

Calvinism (III)

Calvinists misuse Romans 9

- Ro.2:28-29; 3:1
 - What advantage in being a Jew?
 - Romans 9 gives a full answer.
 - Did God lie?

There is a distinction between
Israel and real Israel.

I. Romans 9: God Is Faithful

Ro.9:1-2

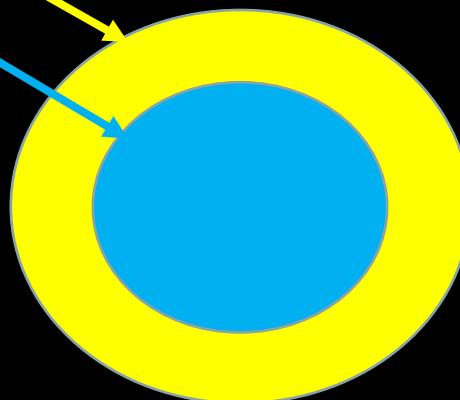
- Emphatic: ‘truth’
 - Not a lie: ¹conscience; ²Holy Spirit
- I could wish... – potential action
- Accursed (cursed): forfeit salvation
- In spite of all their privileges, many Jews are accursed
 - How to comprehend love of Paul? Ex.32
 - Even more, of Jesus (Ro.5:6-8)
 - If God elected Jews (saved), why worry?

Ro.9:4-5

- Israel became so impressed with privileges that they rejected purpose of privileges: God's salvation in Christ.
- From whom...Christ came. Jn.4:22
 - Sons of such fathers, lost! Jn.1:11

Ro.9:6

- “Jews enjoy all these blessings, yet are lost?” “God’s word failed?”
 - Paul answers an objection one may draw from verses 1-5.
 - First Israel: ethnic / national
 - Second Israel: spiritual (saved)



Ro.9:6

- “Jews enjoy all these blessings, yet are lost?” “God’s word failed?”
 - God fulfilled ALL His promises (4-5).
 - Personal salvation was not among these promises.
 - Salvation was only to *spiritual* Israel.
 - Mere blood relationship did not save.
Ro.2:28-29. Cf. Korah, Num.16.

Ro.9:7-9

- This promise involved national Israel, not spiritual.
- God chose to build His nation through Isaac, not Ishmael.
- 7: Israel within Israel: only remnant is saved (27); national Israel is for service.
 - Even Jews rejoiced that God excluded others sons of Abraham (Ishmael, Arabs).

Ro.9:7-9

- 8a: children of flesh (physical birth) are not saved.
 - As God chose Isaac, not Ishmael, He now chooses those of faith, not physical lineage. Ro.2:28-29; Gal.3:7-9; 4:28.
- 8b-9: ‘for’ explains 8: national Israel.
 - Abraham’s covenant family is not saved merely by being born.
- 9: Gn.18:10, 14, Sarah . . . son.

Ro.9:10-13

- Choice of Isaac was no surprise.
- Jacob and Esau have same father AND mother: twins...but firstborn is not chosen.
- God chose before they were born.
 - “Unconditional election”?
 - Yes: for service, not for salvation.
- God chose Jesus’ ancestry as He wished.
- Gn.23:23... ‘two nations in womb’; had to pick one.

Ro.9:10-13

- Older would serve younger.
 - Esau never served Jacob (Gn.32:18, 20).
 - Edom did serve Israel / Judah, Nu.24:18f; 2 Sm.8:14, etc.
- ‘It is written...’ – Mal.1:2-4
 - Paul’s prooftext: more than 1000 years after they lived.
- Israel with its faults served God’s purpose
- Edom tried to destroy Israel’s purpose
- Paul is not discussing double predestination

Ro.9:14-15

- Is God unrighteous (unjust, unfair)? No!!!
(3:4; Tit.1:2).
- Issue: did God break His promise to Israel?
- Remember: two Israels (v.6).
 - National Israel approved God's right to reject Arabs and Edom as servants . . . and now God rejects them. Is He wrong?
 - Israel has same opportunity to be saved as Gentiles.

Ro.9:14-15

- 15: ‘for’ God said... Ex.33:19 (18)
- He has right to choose anyone He pleases to serve His purposes
 - a. Choice of eternal salvation or servants?
 - To see God’s face shows His favor.
 - Broader context: national Israel.
 - Calf: serious consequences, Ex.32:25-35
 - Salvation is at stake...
 - But...

Ro.9:14-15

- Most of context: existence as a nation
 - 32:...9-14. [10: new nation of Moses]
 - 33:1-5... great concern: travel without God
 - 33:12-16... Moses pleads...
 - 34:...6-9, God will go with them
 - 34:10-28, reestablishes the covenant
- Parallel: Num.14 – on verge of renouncing covenant; Moses intercedes
 - Nu.14:18 cites Ex.34:6-7 – mercy...

Ro.9:14-15

- “But ‘mercy and compassion’ refer only to salvation?” Wrong!
 - More often used of temporal blessings.
 - Jer.13:14, physical
 - Lk.6:36, human mercy to match heavenly
 - 2 Co.4:1, call to be apostle
 - Hb.10:28, execution
- b. How does v.15 fit Ro.9?
- Issue: God’s faithfulness to Israel.
 - He chose them to serve; is each Jew saved?

Ro.9:16-17

- 16: issue is not salvation but service; based on God's purpose.
 - He chose Balaam, Nu.22... though Balaam was hostile. He served.
 - He chose Jonah... He served.
- 16: mercy (as v.14): chosen for service.
 - ‘So then’ concludes point of v.15 (v.17 further explains).

Ro.9:16-17

- 17: ‘For...’: as v.15, another OT quote – Ex.9:16.
- God can choose His own servants – including Pharaoh (not for salvation).
 - ‘Raised you up’: of God calling up actors on stage of history. Hab.1:6; Jer.50:41.
 - Pharaoh (17): not in spite of his hard heart but because of it. [Cf. Is.44:28-45:7]

Ro.9:16-17

- God could have killed Pharaoh immediately; instead He used him for object lesson.
 1. Display God's power.
 - Pharaoh's stubbornness gave God an opportunity to pile on plagues...
 2. Proclaim God's Name on earth.
 - Every Jew would approve God's use of Pharaoh.
 - God did not make a good man do bad.
 - Point: same principle applies to Israel.

Ro.9:18

- Therefore (as v.16): logical conclusion from context (6-17) –
 - Paul is not discussing eternal destiny of individuals.
 - Paul is dealing with Israel's place in God's plan (bringing Jesus into world – NOT the fate of individuals).
 - This 'mercy' does not refer to salvation but to God's favor in choosing someone to serve His purpose.

Ro.9:18

Summary

- 1) Pharaoh could not respect a ‘god of slaves.’
- 2) Plagues forced Pharaoh to choose: obey Israel’s God (do something he did not like) or just say No!
- 3) God did not make a good man bad.
- 4) He hardened his own heart as/when God hardened his heart through the demands.
- 5) Using evil man did not cancel his guilt; Is.10.

I. Romans 9: God Is Faithful

II. Importance Of Context

Historical Context

- All “church fathers” before Augustine interpreted Romans 9, not of final salvation of persons (as Calvinistic ‘double predestination’) but of the execution of God’s plan.
 - Underlying it all is Paul’s explanation for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

Near context

- Passages that Calvin appeals to are contrary to Paul’s point.
- Calvinists ignore 9:30-33 and chapter 10.

Conclusion

- The election throughout Romans 9 does not pertain to final salvation of persons, but to God's servants (as Israel who would bring Christ into the world).
- Not even all Calvinists interpret it as unconditional election to salvation.
- Underlying the whole section: Paul's justification for preaching gospel to Gentiles (v.24-33). ["How can Gentiles receive what Israel lost?"]