*Northwest Bible Church – Jul. 18, 2004 – Worship Service – Alan Conner*

**Romans. 9:14-16**

*Is God unjust to elect only some?*

**INTRO**  
     Review – Paul is vindicating God’s word over against those who say that He has not fulfilled his promises to Israel because so many of them are lost and in unbelief. Paul’s answer is that from the beginning, v. 6 "THEY ARE NOT ALL ISRAEL WHO ARE DESCENDED FROM ISRAEL. In other words, not all physical Jews are the real spiritual Jews to whom God intended the covenant promises and blessings to be given. He has chosen an Israel within Israel to be saved, and never intended that all Jews would inherit salvation.  
        To prove this Paul shows how God chose Isaac and not Ishmael, even though both were physical sons of Abraham; and then God chose Jacob and not Esau though they were twins and both descended from Isaac and Rebekah. And God chose Jacob apart from any condition or merit or virtue on his part. "When they were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad" (v. 11).  
  
        This raises a common objection . . .  
  
  
**I. IS GOD UNJUST/UNFAIR TO CHOOSE TO SAVE ONLY SOME?**  
    A. Objection (v. 14a).  
        "What shall we say then?" This is Paul’s way to introduce an objection. (3:5; 6:1; 7:7; 9:30).    There are two parts to this objection of injustice: 1) that God loved Jacob, and 2) that He hated Esau. The first is deal with in vv. 14-16, and the second in vv. 16-17.  
  
    B. Answer (vv. 14b-15).   
  
        1) Forceful denial: "may it never be" (v. 14b).   
  
            a) God can’t be unjust for justice is one of His holy attributes. Jer. 9:24; Ps. 71:19; 119:142.  
  
            b) God’s justice is not the real issue.   
  
        2) God’s mercy is sovereign (v. 15). The "For" introduces a reason or explanation for why God is not unrighteous. Ex. 33:19 is quoted exactly from the LXX to show that God’s very nature and character is One that is sovereign in bestowing mercy and compassion.   
  
            a) This quotation and all the previous ones in Romans 9 so far are ones in which God Himself speaks (vv. 7, 9, 12, 13). No higher authority!  
  
            b) God’s mercy and compassion are synonymous. Some say mercy = outward expression and compassion = heart attitude.  
  
            c) What is God’s mercy? It is His goodness toward the suffering, pitiful, the weak, the diseased.   
  
                Mercy contrasted with grace. God’s grace is to the guilty criminal, God’s                 mercy is to the wretched and pitiful.  
  
            d) Meaning of the quotation, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy."   
    This is an idiom that indicates God’s free and sovereign will and desire. By repeating the action without adding any qualifications, the idem per idem formula makes clear that they way the action is executed is determined by the will of the subject. Thus, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy" indicates that showing mercy is based solely on God’s will and there are no qualifications or stipulations outside of His own counsel or will which come into play.      
    This is confirmed in v. 18.  
          
        SUM: God’s election is not unjust because it is rooted in God’s character, not God’s covenant with the nation of Israel. God can show mercy to any sinner He desires, or to no one at all and remain just.  
  
    C. Conclusion (v. 16).   
        "it" = God’s sovereign mercy which in this context is linked to God’s favor and salvation and which is given to those whom God chooses. Thus, God’s choice of some and not others to receive mercy and salvation DOES NOT DEPEND ON:  
  
        1) "the man who wills" – the inner desire or purpose of the will of man  
  
        2) "the man who runs" - the actual carrying out of that will, any religious effort or activity,   
  
**BUT SOLELY ON:**  
  
         "God who has mercy" - Salvation and justification are based on God’s mercy and God’s will, not on man’s will or works.   
  
  
**CONCLUSION**