



**Romans:
Life through
faith in Jesus**



Romans 9

God's Sovereign Choice

Romans 9



I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, ⁴ the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵ Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

Romans: Life through faith in Jesus

Romans 9

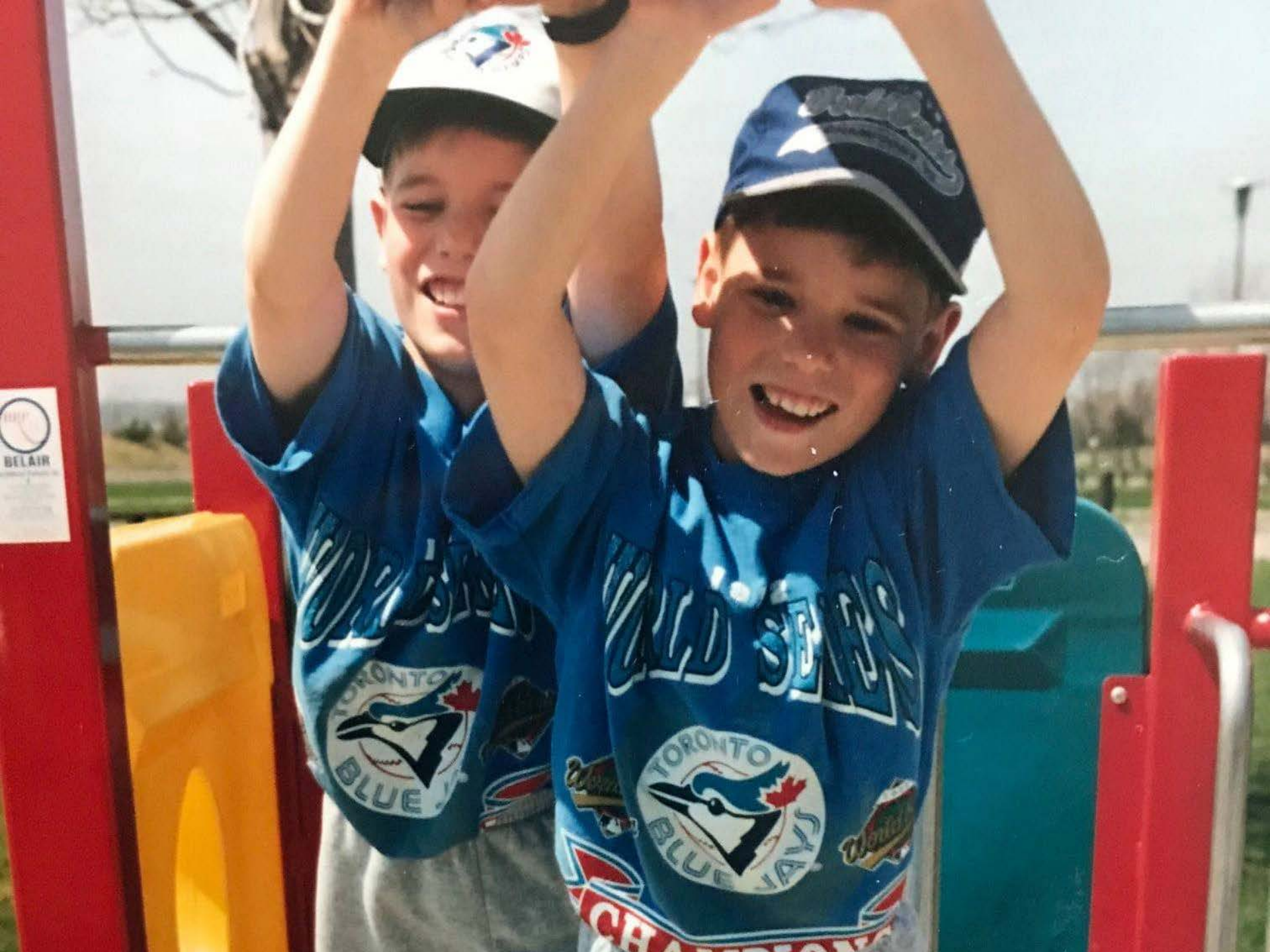


⁶ It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷ Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ⁸ In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. ⁹ For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."

Romans 9



¹⁰ Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. ¹¹ Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: ¹² not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” ¹³ Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”



BELAIR

Romans 9



¹⁴ What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all!

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 It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. ¹⁷ For Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” ¹⁸ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

Romans 9



¹⁹ One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?” ²⁰ But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” ²¹ Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?

A stone path made of irregular, dark grey stones leads from the bottom center towards a wooden cross at the top center. The background is solid black. The cross is made of rough, weathered wood. The path is flanked by low stone walls on both sides.

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them,
for they do not know what they are
doing.”

Luke 23:34

Romans: Life through faith in Jesus

Psalm 103:8-12

⁸ The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.

⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;

¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the
earth, so great is his love for those who fear
him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far has
he removed our transgressions from us.

Romans 9



²² What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? ²³ What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory—



There is a remarkable asymmetry in Paul's (and the NT's) viewpoint that should keep us from the conclusion of double predestination. Those who are saved are saved only by the mercy of God; those who are lost are lost only because of their refusal to repent. The basic premise, argued earlier in Romans, is that no one, not even the most 'righteous,' deserves to be saved. Quite the contrary – all deserve condemnation; that any are saved is an astonishing fact. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)



In point of fact, as appears with blessed clarity later in the present argument [1 1:25-32], God's grace is far wider than anyone could have dared to hope, but just because it is grace, no-one is entitled to it, and no-one can demand that God should give an account of the principles on which He bestows His grace, or that He should bestow it otherwise than in fact He does. Grace in its sovereignty may impose conditions, but it cannot be made subject to them. But God delights to show mercy, and He has lavished it upon men and women beyond counting – from Gentiles and Jews alike. (F. F. Bruce)



We also must remember that there are important differences between election and reprobation as they are presented in the Bible. Election to salvation is viewed as a cause for rejoicing and praise to God, who is worthy of praise and receives all the credit for our salvation (see Eph. 1:3-6; 1 Peter 1:1-3). God is viewed as actively choosing us for salvation and doing so in love and with delight. But reprobation is viewed as something that brings God sorrow, not delight (see Ezek. 33:11), and the blame for the condemnation of sinners is always put on the men or angels who rebel, never on God himself (see John 3:18-19; 5:40).



So in the presentation of Scripture, the cause of election lies in God, and the cause of reprobation lies in the sinner. Another important difference is that the ground of election is God's grace, whereas the ground of reprobation is God's justice. Therefore, 'double predestination' is not a helpful or accurate phrase, because it neglects these differences between election and reprobation. (Grudem)

Romans 9



²⁴ even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵ As he says in Hosea:

“I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,” ²⁶ and,

“In the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’”

Romans 9



²⁷ Isaiah cries out concerning Israel:

“Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea,
only the remnant will be saved.

²⁸ For the Lord will carry out
his sentence on earth with speed and finality.”

²⁹ It is just as Isaiah said previously:

“Unless the Lord Almighty
had left us descendants,
we would have become like Sodom,
we would have been like Gomorrah.”

Romans 9



³⁰ What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. ³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. ³³ As it is written:

“See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.”

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