



“God is God, and I am not”

(Romans 9:1-29)

Reading and Study Guide for the week
of May 12-18, 2024

Memory verse: *“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”* (Romans 10:9)

This week, read and study Romans 9:1-29. Some questions to answer and think about this week with your family or Community Group:

1. How do you react when someone brags that God is on his or her side?
2. What situation made Paul feel sad and anguished? (9:2–3)
3. What gifts and opportunities had God given to the Jewish people? (9:4–5)
4. How did Paul explain the difference between Jews who believe and Jews who do not believe? (9:6–8)
5. What did Paul say to people who claim to be children of God merely because they are descendants of Abraham? (9:8–9)
6. What decision did God make about Jacob and Esau before they were born? (9:12–13)
7. How did Paul defend the accusation that God is unjust in His treatment of people? (9:14–15)
8. What determines how God bestows favor on people? (9:16)
9. Why does God show great patience with us even though we deserve His wrath? (9:22–24)
10. What did the prophets Isaiah and Hosea tell us about God’s patience and justice? (9:25–29)
11. How could a person come from a very religious background and still not have a personal faith in God?
12. On what basis does God choose people to inherit His promises?
13. How have you experienced God’s mercy and patience in your life?
14. What sacrifices or efforts can you make this week to help a friend come to faith in Christ?

Life Application Bible Notes

9:1–3 Paul expressed concern for his Jewish brothers and sisters by saying that he would willingly take their punishment if that would save them. While the only one who can save us is Christ, Paul showed a rare depth of love. Like Jesus, he was willing to sacrifice so others would be saved. How concerned are you for those who don’t know Christ? Are you willing to sacrifice your time, money, energy, comfort, and safety to see them come to faith in Jesus?

9:4 The Jews viewed God’s choosing of Israel in the Old Testament as being like adoption. They were undeserving and without rights as natural children. Yet God adopted them and granted them the status of his sons and daughters.

9:6 God’s word in the form of beautiful covenant promises came to Abraham. Covenant people, the true children of Abraham, are not just his biological descendants. They are all those who trust in God and in what Jesus Christ has done for them (see also 2:29; Galatians 3:7).

9:11 The Jews were proud of the fact that their lineage came from Isaac, whose mother was Sarah (Abraham’s legitimate wife), rather than Ishmael, whose mother was Hagar (Sarah’s servant). Paul asserts that no one can claim to be chosen by God because of his or her heritage or good deeds. God freely chooses to save whomever he wills. The doctrine of election teaches that it is God’s sovereign choice to save us by his goodness and mercy, not by our own merit.

9:12–14 Was it right for God to choose Jacob, the younger, to be over Esau? In Malachi 1:2, 3, the statement “This is how I showed my love for you: I loved your ancestor Jacob, but I rejected his brother Esau” refers to the nations of Israel and Edom rather than to the individual brothers. God chose Jacob to continue the family line of the faithful because he knew his heart was for God. But he did not exclude Esau from knowing and loving him. Keep in mind the kind of God we worship: He is sovereign; he is not arbitrary; in all things he works for our good; he is trustworthy; he will save all who believe in him. When we understand these qualities of God, we know that his choices are good even if we don’t understand all his reasons.

9:16 The fallacy of gaining salvation by human effort remains as strong as ever—people still think good intentions are the key to unlock the door to eternal life. By the time they get to try the lock, they will find that their key does not fit. Others imagine that their efforts are building an invisible ladder to heaven made up of service, family, position, reputation, good work, and desire, although none of these rungs will support a feather. People are so busy trying to reach God that they completely miss the truth that God has already reached down to them. We cannot earn God’s mercy—if we could, it would not be mercy.

9:17, 18 Paul quotes from Exodus 9:16, where God foretold how Pharaoh would be used to declare God’s power. Paul uses this argument to show that salvation was God’s work, not people’s. God’s judgment on Pharaoh’s choice to resist God was to confirm that sin and harden his heart. The consequences of Pharaoh’s rebellion would be his own punishment.

9:21 With this illustration, Paul is not saying that some of us are worth more than others but that the Creator has control over the created object. The created object, therefore, has no right to demand anything from its Creator—its very existence depends on him. Keeping this perspective removes any temptation to have pride in personal achievement.

9:25, 26 About seven hundred years before Jesus’ birth, Hosea told of God’s intention to restore his people. Paul applies Hosea’s message to God’s intention to bring Gentiles into his family after the Jews rejected his plan. Verse 25 is a quotation from Hosea 2:23 and verse 26 is from Hosea 1:10.

9:27–29 Isaiah prophesied that only a small number of God’s original people, the Jews, would be saved. Paul saw this happening in every city where he preached. Even though he went to the Jews first, relatively few ever accepted the message. Verses 27 and 28 are based on Isaiah 10:22, 23; and 9:29 is from Isaiah 1:9.¹



Romans Study Guide questions and notes are from

¹ [Life Application Bible Notes](#) (Tyndale, 2007), 1910–1912.