

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS
THE THEME OF THE BOOK OF
ROMANS?**

ANSWER:

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

**30 verses in Romans that refer to
God's righteousness**

Romans 1:18-20 (NASB77)

*18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and **unrighteousness of men**, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.*

*20 For since the creation of the world **His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.***

IN THIS PART OF ROMANS 9 GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS BEING CHALLENGED

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice (adikia-unrighteousness) with God, is there? May it never be!

Same issue in verse 14-is God righteous

Remember the circumstances under which God spoke to Moses, so he could see the righteousness of God's sovereignty in mercy. Exodus 32:21-24

IS GOD FAIR? IS GOD JUST IN DOING WHAT HE DID WITH THE JEWS?

We have seen that:

- Not ALL ethnic Israel is saved
- Not all children of Abraham are ethnic Israel

Since God has made these distinguishing selections is He therefore unjust to the ones who have been excluded?

Mercy is not based on physical birth.

Mercy is based upon God's character.

WHY DOES GOD HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE MERCIFUL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

“Therefore” Is God unjust in Vs. 14-16

Answer-

NO, because if justice was always given, everyone would be condemned (including ethnic Israel)

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."

God is always just and always having the freedom to show mercy to whom He desires because of the cross.

Were there consequences because of the golden calf incident? 3000 deaths

Exodus 32:33 (NASB)

³³ The LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book."

Exodus 32:35 (NASB)

³⁵ Then the LORD smote the people, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.

Aaron's excuse- *Exodus 32:24 (NASB)*

*²⁴ "I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' So they gave it to me, and **I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.**"*

What was the issue

Hebrews 3:7-10 (NASB)

7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,

8 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS,

9 WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED ME BY TESTING ME, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS.

10 "THEREFORE, I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS'

God exercises mercy on all (NASB) 10:32 ³² For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

How did Moses find favor with God?

Ex. 33:13,17-19

13 "Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people."

17 The LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name."

18 Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!"

19 And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

¹⁶ So then **it** does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

- The word "**it**" refers to the fact of a participation in God's grace and mercy.
- The participation in God's grace and mercy is not because someone desires mercy nor runs after it to earn mercy, that is, works for it.
- God is **never** placed under obligation by man's *will* or any human *work*."
- A participation in God's mercy is dependent upon God's sovereign will alone.

How does man obtain God's favor/mercy?

The OT contrast between how people view the obtaining God's mercy/favor and in how one actually obtains it. **Faith in Christ.**

This great verse should sink into our ears, into our very hearts! Perhaps no statement of all Scripture so completely brings man to an utter end. Man thinks he can “will” and “decide,” God-ward, and that after he has so “decided” and “willed,” he has the ability to “run,” or, as he says, to “hold out.” Newell

To declare to be *God that has MERCY*. **Human responsibility is not at all rejected here:**

1. Man should will and should run.
2. But we are all nothing but sinners, and can do, —will do, neither: unless God comes forth to us in sovereign mercy.

¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE, I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

Pharaoh had said: *"Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go"* (Ex. 5:2).

God had a dual purpose for raising Pharaoh up:

1. That I might **show my power in you**- God wanted to point out or bring attention to His own power through Pharaoh.
2. That **my name may be declared in all the earth.**

How did God do this?

1. God allowed Pharaoh, a rebellious and godless king to survive the first 6 plagues, therefore he deserved to die for his rebellion.
2. God then completed the remaining plagues on the most powerful nation in the world to deliver His people.

- God is always just and has the freedom to show mercy to whom He desires.
- He has the freedom to harden if it advances His purposes.
- His goal was to bring about His promised deliverance.

Exodus 9:15-17 (NASB)

15 "For if by now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth.

16 "But, indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.

17 "Still, you exalt yourself against My people by not letting them go.

This passage is not about individual salvation or election.

It is about God raising Pharaoh up to his position.

Exodus 9:12 (NASB) ¹² And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

How was God's Name declared in all the earth?

Joshua 2⁹ and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you.

10 "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.

1 Samuel 4:5-7 (NASB)

6 When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What does the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" Then they understood that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp.

¹⁷ For the **Scripture says** to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE, I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

The word "**says**," is in the present tense "There is an element of persistence in the statement.

If the **Scripture ever spoke** at all, it continued and continues to speak. It has never been struck dumb." Wuest

Wuest quotes Denney to show that while in verse 16 the experience of God's mercy does not depend on man's resolve or effort,

in verse 17, the contrary phenomenon is seen, "*that of a man who does not and cannot receive mercy.*"

*17 For the **Scripture says** to Pharaoh,*

The same authority says concerning Paul's use of Scripture here, It is on Scripture the burden of proof is laid here and at verse ¹⁵ 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."

The Jew might answer the arguments Paul uses here as if they were Paul's own opinion; but to Scripture, Pharaoh or anyone else, can make no reply. Scripture silences everyone, even where it does not convince you."

Wuest

18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

God has the right to harden the hearts of the people of Israel who had already hardened their own hearts towards Him-

They rejected Jesus Christ their Messiah John 1:11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

God is just in setting aside (hardening) ethnic Israel temporarily to show mercy to the Gentiles.

Romans 11:11 (NASB) ¹¹ I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

¹⁸ **So then** *He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.*

So then a particle expressing sequence or consequence, is rendered "then," through the idea of *drawing* a conclusion.

In conclusion:

- Unless Jehovah shows mercy, Israel must all righteously perish.
 - There was no resource left in any man!
 - God, whose name is Love, must come out to man and come in mercy, or it's all over!
1. **Grace and mercy will accomplish in the heart which values it carefully that reconciliation of the sovereignty of God with God's love and grace is possible alone to faith; and**
 2. **It will also enlighten the mind concerning God's dealings with Israel as recorded in these three chapters of Romans.**

- We saw that it was not necessary nor justifiable to make God the author of Pharaoh's stubbornness.
- It is also incorrect to insist that if God be a God of love, He must save everybody, as all sorts of Universalists claim.
- **Exodus 7:13 (NASB77)¹³ *Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said,***
- ***Exodus 7:14 (NASB77) ¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go.***
- God's report of Pharaoh's heart-condition, —for God sees the heart: “And Pharaoh's heart was hardened [lit., was strong], and he hearkened not unto them; as Jehovah had spoken.”

¹⁸ So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

God had a perfect right to allow Pharaoh to remain (where we all would have remained, apart from Divine sovereign mercy!) in a disobedient, God-defying attitude:

What God's Word tells us as to His dealing with Pharaoh, explains "[He hardens.](#)"

But nothing other than a subjected heart of faith will enter, with reverence, into the words, "*whom He will,*" here.

And we say boldly that a believer's heart is not fully yielded to God until it accepts without question, and without demanding softening, this eighteenth verse. Paul in the Spirit shoots down the natural operations of man's proud heart.

God has rights high above all our weak comprehension.

- We know that God will always act righteously.
- We are not God's judges!
- No godly person challenges that right.
- Rather, godly people most reverently bow to it!

“Can you now say, you Jews, (and we Christians, ask ourselves the question), **will you be willing to be dealt with only on the basis of righteousness?**”

- **No, you would not!** Then do not even think about it, until you can go to God on the footing of grace and mercy.
- But if you have a conviction of sin that stops your mouth about righteousness, and so excludes all arrogance, you will rejoice in the ‘mercy’ and ‘compassion’ of God, who retreats into His own sovereign righteousness, that He may know how to spare; **because in this sovereignty He can show mercy.”**

