

Israel's Past: Is God's plan still moving forward?

Scripture: [Romans 9:14-33](#)

Big Idea:

God's choices are always right, and His plan is still moving forward.

Call to Action:

Romans 9 is humbling—God chose you before creation, and Israel's rejection of Jesus opened the door for your salvation. How does that make you feel?

Family Action:

This week's truth may be hard to understand, but God calls us to trust His Word even when we don't fully understand His plan.

([Proverbs 3:5](#), [Romans 9:20](#), [Ephesians 1:4](#)).

Exposure to Exposition & Exploring the Scriptures: (15-20 mins)

- Bible Drills (Memorization of OT & NT Book order)
- Guide the children to [Romans 9:14-33](#) in the Bible. (Help them as needed, NT vs OT)
- Say: We are going to continue through Paul's letter to the church of Rome.
- We will learn that the gospel is God's power to save everyone who believes, and we should never be ashamed of Jesus.
- Read aloud. (Ask kids to start their pointer fingers on V14 and follow along)

Review:

vv. 7:1-13 God's Law is good—our sinful nature is the problem.

vv. 7:13-25 The war of the Flesh!

vv. 8:1-11 Life in the Spirit, Forever with God!

vv. 8:12-25 Suffering for a Little While

vv. 8:26-39 Nothing can separate me from God!

vv. 9:1-13 Did God break His Promises to save Israel (Israel's Past History)

vv. 9:14-33 God's Sovereign over ALL, and will not fail.

Opening Question

If you could design the rules for a game, would you want everyone to follow your rules—or their own?

Why? Or Why Not→ today we'll learn that God is the one who makes the rules—and He always does what is right.

Notes:

After Romans 8, Paul asks an important question: *"What about Israel?"*

- God promised Israel a Savior, but many didn't believe in Jesus. Did God fail?
 - Paul explains no.
- In the beginning of Romans 9, Paul shows that God has always chosen who receives His promises:
 - Not everyone born into Abraham's family was included—God chose Isaac, not Ishmael, and Jacob, not Esau, before they were born.
- Romans 9 teaches us that God is the sovereign Lord, which means He is in charge and answers to no one.
- God chose Israel in the past to be His special people.
 - He gave them promises, the Law, and the Messiah would come through them.
 - But many in Israel did not believe in Jesus when He came.
 - Because of their unbelief, God set the nation of Israel aside for a time.
 - This does not mean God broke His promises.
 - It means God is working out His plan in the way He decided—by mercy and faith, not by effort or family background.
- God's choices are always right, and His plan is still moving forward.

Context of vv.14-33:

- Is God choosing some and not choosing others unfair or mean?
- Did God forever leave the Israelites to choose Gentiles?
- Does God still love Israel? Is God trustworthy in His promises?

Key Theological Term

Sovereign- God is in charge of everything. He makes perfect decisions, no one tells Him what to do, and He always does what is right and good.

ROMANS 9:14-33 NLT

14 Are we saying, then, that God was unfair? Of course not! 15 For God said to Moses,

“I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.”

16 So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it nor work for it.

17 For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, “I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you and to spread my fame throughout the earth.” 18 So you see, God chooses to show mercy to some, and he chooses to harden the hearts of others so they refuse to listen.

19 Well then, you might say, “Why does God blame people for not responding? Haven't they simply done what he makes them do?”

20 No, don't say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to argue with God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who created it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn't he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into? 22 In the same way, even though God has the right to show his anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his anger falls, who are destined for destruction. 23 He does this to make the riches of his glory shine even brighter on those to whom he shows mercy, who were prepared in advance for glory. 24 And we are among those whom he selected, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles. 25 Concerning the Gentiles, God says in the prophecy of Hosea, "Those who were not my people, I will now call my people. And I will love those whom I did not love before." 26 And, "Then, at the place where they were told, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'" 27 And concerning Israel, Isaiah the prophet cried out, "Though the people of Israel are as numerous as the sand of the seashore, only a remnant will be saved. 28 For the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth quickly and with finality." 29 And Isaiah said the same thing in another place: "If the Lord of Heaven's Armies had not spared a few of our children, we would have been wiped out like Sodom, destroyed like Gomorrah." 30 What does all this mean? Even though the Gentiles were not trying to follow God's standards, they were made right with God. And it was by faith that this took place. 31 But the people of Israel, who tried so hard to get right with God by keeping the law, never succeeded. 32 Why not? Because they were trying to get right with God by keeping the law instead of by trusting in him. They stumbled over the great rock in their path. 33 God warned them of this in the Scriptures when he said, "I am placing a stone in Jerusalem that makes people stumble, a rock that makes them fall.

But anyone who trusts in him
will never be disgraced.”

- V14-18 God is always fair and good, even when we don't understand His choices.
 - Paul Answers a Hard Question (v.14)
 - Paul knows people will ask: “Is God unfair?”
 - His answer is very strong: Absolutely not!
 - God is always good, always right, and never unjust.
 - Just because we don't understand God's choices doesn't mean they are wrong.
 - Mercy Is a Gift, Not a Right (vv.15–16)
 - God told Moses, “I will show mercy to whom I choose.”
 - Mercy means kindness we don't deserve.
 - God does not owe mercy to anyone.
 - We cannot earn mercy by trying harder or wanting it more.
 - Mercy comes only because God chooses to give it.
 - God Is in Control of All Things (v.16)
 - Paul says salvation does not depend on:
 - what we want, or
 - how hard we try.
 - It depends on God's mercy.
 - This shows that God—not people—is in charge of saving.
 - Pharaoh Shows God's Power (vv.17–18)
 - Paul gives an example from the past history of the OT..
 - God used Pharaoh to show His power to the whole world.
 - Pharaoh was already sinful and stubborn.
 - God allowed Pharaoh's hard heart to continue refusing to let God's people go so His power would be seen.
 - Just as God shows mercy to some, He allows others to remain hard.
 - God Is Still Good and Just
 - Everyone is born sinful and deserves judgment.
 - The amazing thing is not that God judges—but that He shows mercy at all.
 - When God gives mercy, it is grace.
 - When God withholds mercy, He is still just.
 - God is never cruel, never wrong, and never unfair.
 - Kid Point: God is always right, always loving, and always in control—even when His choices are

hard to understand.

Key Theological Term:

Mercy vs Grace

Simple Way to Remember:

☪ Mercy = God doesn't give me the punishment I deserve. (Jesus' blood)

Grace = God gives me blessings I don't deserve. (Gift of salvation)

Notes:

Paul knew we would still have questions about “how can God blame us, if He is the one who didn't choose some for salvation? The heart of asking a question like this is to imply that God is not just and that we deserve to know why God doesn't choose some.

[ROMANS 9:19-21](#) Well then, you might say, “Why does God blame people for not responding? Haven't they simply done what he makes them do?”

[20](#) No, don't say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to argue with God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who created it, “Why have you made me like this?” [21](#) When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn't he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into?

- V19-21 God is the Creator, and He has the right to decide how He uses what He makes.
 - In response to his teaching, Paul knows people will say: “If God is in control, why doesn't He just save everyone?”
 - This question sounds honest, but it often hides doubt or disagreement with God's plan.
 - Paul understands this struggle and answers it directly.
 - Paul reminds us that we are not God. (v.20)
 - We don't get to talk back to our Creator or tell Him how He should run the world.
 - Just like clay doesn't question the potter, people don't get to question God's decisions.
 - God knows far more than we do and always does what is right.
 - Paul uses a picture we can understand, The Potter & the Clay (v.21):
 - God is like a potter.
 - We are like clay.
 - A potter can take the same lump of clay and make something special for honor, or something for ordinary use.
 - The clay doesn't choose its purpose—the potter does.
 - In the same way, God decides how each life will be used.

- God's Choices Are Never Wrong!
 - God never acts unfairly or cruelly.
 - Everything God does has a good purpose—even when we don't understand it.
 - Questioning God's wisdom shows we are trusting ourselves instead of Him.
- **Kid Point:** God made us, God knows best, and we can trust Him—even when we don't understand His plans.

[ROMANS 9:22-24](#) In the same way, even though God has the right to show his anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his anger falls, who are destined for destruction. [23](#) He does this to make the riches of his glory shine even brighter on those to whom he shows mercy, who were prepared in advance for glory. [24](#) And we are among those whom he selected, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles.

- V22-24 God shows His mercy so we can clearly see how loving and glorious He is.
 - God Is Patient With a Broken World (v.22)
 - Paul explains that God could judge sin right away—but He doesn't.
 - God patiently allows sinful people to live, even though they don't honor Him.
 - This shows God's great patience, not cruelty.
 - God Uses Contrast to Show His Mercy (v.23)
 - Paul says God allows this so His children can see how amazing His mercy really is.
 - We understand light better when we've seen darkness.
 - We understand forgiveness better when we know judgment is real.
 - Seeing a broken world helps us understand how special God's grace truly is.
 - God Prepared His Children for Glory (v.23)
 - This means God planned their rescue before they were born.
 - Salvation was never an accident—it was always part of God's loving plan.
 - God's mercy is not only for Jewish people. (v.24)
 - God also calls Gentiles—people from all nations.
 - God's family includes people from every background.
 - Anyone who belongs to Jesus is a vessel of mercy.
- **Kid Point:** God patiently shows mercy so we can see how great His love really is—and thank Him for it.

[ROMANS 9:25-29](#) Concerning the Gentiles, God says in the prophecy of Hosea,
“Those who were not my people,

I will now call my people.
And I will love those
whom I did not love before.”

26 And,

“Then, at the place where they were told,
‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called
‘children of the living God.’”

27 And concerning Israel, Isaiah the prophet cried out,
“Though the people of Israel are as numerous as the sand of the
seashore,
only a remnant will be saved.

28 For the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth
quickly and with finality.”

29 And Isaiah said the same thing in another place:

“If the Lord of Heaven’s Armies
had not spared a few of our children,
we would have been wiped out like Sodom,
destroyed like Gomorrah.”

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- V25-29 God has always chosen who receives His mercy—and He keeps His promises exactly as He planned.
 - God Promised to Call New People His Own (vv.25–26)
 - Paul first quotes Hosea, who spoke about a time when God would show mercy to people who were not His people.
 - This means Gentiles—people who were not Jewish—would become God’s people.
 - God said those once called “not My people” would be called “children of the living God.”
 - This shows that God planned long ago to include people from all nations.
 - God Shifted His Mercy on Purpose:
 - After Jesus came, most Jewish people rejected Him.
 - At the same time, many Gentiles believed in Jesus.
 - This surprising change was not an accident—it was God’s plan.
 - God chose to extend His mercy to Gentiles during this time.
 - Only God’s choice can explain why Gentiles believed while most Jews did not.
 - God Always Saves a Remnant (vv.27–28)
 - Paul then quotes Isaiah, who explains that only a small group, called a remnant, would be saved from Israel.
 - Even though Israel was very large, God only saved some, not all.
 - This has always been true throughout Israel’s history.

- God's promises never failed—He fulfilled them exactly as He said.
- Mercy Is the Only Reason Anyone Is Saved (v.29)
 - Paul quotes Isaiah again, reminding us that without God's mercy, no one would be saved.
 - Even the faithful people of Israel would have ended up like Sodom and Gomorrah without God's help.
 - The remnant was saved only because God chose to show mercy.
 - No one was saved because they were better—only because God was kind.

Key Theological Term:

Remnant- a small group of people who keep trusting and obeying God even when most others do not, within Israel.

- God promised this in the Old Testament: [Isaiah 10:22](#) Though your people, O Israel, be like the sand of the sea, only a remnant will return
- **Kid Point:** God has always saved people by mercy alone, and He always keeps His promises.

Notes:

Paul switches from Israel's past circumstances to Israel's present circumstances in v.30.

- God chose to show His kindness to the Gentiles, while Israel chose not to believe in Jesus.
- God is always in control and knew this would happen, and He used it as part of His plan to save people from all nations.

[ROMANS 9:30-33](#) What does all this mean? Even though the Gentiles were not trying to follow God's standards, they were made right with God. And it was by faith that this took place. [31](#) But the people of Israel, who tried so hard to get right with God by keeping the law, never succeeded. [32](#) Why not? Because they were trying to get right with God by keeping the law instead of by trusting in him. They stumbled over the great rock in their path. [33](#) God warned them of this in the Scriptures when he said,
 "I am placing a stone in Jerusalem that makes people stumble,
 a rock that makes them fall.
 But anyone who trusts in him
 will never be disgraced."

- V30-33 We are made right with God by trusting Jesus, not by trying to earn it. (Israel missed this)
 - Paul asks, "What should we say about this?" (v.30)
 - Gentiles—who were not looking for God—ended up being made right with Him.
 - They didn't earn righteousness.
 - They received it by faith in Jesus.

- Israel worked very hard to be righteous. (v.31)
 - They followed God's Law and tried to earn God's approval.
 - But even with all their effort, they did not become righteous.
 - Trying harder did not bring them closer to God.
- The Problem: Paul explains why Israel failed: they did not trust God by faith. (v.32)
 - They thought they could earn righteousness by good works.
 - Because of pride, they missed God's way of salvation.
 - Jesus became a stumbling stone to them.
- Jesus is the Stone: God warned Israel ahead of time through Isaiah. (v.33)
 - Jesus would be a stone people might trip over.
 - Those who tried to save themselves would stumble over Him.
 - But anyone who believes in Jesus will never be disappointed.
- Faith vs. Effort: Gentiles received righteousness because they trusted Jesus.
 - Israel missed it because they trusted themselves.
 - God kept His promise—Jesus came exactly as foretold.
 - The problem was not God's faithfulness, but human pride.
- **Kid Point:** We don't earn God's love by following Law—we receive it by trusting Jesus.

Observation Questions (What did it say?)

1. What question does Paul ask about God in [Romans 9:14](#)? Is God unfair, according to Paul? (*Paul asks if God is unfair. No! v.14*)
2. Who does Paul compare God to in [Romans 9:20–21](#)? (*God is compared to a potter, and people are compared to clay. vv. 20-21*)
3. Who received righteousness by faith according to [Romans 9:30](#)? Why did the Israelites struggle with this? (*The Gentiles received righteousness by faith, so does anyone who believes. But the Israelites thought following the Law gained them right standing with God v.30*)

Understanding Questions (What does it mean?)

1. Why does Paul say God is not unjust even though He shows mercy to some? (*Because mercy is a gift God chooses to give, not something anyone deserves. v.15-16*)
2. Why did Israel stumble over Jesus? (*Because they tried to be right with God by works instead of by faith. v.32*)
3. Why does God allow some people to receive mercy and others not? (*To show the greatness of His mercy and glory to those He saves. v.22-23*)

Application Questions (What should I do?)

1. How should we respond when we don't understand God's choices? (*We should trust God, knowing He*

is wise and good. v.20)

2. What is the right way to be made right with God? *(By trusting Jesus in faith, not by trying to earn it. v.30-33)*
 3. How should knowing God showed us mercy affect our attitude? *(It should make us thankful, humble, and full of praise to God. v.23-24)*
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Activities

1: Craft

Potter & Clay

To help kids understand that God is sovereign, mercy is a gift, and we trust God even when we don't understand His choices ([Romans 9:14-33](#)).

Materials:

- Modeling clay or Play-Doh (one small piece per child)
- Paper towels or placemats

Directions:

Give each child clay.

Tell them to shape the clay into something simple (cup, bowl, heart).

- Explain: “The clay doesn't decide what it will be. The potter does.”
- Halfway through, change the instruction (e.g., “Now turn it into a cup”).

Discussion Questions to ask while working:

- Was it hard when the plan changed?
- Did the clay get to argue?
- Who decided what the clay became?

Teaching Moment – explain clearly and gently:

- God is the potter. We are the clay.
- God has the right to decide how His plan works.
- God's mercy is a gift—not something we earn.
- Trusting God is more important than understanding everything.

2: Memory Verse:

Come up with moves:

[Romans 9:16](#) *So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it nor work for it.*

3: Discussion

For Older Youth students, see separate printable handout.

Remind them: What is the Gospel?

Jesus' perfect life paid for the sins of all who believe. Jesus died on the cross as the punishment for sin. But Jesus did not stay dead, three days later He rose to life (resurrection) defeating the power of death. Believe, and you will be saved!

- We are all sinful. We all deserve the consequence of sin- death.
- Jesus is what saves us from the sin we all have in our bodies. And one day, he'll even give us a new body.

Supporting Truths Kids Can Grasp:

- God chooses some and others He doesn't. Even in this, He is just for who are we to question God (Romans 9).
- God is always fair, even when we don't understand Him. ([Romans 9:14](#)).
- We can't work for God's love—it is given by His kindness. ([Romans 9:15-16](#)).
- Being good isn't enough; faith in Jesus is what makes us right with God. ([Romans 9:30-32](#)).
- People either trust Jesus or trip over Him—but He is God's plan for salvation. ([Romans 9:33](#)).