an eternal way of god as he says in the scripture, god is love. But we cannot say, God is. Wrath. He shows wrath because he is love.

But he is love. And so there is this emphasis Upon his mercy and upon his compassion. That is in his salvation. And so even by the time we have finished verse 15, The apostle by the spirit and really the spirit using the apostle as common said, The response, that's not fair, that comes from the flesh.

But here is the response that comes from the spirit. Oh, how great is the mercy and compassion of god, That those who deserve as hatred. Might receive instead his redeeming adopting love. So that when we have either one of those responses come from our own heart, We can identify the source in our heart.

Of that response. The, that's not fair response. Comes from my flesh. But if I find, uh, Oh, how great? This god's love that to one who deserves his hatred such as I He would show mercy and compassionate instead. Then I know that that has come from the spirit that has come From the same.

God, who is the speaker being quoted in verse 15? And then not only god's mercy, but god's power. Oh, have mercy on whomever. I will have mercy. I will have compassion on whomever. I will have compassion. In other words, if I am determined to save someone, That person. Neither, neither that person nor anyone else nor the devil, nor all of the combined powers of all of the devils can keep me from showing mercy to that one.

Can keep me from showing compassion to that one. So that the infinite goodness and love of god is expressed in almighty power. And he cannot be. Resist it. So this is exactly the opposite. Of unrighteousness. Therefore is god. Who makes the difference? Verse 16, this it is not of him who wills nor of him who runs but of god who shows mercy Is similar to the end of verse 11, not of works.

But of him who calls. So, just as It is not of the one who desires. That someone else. Uh, would do it. It is not. Would believe in the lord, it is not on account of the one who runs. The one who does. The believing in the lord but if god who shows, mercy.

He has desired the the salvation of those who who are saved more than anyone else has desired it. You know, Paul started out expressing. His will that all the israelites would be saved? Then he's going to say, again the At the beginning of chapter 10, Uh, my heart's desire and prayer to god for israel, is that they would be saved.

And yet god has willed desired. The salvation of those, who would be saved infinitely more. Than anyone else has ever desired someone, else's salvation. And is not of him who runs the one who who realizes that he is, poor in spirit realize that he is bankrupt. Realizes that christ is god who has given himself for sinners and realizes that the that christ has done that for him?

It is not the work of the one choosing, but it is the work of the god who is showing mercy. And so when someone comes to faith and Jesus Christ, he is not acting out of merit. In fact, he is yielding. Out of god's mercy. To him. And so, god is the one who makes.

The merciful. Difference. And in the last place. Even in those in whom god does not make a mercile a difference. He is active. And he is. Righteous. Do you know what's righteous? For wicked pharaoh. To be solidified. In what he already is. To be given over. To what he already is.

And this is something that actually happens. In the case of everyone who dies apart from christ, doesn't it? As long as they're in this world, they find themselves, the objects of a common grace that restrains the expression of their wickedness. Even. Permits, such outside pressures as would produce Uh, some form some outward.

Conformity to the law of god. But once someone, Dies outside of christ. All restraint is removed. They become as it were as a devil.

And this is what we see in part in pharaoh. During pharaoh's life. God allows Pharaoh to thicken. To solidify. To harden. And it is righteous, and just of god. To give pharaoh over. To what he is like and even to do, so for the purpose. Of glorifying himself. In doing good.

To those who are his in the course. Of redeeming then and saving them. And so god does righteously. Harden, he has mercy on who he wills. And that's the main point of all of this first half of verse 18, But, Whom he wills, he hardens. Which is also true.

And there's also righteous. The amazing glory of the gospel. As we heard back in chapter 3, 24 through 26. Is that when he saves by the grace of christ, He is both just. And the justifier. Of the one who has faith in christ Jesus. So, he shows this mercy.

In this power. Future without compromising his justice. At all.

Let's pray. Oh yep. The mail is here. Let's pray. Our gracious garden our heavenly father. We're so thankful to you for this portion of your word. Particularly for how it helps us distinguish. Between that response in our heart that comes from our flesh. And that response in our heart that comes from your spirit help us O, Lord to mortify, The flesh.

And To grow. By the grace and knowledge of jesus christ and conformity to him and conformity to your spirit. And blessed to us the knowledge of your mercy. We pray in jesus name. Amen.