



A Worship Discussion Guide for Individuals, Groups & Families For the week of April 30, 2023

Read the Bible passage aloud in your group meeting. This is a worship discussion guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for your meeting, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Warm Up

- When have you experienced frustration in ministry to others. Why was that so difficult?
- Does the Christian belief in the sovereignty of God encourage or challenge you? Why?

Romans 9:1-29

God's Sovereignty

Why doesn't all Israel believe when the Gospel should be clearest to them? This week, Paul leads us through several things we CAN'T conclude from the large number of Jews that are not believers in Jesus. And, we'll reflect on the meaning of God's election.

¹I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—²that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

- Romans 8 ended with such a [tremendous crescendo of confidence](#). God guarantees our perseverance, because our salvation is not based on our strength. So, why would Paul now think about the unbelief of the majority of Israel?
- What are Israel's benefits, and how does each benefit point toward Christ? (4-5)
- Paul is deeply grieved (2-3). What does he do with that grief?

⁶But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, ⁷and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ⁸This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. ⁹For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son." ¹⁰And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—¹²she was told, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

- How does Paul account for Jewish unbelief and still defend the word (promises) of God? How does he prove his answer from the Old Testament?
- Why did Jacob inherit the promises to Abraham, while Esau did not? (10-13)
- Summarize how Paul has answered the question: "If God is true to His promises, why are there so many Jewish unbelievers?"

¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." ¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

- **How does Paul refute the charge that God is unfair to choose some and reject others? (14-16)**
- **On what basis does God choose people to inherit His promises? What factors do not affect His choice? (16)**
- **What does it mean that God "hardens"? (18)**

¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" ²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? ²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— ²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea,

"Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,'

and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'"

²⁶ "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, ²⁸ for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay." ²⁹ And as Isaiah predicted,

"If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah."

- **How does Paul refute the charge that God is unfair to choose some and reject others? (19-22)**
- **Are you ever tempted to believe God is unfair or arbitrary in His dealings with people? How does Paul's teaching on the sovereignty of God challenge or comfort you?**
- **Paul has addressed some of the intellectual questions that the doctrine of election raises. If you believe that God is the One who elects, what practical, beneficial effect can this belief have on the way you live?**
- **It is common in our Christian experience to grow less confident in our actions and strength as we mature, and to grow more confident in God's actions and strength. Reflect on your life: Can you now see God's hand in a way you could not see it at the time?**
- **Pray together in light of this week's passage.**

To hear sermons and access past study guides visit www.wepc.org/resources/sermons-media-study-guide

Questions? Contact Pastor Kevin Greene,
kevin@wepc.org

