

# Romans – The Crown Jewel of Salvation

## 48 - “The Mystery We Bow To”

### Romans 9

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / March 22, 2015

God didn't just reveal the doctrine of election to us to aggravate us, confuse us or to cause us to give up on praying and sharing the Gospel.

“Shall we never be able to drive into men's minds the truth that predestination and free agency are both facts? Men sin as freely as birds fly in the air, and they are altogether responsible for their sin; and yet everything is ordained and foreseen of God. The fore-ordination of God in no degree interferes with the responsibility of man... Permit me also to add that I have long ago given up the idea of making all my beliefs into a system. I believe, but I cannot explain. I fall before the majesty of revelation and adore the infinite Lord.” C.H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 33, Banner of Truth, 1969 reprint, pp. 198-199

#### I. Regardless of What Subject You're Studying You Will Never Escape a Measure of Mystery in the Bible

If we played a word associate game, the word 'God' would cause most people to say 'Love'. God is love, but you should also say 'Mystery'.

**Deuteronomy 29:29** “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed long to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

**I Corinthians 13:12** “For now we see through a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am known.”

“Remember – the most gifted, best-equipped minds in church history, no matter how far they dive into the theological pool, have failed to plumb the depths of election. Meanwhile, far above them, my skinny legs can only occasionally be glimpsed, just beneath the surface, desperately treading water.” (p. 6) “Sovereign Grace and the Glorious Mystery of Election” C.J. Mahaney

There are two ends of this great theological ROPE we call salvation.

Sampling of the verses that proclaim God's electing love:

**I Thessalonians 1:4** “...knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

**2 Thessalonians 2:13** “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation...”

The Bible says God's choice was made before the world was created.

**Ephesians 1:4** “...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”

The Bible says God's choice was not based on anything He saw you were going to do or not do.

**2 Timothy 1:9** “who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace.”

**Romans 9:11** “...for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls...”

**John 1:12-13** “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Ultimately God's choice was based on His own sovereign love and mercy.

**Titus 3:4-5** “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit...”

God’s Word calls us to hold on to both sides of this SALVATION rope – and when you DO you’ll end up bowing – and you’ll end up stepping out of the light of what you clearly see and understand and into the shadow of some glorious mystery.

**Job 26:7-14** “He stretches out the north over empty space; *He* hangs the earth on nothing. He binds up the water in His thick clouds, yet the clouds are not broken under it. He covers the face of *His* throne, *and* spreads His cloud over it. He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters, at the boundary of light and darkness. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at His rebuke. He stirs up the sea with His power, and by His understanding He breaks up the storm. By His Spirit He adorned the heavens... Indeed these *are* the mere edges of His ways, and how small a whisper we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?”

## II. Always Keep in Mind that Your Human Logic Will Never Be Fully Satisfied

**Ecclesiastes 3:11** “He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the works that God does from beginning to end.”

**Ecclesiastes 11:5** “As you do not know what is the way of the wind, or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, so you do not know the works of God who makes all things.”

Is salvation a work of God or is it our thing?

**Revelation 7:10** “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

It’s His; not ours! And so if He owns it and thought of it it’s likely that we’re never going to FULLY understand all Why’s and How’s and What’s of all He’s done. But He’s given us enough light and truth to trust Him... that He’s good and merciful and sovereign!

**Romans 11:33-36** “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid him?’ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

As you GROW in Christ and WALK with Christ and learn to TRUST your heavenly Father I think one of the fruits of Christian maturity is an increasing comfort with DIVINE MYSTERY because without mystery there isn’t much awe, wonder and gratitude.

Your Christianity and your God is no bigger than what you can fathom with your own puny mind?

“Whenever you meet a person who feels compelled to explain everything, who has a pat answer for every question and a red formula for solving every problem, you are back at the ash heap with Job’s three friends. When that happens, remember the words of the Swiss psychologist, Paul Tounier: We are nearly always longing for an easy religion, easy to understand and easy to follow; a religion with no mystery, no insoluble problems ... a religion in which contact with God spares us all strife, all uncertainty, all suffering and all doubt...” [New York: Harper & Row, 1976], 142) Be Patient, Warren Wiersbe, P. 25 & 26

Mystery is okay because it keeps us humble and dependent on God.

## III. Don’t Ever Stop Asking God for Greater Understanding

**Deuteronomy 29:29** “...but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

God encourages us to diligently enquire into everything that God HAS made known to us. Everything’s not a mystery.

God encourages us to diligently enquire into everything that God HAS made known to us. Everything's not a mystery.

"It is the concept that troubles us that we are most likely to avoid at all costs, to brush over uncomfortably and excuse as irrelevant. In that sense, it is not progress we seek at all, but a God we can shape ourselves; an image molded to our liking. But this is not only a dishonest pursuit of knowledge—it is dangerous theology. It is choosing to live in the dark; choosing to avoid that honest knock for fear that someone might actually answer. It is choosing what we want God to be instead of finding out Who He is. It is believing that our image of God is actually better than the Real Thing." *Slice of Life*, 2003 Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (RZIM)

**A. Keep Asking God for Greater Insight Through Prayer**

**Psalm 119:18** "Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Your law."

**B. Keep Searching Through the Scriptures with a Learner Spirit**

**2 Timothy 2:15** "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Don't let mystery be an EXCUSE for not PRAYING hard and STUDYING hard to find biblical answers.

Two EXTREMES to avoid: Don't just give up and throw up your hands. Also, don't clench your hands saying, 'God I MUST fully understand everything!'