

“God’s Discretion in Mercy”

Romans 9:13-18

March 16th, 2025 – Pastor Nick Neves

Romans 9:13-18 – ¹³ As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

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.

For many, the declaration that Paul quotes from Malachi 1:2-3 is difficult to take at face value. Many attempts have been made to explain away the force of language used there:

- Perhaps God is speaking in _____?
- Perhaps God is really just saying that he loves Esau _____?
- Perhaps God can hate a nation without hating the _____ who make up that nation?

But the scriptures make it clear that the God of love can in fact have a righteous hatred for that which is wicked. (Psalm 5:5, 11:5, Prov. 15:8-9, Revelation 2:6)

Romans 12:9 – *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.*

Verses 15-17 – God’s _____ in displaying mercy and compassion

When Moses appeals on behalf of Israel in Exodus 33, he does not do so on any legal basis – his countrymen are sinners and deserve to be cast away from God! He pleads not for justice, but for God to give _____ and _____!

Does God _____ grace and mercy to any sinner? No. If we think of salvation as something that God MUST give to all people, we have lost the very meaning of what grace means. It is no longer a gift freely given.

Verses 17 – God’s discretion in hardening hearts

What does it mean that God ‘raised Pharaoh up?

God has not only the _____ and ability to do this, He has the _____ to do it. (see 2 Samuel 12:11, Job 5:11, Hebrews 1:5-6, Zechariah 11:16)

This matter of God’s freedom – freedom to show mercy and compassion, freedom to harden – what does this all point plainly to? The doctrine of _____. The sovereign freedom that God exercises in choosing a people for Himself. (see again Romans 9:10-12)

Verse 18 offers a summary of Paul’s arguments, but adds the emphatic detail that this will all come to pass according to God’s perfect _____.