

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – June 25, 2023

Theme: The power of God at work in us **Topic:** Chosen by God's Mercy

Main Texts: Romans 9:1-33

Key verse: Romans 9:16 – *'So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy' (NKJV)*

INTRODUCTION: It is a common belief that the nation of Israel is God's special people. Even world leaders go to great pains to be aligned with the nation of Israel. Yet, Romans chapter 9 opens with Apostle Paul's sorrow and heaviness of heart over the salvation of his fellow countrymen. The reason for his anguish is that there were Jews who were not yet in Christ. His anguish was so much that he wished he were accursed (cut off) from Christ if that would save them, especially because *the doctrine of adoption, God's covenants, Law, came through them, as well as the promises. Not to mention that they beheld God's glory in the wilderness (Romans 9:3-4). Not only that, '... their ancestors were great people of God, and Christ Himself was a Jew as far as His human nature is concerned. And He is God ... (Romans 9:5 NLT).* Yet, some Jews in Paul's days were separated from God's plan, and many still are. This clearly portrays Apostle John's writing that, *'He came to His own and His own did not receive Him' (John1:11).*

1. **Read John 1:12; Romans 9:6-9. (a) Let participants discuss why Paul was so sorrowful over the Jews that he was ready to be accursed from Christ if that would save them. (b) What is the main point of Romans 9:6-9 when we think of the nation of Israel and the world at large? (c) How should this truth affect our outreach?**

A major theme of our quarter study from the Book of Romans is that the God has provided salvation for all through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 3;23-24 captures it succinctly, saying that *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."* So, being called a Jew, or a Christian, or being in the membership records of a local Church, does not mean God sees such a person as a Jew or Christian. In simple terms, what this means is that those who believe in Jesus are saved; and those who do not believe are not saved. And this has nothing to do with one's physical ancestry or nationality. And this is because, it is only the children of promise who are counted as God's children (Romans 9:8-9).

2. **(a) Paul used two Old Testament scenarios to explain the fact that God's word and blessings come to pass as determined by Him and according to His mercy (Romans 9:9-18). What does this tell you about God and about our salvation? (b) Read Jeremiah 18:3-6. Let participants discuss how this passage illustrates God's mercy to whom He wills. (c) How does knowing that we are chosen by God's mercy make you feel?**

As typical humans, we are quick to spot supposed inconsistencies. On the question of God's sovereign right to choose, God anticipates our questions and asks two pertinent questions of His own: *"was God's word and promise of no effect since not everybody who is a descendant of Israel received him? ... Are we saying, then, that God was unfair?" (Romans 9:6, 14).* By God's choice and design, the blessing of Abraham was to be passed down through Isaac. Before Jacob and Esau were born, God chose Jacob to be the one through whom the blessing would be passed down. This was before either son had done anything, good or bad. *'So then, it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy' (Romans 9:16).* Through the extension of God's mercy, He has included those from far and near into the nation of Israel, so *'that Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith' (Romans 9: 30).* But Paul's countrymen (the Israelites) did not attain it because they continued to seek righteousness by the law instead by faith. In all of these, God's plan and promise remains that His mercy would reach all who come to Him by faith.

3. **(a) How do you reconcile Psalm 145: 8-9 with Romans 9:15-18? (b) What role does faith play in resolving the difficulties anyone might have about this subject of chosen by God's mercy? See Romans 9:30-33 (c) Let participants mention some situations where they felt God was unfair. How has today's text and study helped you in resolving your question?**

Prayer: *Our dear heavenly Father, we thank You for extending Your mercy to us. We pray that each one of us will continually be positioned to receive Your mercy all the days that we live. Amen.*