

## **Romans 9:1-8 NASB**

“If God ‘elects’ some, does that mean He is biased?”

“I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, <sup>2</sup>that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup>who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises, <sup>5</sup>whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

“<sup>6</sup> But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; <sup>7</sup>nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: “THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED.” <sup>8</sup>That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.”

**Our text is part of a powerful religious essay.**

**As you probably believe, Paul deemed Jesus to be God’s one and only Son.**

**He knew Jesus died by crucifixion and was placed securely in a tomb.**

**Three days later, Jesus came back from the dead, a fact confirmed by many witnesses.**

**Jesus ascended to heaven until the Last Day when he’ll return to judge all people.**

Based on these and other truths, Romans takes us deep into human despair only to soar again to godly heights.



**A fun-loving Kansas City cousin of mine loved to fly and owned his own airplane. In the mid-1970s, he took one of our sons and me on a “tour” of Kansas City.**

That exhilarating flight took us into the heights and back to the depths.

**My cousin put that four-place airplane in a climb almost to the point of stalling and then “bent it over the top.”**

Momentarily, we felt as if we were suspended on nothing.

**Just before gravity got its way, maps and notes floated off the dash board of the plane. Our bodies tend to rebel against weightlessness. As the pilot bids the plane skyward once more after a fast downward plunge, “G” forces stress the aircraft and surging adrenaline can make your every muscle taut from ears to toes.**

You’ve probably felt the same on a roller coaster at the top of a hill, just before it plunges attended by anxious screams and sometimes liquid terror.

**Romans similarly takes us from heights to depths and back again.**

At least twice, chapters 1-6 go from the apex of God’s grace to perverse, mortal selfishness.

**Chapter 7 centers on the murkiness of our efforts.**

**We talk about doing right but often flunk our own standards.**

Sometimes we end up doing what we’d told ourselves we’d never do.

We often worsen the situation by trying to hide and then deny our failure.



**In chapter 8, we soar again to heavenly realms seemingly touching the face of God.**

- God loves us big-time.
- Jesus’ forgiving arms hold us tight.
- The Holy Spirit pulls for us.
- In Christ, nothing in the Universe can harm us.
- We feel perfect security.

Still, after chapter 8’s uplifting ride, Paul plunges to the depths again in chapter 9.

**What went wrong?**

You possibly know the “Home Alone” movie theme.

**A rush of last minute details busies everyone getting ready to go on a family vacation.**

**They board the aircraft, settle in, and the plane takes off.**

Moments later, the parents panic when they discover that they left their youngest son.

**Romans chapter 9 traces a similar dismal scene.**

**In chapter 8, Paul described the joy of security, forgiveness, and love in Christ.**

No power in heaven or earth can alter God’s gift of life in Christ and his indwelling Spirit.

**But something went wrong.**

**Many of Paul’s loved ones weren’t on board.**

- They were “home alone,” so to speak.
- They had everything going for them.
- They enjoyed great advantages.
- They had the home base—the home field advantage, but they lost their way.

**If you field the stronger team, enjoy the home- field advantage, and have the better coach, you should win, shouldn’t you?**

**But something went wrong and Paul’s loved ones were losing.**

**They blew it.**

Today’s text deals with the meaning of the Jewish loss with God.

**“They had everything going for them—family, glory, covenants, revelation, worship, promises, to say nothing of being the race that produced the Messiah, the Christ, who is God over everything, always.”<sup>1</sup>**

**What went wrong?**

**The Jews possessed home-field benefits.**

**Did God, their coach fail?**

**Was it a bad plan?**

**Why did they lose their advantage?**

**“Here’s why,” says Romans.**



**First, a clarification:**

God’s Spirit did not include and preserve this section of Romans just to pick on Israel’s sons.

**Disobedience is a human tendency.**

Failure to live by God’s plan isn’t unique to Jews.

**This Scripture speaks to every person regardless of background.**

**Before time began, God chose that His messiah would come into the world as a son of Abraham.**

The Lord formed a contract with Abraham’s descendants so that proper preparations would be made for Christ’s arrival.

**God gave Israel a special piece of real estate and superb laws.**

**In other words, God *predestined, elected, or chose* Israel for a special assignment.**

**Some folks seem unaware of other info the Lord gave Israel when he selected them for the task.**

**Here’s a sample of what Our Creator told Israel:**

“The LORD did not . . . choose you because you were more numerous than other nations, for you were the smallest . . .

“Understand, therefore, that the LORD your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God . . . and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands.

“<sup>10</sup> But he does not hesitate to punish and destroy those who reject him. <sup>11</sup> Therefore, you must obey all these commands, decrees, and regulations I am giving you today.”<sup>2</sup>

**When the Lord informed Israel that they were the smallest, the word *small* literally meant:**

**“Tiny to the point of being insignificant.”**

**He left Israel No bragging rights.**

**In addition, the Lord also clearly told them that they must obey Him:**

<sup>1</sup> Romans 9:4, 5 *The Message.*

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 7:7-10 NASB

“He does not hesitate to punish and destroy those who reject him.”

No Christian should assume that *election* or *predestination* means that once we are saved, we are always saved.

The Biblical way to understand predestination or election is:

First, God predetermined that salvation is only in Christ His son.

Second, unless we follow and obey Jesus to the end, we can't expect God's approval.

Those who accept the human teaching that we cannot lose our salvation disregard what Jesus taught:

- “Why do you call me ‘Lord,’ ‘Lord,’ and don’t do what I say?”
- “He who hears these words of mine and does them is like the man who built his house on the rock.”



How can we neglect what Jesus said about the person who built a house on sand?

**The Book of Hebrews warns:** “See to it brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.”<sup>3</sup>

Most Christians look forward to a home in heaven.

Though the Book of *Revelation* delivers most of its messages in symbolic language, a few passages speak very directly.

**One notable, sobering verse concerns heaven (the holy city or New Jerusalem):** “Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful . . .”<sup>4</sup>

**Do you accept what the Bible says about losing your salvation or do 16<sup>th</sup> century theologians guide your beliefs?**

God's choosing of Jeremiah helps us understand a vital but neglected aspect of predestination.

**“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, Before you were born I set you apart. I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”<sup>5</sup>**

The Lord pre-chose Jeremiah as a spokesperson, but that did not foreordain Jeremiah's salvation.

<sup>3</sup> 3:12 NIV

<sup>4</sup> Revelation 21:27 NIV

<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah 1:4, 5 NIV

**The Lord also *elected* Paul to tell others about Jesus.<sup>6</sup>**

**But what about ordinary people?  
What does expect of us when he elects us?**

Again, the Book of Revelation helps us understand.

**Chapter 12 tells us how to win in life—how to defeat the devil.**

“And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb *and by their testimony*. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens! And you who live in the heavens, rejoice!”<sup>7</sup>

**To what testimony does this refer?**

As we learned earlier, Jesus assigned all his people to testify that he is Lord and Savior. We unashamedly tell others how Jesus, though innocent, died to pay for our failures.

**We tell how envious people demanded his crucifixion and how he arose from death, ascended to heaven, and will someday return to Judge all people.**



**All who faithfully follow him and boldly tell his Good News, Jesus will raise to eternal life.**

Many of us feel as Jeremiah did when the Lord told him why he appointed him:

**“Ah, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.”**

Jesus didn’t make us responsible for whether people listen.

He does hold us accountable, though, for warning folks of the coming Judgment.

**“God calls all people everywhere to repent.”<sup>8</sup>**

Right now the world pressures us to “**treat everyone equally.**”

**“Make the world a better place.”**

**Though people insist we do it, no one can agree, explain, or outline how to bring about equity.**

Jesus sent us into the world to tell all people his Good News.

Christians should love everyone and should tell all they meet about Jesus.

We believers should do what Jesus said, even when circumstances aren’t favorable.

Note what happened in the first century:

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<sup>6</sup> See Acts 9:1-15

<sup>7</sup> 12:11, 12 NLT

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<sup>8</sup> Acts 17:30

“A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. . . But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went.”<sup>9</sup>

**New Testament evidence clearly shows the church witnessed to Jesus’ resurrection.**

**They did not try to change society into anyone’s mold.**

**Human efforts such as that always fail.**

**Do you feel as if you are out in the wilderness without a map and without a clue as to which direction to go?**

**God gave us believers the special life-purpose to warn people of God’s Judgment, to tell Jesus’ Good News, and to fully obey God.**

**We all offer excuses why we can’t do that.**

**Moses – Exodus 4:10 “I’ve got a lisp.”**

**Isaiah 6:5 “I’m too sinful.”**

**Amos 7:14 “I’m a farm boy.”**

**Jeremiah “I don’t know how to speak; I am only a child.”**

**The Lord told Ezekiel, “Don’t be afraid of the people’s faces,” (Ezekiel 3:8)**

**“I have made your face hard against their faces, and your forehead *hard* against their foreheads.”**

**The word *hard* described callused foreheads oxen developed from pushing carts.**



**The Lord says:**

**“Don’t be afraid of the scornful looks you get.”  
“Isn’t telling the message the preacher’s job?”  
some ask.**

**Jesus answered that question:** “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels, ( Luke 9:23-26.

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<sup>9</sup> Acts 8:1 NLT