

## **9:6 *God's Word Has Not Failed***

## **9:7 *Children of Abraham***

## **9:8 *Children of God***

### **CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE.**

CHRYSOSTOM: Paul does not call them the children of Abraham, but rather the children of God, thus combining the past with the present and showing that even Isaac was not merely Abraham's son. What Paul means is something like this: Whoever has been born in the way that Isaac was born is a son of God and of the seed of Abraham.... For Isaac was born not according to the law of nature nor according to the power of the flesh but according to the power of the promise. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.40

## **9:9 *The Promised Son***

### **SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON.**

CHRYSOSTOM: It is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but rather even in nature regeneration through baptism from above was sketched out beforehand.... For Sarah's womb was colder than any water, owing to barrenness and old age.... And just as in her case it happened when her age was past hope, so in this case also it was when the old age of sins had come upon us that Isaac suddenly sprang up in youth, and we all became the children of God and the seed of Abraham. HOMILIES ON ROMANS I 6.

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AUGUSTINE: This passage [to v. 29] is rather obscure. To SIMPLICIAN ON VARIOUS QUESTIONS 1.2.1.46

## **9:10 *Two Different Peoples***

## **9:11 *Elect by Grace, Not Merit***

### **THEY HAD DONE NOTHING EITHER GOOD OR BAD.**

ORIGEN: Paul is saying all this in order to demonstrate that if either Isaac or Jacob had been chosen by God because of their merits and earned justification by the works of the flesh, then the grace which they merited could belong also to those who were descended from them according to flesh and blood. But in

fact, since their election was not due to works, but to the purpose of God and the free will of him who called them, the grace of the promises is not fulfilled in the children of the flesh, but in the children of God, that is, in those who are likewise chosen according to God's purpose and adopted as sons. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>54</sup>

#### **THAT GOD'S PURPOSE OF ELECTION MIGHT CONTINUE.**

CHRYSOSTOM: God does not have to wait, as we do, to see which one will turn out good and which one will turn out bad. He knew this in advance and decided accordingly. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.<sup>56</sup>

#### **NOT BECAUSE OF WORKS.**

AUGUSTINE: This moves some people to suppose that the apostle Paul had taken away the freedom of the will, by which we either please God by the good of faithfulness or offend him by the evil of unfaithfulness. These people say that God loved the one and hated the other before either one was born or could have done either good or evil. But we reply that God did this by foreknowledge, by which he knows what even the unborn will be like in the future. But let no one say God chose the works of the man whom he loved, although these works did not yet exist, because he knew in advance what they would be. If God elected works, why does the apostle say that election is not according to works? Thus we should understand that we do good works through love, and we have love by the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the apostle says himself: God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. <sup>57</sup> Therefore no one should glory in his works as if they were his own, for he does them by the gift of God, since love itself works good in him. What then has God elected? If he gives the Holy Spirit, through whom love works good, to whomever he wishes, how does he choose whom to give him to? If he does not choose according to merit, it is not election, for everyone is equal prior to merit, and it is impossible to choose between totally equal things. But since the Holy Spirit is given only to believers, God does not choose works (which he himself bestows), for he gives the Holy Spirit so that through love we might do good works. Rather, he chooses faith. For unless each one believes in him and perseveres in his willingness to receive, he does not receive the gift of God (i.e., the Holy Spirit), through whom, by an outpouring of love, he is enabled to do good works. Therefore God did not choose anyone's works (which he himself will give) by foreknowledge, but by foreknowledge he chose faith. He chose the one whom he knew in advance would believe in him, and to him he has given the Holy Spirit, so that by doing good works he may attain everlasting life. Belief is our work, but good deeds belong to him who gives the Holy Spirit to believers. This argument was used against certain Jews who, once they believed in Christ, gloried

in the works they had done before receiving grace. They claimed that they had merited the grace of the gospel by these earlier works, even though only a person who has received grace can do good works. Furthermore, grace is such that the call comes to the sinner when he has no merit and prevents him from going straight to his damnation. But if he follows God's call of his own free will, he will also merit the Holy Spirit, through whom he can do good works. And remaining in the Spirit (also by free will) he will merit eternal life, which cannot be marred by any corruption. AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 60.<sup>58</sup>

#### **BECAUSE OF HIS CALL.**

AUGUSTINE: No one believes who is not called. God calls in his mercy and not as rewarding the merits of faith. The merits of faith follow his calling; they do not precede it.... Unless the mercy of God in calling precedes faith, no one can even believe and thus begin to be justified and to receive the power to do good works. So grace comes before all merit. Christ died for the ungodly. The younger received the promise that the elder should serve him from the God who called him and not from any meritorious works of his Own. To SIMPLICIAN ON VARIOUS QUESTIONS 1.2.1.<sup>59</sup>

#### **THOUGH NOT YET BORN.**

AUGUSTINE: We know that children not yet born have done nothing either good or evil in their own life, nor have they any merits from a previous life, which no individual can have as his own. They come into the miseries of this life, their carnal birth according to Adam involves them at the moment of their nativity in the contagion of the primal death, and they are not delivered from the penalty of eternal death which a just verdict passing from one lays upon all unless they are born again in Christ through grace. LETTERS 217.<sup>60</sup>

### ***9:12 Good Works Produced by Grace***

#### **JACOB HAD NO MERITORIOUS WORKS BEFORE HE WAS BORN.**

AUGUSTINE: No one could say that Jacob had conciliated God by meritorious works before he was born, so that God should say this of him.... Nor had Isaac conciliated God by any previous meritorious works, so that his birth should have been promised.... Good works do not produce grace, but are produced by grace. To SIMPLICIAN ON VARIOUS QUESTIONS 1.2.3.<sup>62</sup>

## ***9:13 Choosing One, Rejecting Another***

### **WHETHER GOD HATES NOTHING HE HAS MADE.**

AUGUSTINE: If God hated Esau because he was a vessel made for dishonor, how could it be true that God hates nothing which he has made? For in that case, God hated Esau, even though he had made him as a vessel for dishonor. This knotty problem is solved if we understand that God is the Maker of all creatures. Every creature of God is good. Every man is a creature as man but not as sinner. God is the Creator both of the body and of the soul of man. Neither of these is evil, and God hates neither. He hates nothing which he has made. But the soul is more excellent than the body, and God is more excellent than both soul and body, being the maker and fashioner of both. In man he hates nothing but sin. Sin in man is perversity and lack of order, i.e., a turning away from the Creator, who is more excellent, and a turning to the creatures which are inferior to him. God does not hate Esau the man, but he does hate Esau the sinner. To SIMPLICIAN ON VARIOUS QUESTIONS 1.2.18.<sup>69</sup>

## ***9:14 God Is Just***

### **THE CASE OF BAPTIZED CHILDREN WHO LATER BECOME APOSTATES.**

AUGUSTINE: What is to be said of infants who receive the sacrament of Christian grace, as is usual at that age, and thus undoubtedly have a claim to eternal life and the kingdom of heaven if they die at once, whereas if they are allowed to grow up, some become even apostates? Why is this, except that they are not included in that predestination and calling according to his purpose which is without repentance? Why some are included and others are not can be for a hidden reason but not for an unjust one. LETTERS 149.<sup>1</sup>

## ***9:15 God Dispenses Mercy and Compassion***

### **FOREKNOWLEDGE AND MERCY.**

CHRYSOSTOM: God was telling Moses 6 that it was not his to know who was deserving of God's love towards man; rather, Moses was to leave that up to God. If that was true for him, how much more is it true for us! HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.<sup>7</sup>

## **I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I WILL HAVE COMPASSION.**

AUGUSTINE: God was merciful to us in the first place in that he called us while we were still sinners ... and he continues to have mercy on us now that we believe. How does God have mercy a second time? He gives his Holy Spirit to the man who believes and asks for him. And having given the Spirit God will then have compassion on those to whom he has already shown compassion. That is to say, he will make the believer compassionate so that he may do good works through love. Let no one take the credit for acting compassionately, since it was by the Holy Spirit that God gave him this love, without which no one can be compassionate. <sup>8</sup> God did not elect those who had done good works, but those who believed, so that he might enable them to do good works. It is our part to believe and to will and his part to give to those who believe and will the ability to do good works through the Holy Spirit, by whom the love of God is poured out in our hearts in order to make us compassionate. AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 61.<sup>9</sup>

## **9:16 *Not by Human Will or Exertion***

### **UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS.**

ORIGEN: This must be understood in the light of what David says in the psalm: Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. <sup>13</sup> From this we learn that it is not because the builder sits idly by that God builds the house for him but because he works and expends as much labor and care as lies within human power, but yet it belongs to God to remove all the obstacles and bring the work to completion. Thus, man is called to work as hard as he can, but God will crown the work with success. Therefore it is godly and right for a man to leave the completion of his work to God and not to another human being. Likewise, Paul sowed and Apollos watered but God gave the increase, <sup>50</sup> neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. <sup>14</sup> In the same way, we can say that it depends not upon man's will or exertion but upon God's mercy. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>15</sup>

### **MAN'S WILL AND RUNNING.**

JEROME: It is clear from this passage that the willing and running are ours, but the fulfillment of our willing and running belongs to the mercy of God. So it is that free will is preserved as far as our willing and running is concerned and that everything depends on the power of God as far as the fulfillment of our willing and running is concerned. AGAINST THE PELAGIANS 1.5.<sup>19</sup>

## **IT DEPENDS UPON GOD'S MERCY.**

AUGUSTINE: Paul does not take away the freedom of the will but says that our will is not sufficient unless God helps us, making us compassionate so that we might do good works by the gift of the Holy Spirit ... We cannot will unless we are called, and when we will after our calling neither our will nor our striving is enough unless God gives strength to our striving and leads us where he calls. It is therefore clear that it is not by willing nor by striving but by the mercy of God that we do good works, even though our will (which by itself can do nothing) is also present. AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 62.<sup>20</sup>

## ***9:17 Human Intent Shows God's Power***

### **GOD'S KNOWING AND FOREKNOWING OF HUMAN INTENTIONALITY.**

ORIGEN: It is certain that God not only knows everyone's intention and will but that he foreknows them as well. Thus knowing and foreknowing, the good and just dispenser uses the motives and intention of each one in order to accomplish the works which the mind and will of each person has chosen. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>26</sup>

### **GOD'S PATIENCE WITH PHAROAH.**

CHRYSOSTOM: God endured Pharaoh for long time in the hope that he might repent, but even when he did not do so God was patient with him in order to display his own goodness and power, even if Pharaoh gained nothing from it. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.<sup>29</sup>

### **WHETHER PHAROAH'S HARDNESS OF HEART WAS UNWILLED.**

AUGUSTINE: We read in Exodus [10:1] that Pharaoh's heart was hardened, so that he was not moved even by clear signs. Therefore, because Pharaoh did not obey the commands of God he was punished. No one can say that this hardness of heart came upon Pharaoh undeservedly; it came by the judgment of God who was giving him just punishment for his unbelief. Nor should it be thought that Pharaoh did not obey because he could not, on the ground that his heart had already been hardened. On the contrary, Pharaoh had deserved his hardness of heart by his earlier unbelief. For in those whom God has chosen it is not works but faith which is the beginning of merit, so that they might do good works by the gift of God. And in those whom he condemns unbelief and unfaithfulness are the beginning of punishment, so that by that very punishment they are permitted to do what is evil. <sup>30</sup> AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 62.<sup>31</sup>

OECUMENIUS: God's power is patience, and it is a very great power indeed. For who would not be overawed by the enormous patience of God? For he says that it is for this reason that he has agreed to let Pharaoh rule, that it may be shown how patient he is. PAULINE COMMENTARY FROM THE GREEK CHURCH.

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## **9:18 *God's Mercy and Human Unbelief***

### **WHETHER PHARAOH'S HEART WAS HARDENED APART FROM HIS OWN RECALCITRANCE.**

ORIGEN: Pharaoh's heart was hardened in the following way: God did not want to punish him immediately and completely. Although Pharaoh's wickedness was enormous, God in his patience did not withdraw the possibility of conversion from him. Instead he struck him lightly at first and then gradually increased the blows. But although God acted with patience, Pharaoh was hardened by that very thing and became even more angry with God and contemptuous of him.... Therefore it is not that God hardens whom he wills, but rather that whoever is not softened by his patience is thereby automatically hardened. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>34</sup>

### **HOW GOD'S MERCY IS RELATED TO ONE'S WILLED FAITH OR UNFAITH.**

AUGUSTINE: He enables the one on whom he has mercy to do good, and he leaves the one whom he hardens to do evil. But that mercy is the result of the prior merit of faith, and that hardening is the fruit of prior unbelief, so that we do good deeds by the gift of God and evil deeds because of his punishment. Yet in either case free will is not taken away from man, whether it is to believe in God, so that mercy on us might follow, or to disbelieve in him, so that punishment on us might be the result. AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 62.<sup>38</sup>

AUGUSTINE: Why does the Father not teach all people in order that they might come to Christ, unless it is that all those whom he teaches, he teaches because of mercy, but those whom he does not teach, he does not teach because of judgment? PREDESTINATION OF THE SAINTS 8.14. <sup>39</sup>

AUGUSTINE: YOU must believe that the man whom God permits to go astray and to become hardened has deserved this evil, while in the case of the man upon whom he has mercy, you must acknowledge with an unswerving faith that this is a case of the grace of God, who is rendering not evil for evil but good for evil. GRACE AND FREE WILL 23.45.<sup>40</sup>

## ***9:19 Resisting God's Will***

### **WHO CAN RESIST HIS WILL?**

ORIGEN: It is certain that no one can resist God's will, but it is good for us to remember that his will is just and right. Whether we are good or bad depends on our will, but it is God's will that the bad person is destined to punishment and the good person is destined to glory. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>42</sup>

### **PAUL'S PERSISTENT WAY OF PRESSING QUESTIONS.**

CHRYSOSTOM: Paul does everything he can to embarrass the questioner. He does not answer him right away either, but prefers to shut him up with a further question.... This is what a good teacher does. He does not follow his pupils' fancy everywhere but leads them to his own mind and pulls up the thorns, and then puts the seed in and does not immediately answer all the questions put to him. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.<sup>44</sup>

AUGUSTINE: Having given his conclusion [in the last verse] Paul plays devil's advocate by asking a rhetorical question.... He responds to this question in a sensible way so that we might understand that the basic rewards of faith and of unbelief are made plain only to spiritual people and not to those who live according to the earthly man. Likewise with the way God in his foreknowledge elects those who will believe and condemns unbelievers. He neither elects the ones because of their works nor condemns the others because of theirs, but he grants to the faith of the ones the ability to do good works and hardens the unbelief of the others by deserting them, so that they do evil. This understanding, as I have said, is given only to spiritual people and is very different from the wisdom of the flesh. Thus Paul counters his inquirer so that he may understand that he first must put away the man of clay in order to be worthy to investigate these things by the Spirit. AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 62.<sup>45</sup>

## ***9:20 Answering Back to God***

### **WHO ARE YOU TO ANSWER GOD?**

ORIGEN: I do not think that, if you are a faithful and discreet servant of God and want to understand and admire the wisdom of the Lord, he will say to you: Who are you?.... If we want to know something of the secret and hidden things of God and if we are not people of lusts and contentions, then let us inquire



faithfully and humbly into the judgments of God which are contained more secretly in holy Scripture. For even the Lord said: Search the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup> knowing that these things are applicable not to those who are busy with other matters and only hear or read the Bible from time to time, but to those who with a pure and simple heart endeavor to open up the holy Scriptures by their labor and constant attention. I know well enough that I am not one of them! But anyone who is, let him seek and he will find. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>47</sup>

ORIGEN: Such a rebuke does not refer to one who is faithful and lives a good and righteous life and has confidence towards God.... This rebuke is not for the faithful and the saints but for the unfaithful and the ungodly. ON FIRST PRINCIPLES 3.1.22.<sup>48</sup>

### **THE FAITHFUL FREELY YIELD TO THE POTTER'S HANDS.**

CHRYSOSTOM: Paul says this in order not to do away with free will but rather to show to what extent we ought to obey God. We should be as little inclined to call God to account as a piece of clay is. We ought to abstain not only from complaining or questioning but from even speaking or thinking about it at all, and instead we should become like that lifeless matter which follows the potter's hands and lets itself be shaped in whatever way the potter wills. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.<sup>50</sup>

AUGUSTINE: AS long as you are just a creature, says Paul, like this lump of clay, and you have not been led to spiritual things, so that as a spiritual man you might judge all things and be judged by no one, it is right for you to hold back from this kind of inquiry and not to answer back to God. For everyone who wants to know God's plan ought first to be received into his friendship, and this is only possible for spiritual people who already bear the image of the heavenly. AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 62.<sup>51</sup>

## ***9:21 The Potter's Right Over the Clay***

### **FIT ONLY FOR MENIAL USE.**

ORIGEN: Remember the incident in Jeremiah when the prophet went down to the potter's house and found him reworking a clay vessel which was spoiled, as it seemed good to him to do. Then the Lord said: O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel <sup>59</sup> It seems to me that no more need be said on the subject.... Someone who does not cleanse himself and does not wash away his sins by repentance is a vessel fit only for menial use. If he goes on and increases in wickedness so that his mind is hardened and his impenitent

heart ends up despising everything God commands, then he will no longer be fit even for menial use but will become a vessel fit only for destruction. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>60</sup>

ORIGEN: If both the saved and the lost come from one lump of clay, then the nature of their souls will be not different but the same. ON FIRST PRINCIPLES 3.1.23.<sup>61</sup>

### **THE SAME LUMP.**

CHRYSOSTOM: God does nothing at random or by mere chance, even if you do not understand the secrets of his wisdom. You allow the potter to make different things from the same lump of clay and find no fault with him, but you do not grant the same freedom to God!... How monstrous this is. It is not on the potter that the honor or dishonor of the vessel depends but rather on those who make use of it. It is the same way with people—it all depends on their own free choice. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.46.<sup>64</sup>

### **HAS THE POTTER NO RIGHT OVER THE CLAY?**

AUGUSTINE: AS long as you are a potter's vessel, you must first be broken by the iron rod of which it was said: You will rule them with a rod of iron, and you will break them as a potter's vessel. <sup>65</sup> Then, when the outer man is destroyed and the inner man is renewed, you will be able, rooted and grounded in love, to understand what is the length and breadth and height and depth, to know even the overwhelming knowledge of the love of God. <sup>66</sup> So because from the same lump of clay God has made some vessels for noble use and others for ignoble, it is not for you, whoever you are who still lives according to this lump (that is, who are wise by the standards of earthly sense and the flesh), to dispute what God has decreed.

AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 62.<sup>67</sup>

AUGUSTINE: First comes the clay which is fit only to be thrown away. We must begin with this but need not remain in it. Afterward comes what is fit for use, into which we can be gradually molded and in which, once molded, we can remain. This does not mean that everyone who is wicked will become good but that no one becomes good who was not once wicked. What is true is that the sooner a man makes a change in himself for the better, the sooner he has a right to be called what he has become. THE CITY OF GOD 15.1.<sup>68</sup>

AUGUSTINE: Given that our nature sinned in paradise, we are now formed through a mortal begetting by the same divine providence, not according to heaven but according to earth, i.e., not according to the spirit but according to the flesh, and we have all become one mass of clay, i.e., a mass of sin. QUESTIONS 68.3.<sup>69</sup>

## **THE FREE WILL OF THE FIRST MAN.**

AUGUSTINE: If this lump of clay were of such indifferent value that it deserved nothing good any more than it deserved anything evil, there would be reason to see injustice in making of it a vessel unto dishonor. But when through the free will of the first man alone, condemnation extended to the whole lump of clay, it is undoubtedly true that if vessels are made of it unto honor, it is a question not of justice not forestalling grace, but of God's mercy. If however, vessels are made of it unto dishonor, this is to be attributed to God's justice, not to his injustice — a concept which can hardly exist with God! LETTERS 186.<sup>70</sup>

AUGUSTINE: It would seem unjust that vessels of wrath should be made unto destruction if the whole lump of clay has not been condemned in Adam. The fact that men become vessels of wrath at birth is due to the penalty they deserve, but that they become vessels of mercy at their second birth is due to an undeserved grace. LETTERS 190.<sup>71</sup>

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: It is not possible to say on the basis of this [verse] that there are different types of human nature, nor does holy Scripture claim that some people have been made cruel or obdurate or even vessels of honor and wickedness, nor does it attribute this kind of nature to them. Rather, it should be understood to mean that some men are made like clay vessels and that we use them either for honor or for dishonor. <sup>74</sup> EXPLANATION OF THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS.<sup>75</sup>

## **9:22 *God's Patient Endurance***

### **DESIRING TO SHOW HIS WRATH.**

ORIGEN: I am astonished when I examine the Holy Spirit's purpose in the Scriptures. For he says that the wrath of God, which is foreign to his nature, will be made known to men ... but that his goodness and mercy, which are proper to his nature, will be concealed and hidden.... Why should God reveal his wrath to men and conceal his mercy? No doubt it is because God knows that the human race is weak and prone to fall through negligence, and that it is therefore better for them to be under the fear of wrath than to relax in the hope of God's mercy and forgiveness. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>1</sup>

### **SELF-CHOSEN VESSELS OF WRATH.**

CHRYSOSTOM: Why are some people vessels of wrath and others vessels of mercy? It is by their own free choice. God, being very good, shows the same kindness to both. For it was not only to those who were saved that God showed kindness but to Pharaoh also, as far as he deserved. For both Pharaoh and God's

people had the advantage of God's patience. And if Pharaoh was not saved it was because of his own will, since God had done as much for him as he had done for those who were saved. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.4

AUGUSTINE: Paul has sufficiently demonstrated that the hardness of heart which came to Pharaoh came as the just deserts of his earlier unbelief. Yet God patiently endured his unbelief until the time came for him to mete out his punishment. God did this in order to correct those whom he had decided to set free from error and to lead them by calling them back to reverence and godliness, offering his aid to their prayers and sighings. AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 63.5

#### **WHETHER GOD LITERALLY HAS THE PASSION OF WRATH.**

OECUMENIUS: Of course God is not subject to the passion of wrath. It is when he does what we do when we are angry that he calls it wrath, so that we will understand what he means. PAULINE COMMENTARY FROM THE GREEK CHURCH.11

### ***9:23 The Riches of God's Glory***

#### **To MAKE KNOWN THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY.**

ORIGEN: The riches of God are made known when his mercy is shown toward those who are rejected by men and who are downtrodden, who put their hope not in their own riches or in their own strength but in the Lord. 12 COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.13

#### **PREPARED BEFOREHAND FOR GLORY.**

CHRYSOSTOM: The Jews reproached the Gentiles because the latter were saved by grace, and they thought that by making this accusation they would bring shame on them. But Paul sets this insinuation aside, because if this brought glory to God, how much more would it bring glory to those through whom God was glorified? HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.15

#### **GOOD IN BENEFITS, JUST IN PUNISHMENT.**

AUGUSTINE: In giving to some what they did not deserve God obviously wanted his grace to be gratuitous and therefore genuinely grace, and in not giving it to all he showed what all deserved. He is good in the benefit given to certain people and just in the punishment of others but good in all things, for it is good

when that which is deserved is given, and just in all things, as it is just when that which is not merited is given without injury to anyone. GIFT OF PERSEVERANCE 12.28.16

### ***9:24 Jews and Gentiles Called by God***

#### **THE POTTER'S ONE LUMP.**

AUGUSTINE: God did not call all the Jews but only some of them. Nor did he call all the Gentiles but only some of them. From Adam has sprung one mass of sinners and godless men, in which both Jews and Gentiles belong to one lump, apart from the grace of God. If the potter out of one lump of clay makes one vessel for honor and another for dishonor, it is clear that God has made of the Jews some vessels for honor and others for dishonor, and similarly of the Gentiles. To SIMPLICIAN ON VARIOUS QUESTIONS 1.2.19.19

### ***9:25 Now Called and Loved***

#### **THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES.**

CHRYSOSTOM: Hosea obviously was speaking about the Gentiles here. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.22

AUGUSTINE: The gist of the entire argument leads to this conclusion. Paul taught that we do good by the mercy of God and that the Jews who had received the gospel should not glory in their works, thinking that they had deserved this and not wanting it to be given to the Gentiles. In Paul's mind, the Jews should cease from such pride and understand that if we are called to faith not through our own works but by the mercy of God and if it is given to those who believe to do good, then they should not begrudge the Gentiles this mercy as if it had been given to the Jews on the ground of prior merit, which is nothing. AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 64.23

### ***9:26 Sons of the Living God***

#### **THEY WILL BE CALLED SONS.**

CHRYSOSTOM: Even if this was said about those Jews who believed and not about the Gentiles, the argument still stands. For if those who had received so many benefits and then had become hard-hearted and estranged and had lost their identity as a people were turned around ... what is there to prevent those

who were originally aliens from being called and counted worthy of the same blessings if only they obey?  
HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.25

### **9:27 *A Remnant Will Be Saved***

#### **ISAIAH CRIES OUT.**

CHRYSOSTOM: Not content with Hosea, Paul quotes Isaiah as well.... He does not say that all are to be saved either, but only those who are worthy. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.29

#### **OTHER SHEEP NOT OF THIS FOLD.**

AUGUSTINE: This shows that the Lord is the cornerstone, uniting both walls in himself. Hosea's testimony is spoken of the Gentiles, <sup>30</sup> but the Lord unites both Jews and Gentiles, according to what he said in the gospel about the latter: I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>31</sup> AUGUSTINE ON ROMANS 65.<sup>32</sup>

#### **ONLY A REMNANT SAVED.**

AUGUSTINE: If by remnant... we are to understand not election of the justified to eternal life but election of those who are to be justified, that kind of election is truly hidden and cannot be known by us, who must regard all men as parts of a single lump of clay. If some claim to be able to know it, I must confess my own weakness in this matter. To SIMPLICIAN ON VARIOUS QUESTIONS 1.2.22.<sup>33</sup>

### **9:28 *The Lord Will Execute His Sentence***

#### **WITH DISPATCH.**

CHRYSOSTOM: What this means is that salvation will come quickly, and it depends on very few words. There is no need to make a big palaver of it or get involved with the vexation of the works of the law.  
HOMILIES ON ROMANS I 6.<sup>37</sup>

## **9:29 A Seed**

### **ABRAHAM'S SEED.**

ORIGEN: What children are these that the Lord has left? No doubt this means what the apostle expounds elsewhere, when he says that it was said to Abraham: I shall give this land to you and to your seed. <sup>39</sup> He did not say to your seeds, as if to many, but to your seed, as if to one, and that one is Christ. <sup>40</sup> Nor was it an accident that Isaiah called the remnant a seed. It was so called because it was meant to be sown in the earth and bear much fruit. In this way he teaches that Christ must also be sown, that is, buried in the earth, from which he would rise and bear fruit in the whole multitude of the church. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>41</sup>

### **AS ISAIAH PREDICTED.**

CHRYSOSTOM: This prophecy was actually fulfilled in the captivity, when most of the people were taken away and perished, with only a few being saved. <sup>44</sup> HOMILIES ON ROMANS I 6.<sup>45</sup>

OECUMENIUS: This may also be said of Christ, which is how Cyril of Alexandria interpreted it. PAULINE COMMENTARY FROM THE GREEK CHURCH.<sup>49</sup>

## **9:30 Attaining Righteousness Through Faith**

### **RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPLANTED IN THE GENTILES WHO DID NOT PURSUE IT.**

ORIGEN: It is one thing to pursue righteousness and another to have it implanted within. A person who tries by much teaching and reading to obtain something is said to pursue it.... In this sense, the Gentiles, who did not have the tables of the law or the written Word, cannot be said to have pursued righteousness. Nevertheless, they had it in them because the natural law had taught it to them. Therefore, they were close to that righteousness which is of faith, that is, to Christ. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>50</sup>

CHRYSOSTOM: Paul means that the Gentiles did not go to particular trouble to acquire righteousness, in the way that the Jews did. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.<sup>52</sup>

### ***9:31 Israel Did Not Fulfill the Law***

#### **PURSUIT LACKING FULFILLMENT.**

ORIGEN: Israel pursued the law of righteousness according to the letter but did not fulfill the law. What law? No doubt the law of the Spirit. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>54</sup>

### ***9:32 Stumbling Over the Law of Faith***

#### **BASED ON WORKS.**

ORIGEN: The apostle would never say that they did not fulfill the law which they pursued, which they had and held in their hands. Rather he is explaining why Israel was unable to fulfill the law. It was because they relied on works, not on faith. COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.<sup>57</sup>

### ***9:33 A Stumbling Stone***

#### **THE STONE THE BUILDERS REJECTED.**

CHRYSOSTOM: This is said not of the Jews only but of the entire human race.... The wonder is that the prophet speaks not only of those who will believe but also of those who will not believe. For to stumble is to disbelieve. HOMILIES ON ROMANS 16.<sup>69</sup>