

The Book of Romans

Excursus on Romans 9:6-23

Does God desire all to be saved?

*“So then He has mercy on whom He desires,
and He hardens who He desires.”*

(Rom. 9:18)

³This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:3-4)

⁹The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

³⁷ “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.” (Matthew 23:37)

²³ “Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,” declares the Lord GOD, “rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?...³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone,” declares the Lord GOD. “Therefore, repent and live.” (Ezekiel 18:23,32)

God's Desire to Save?

- Attempts to Reconcile:
 1. Deny that the Bible teaches unconditional election – explain “election” some other way
 2. Deny that the Bible teaches God's desire to save all – explain these texts another way
 3. Affirm that both are simultaneously true by recognizing the different senses in which God “wills” things

God's Desire to Save?

- Two Wills of God?
 1. The “will” of God is used in two senses
 - “will of decree” (secret, sovereign) – God's plan or purpose which He infallibly accomplishes (e.g. James 4:15; Eph. 1:11)
 - “will of command” (revealed, moral) – God's moral standard expressed in His commands which may be disobeyed (e.g. 1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Pet. 4:2)

God's Desire to Save?

- Two Wills of God?
 2. God wills things in one sense that He does not will in another sense
 - God willed the hardening of Pharaoh's heart so that he would disobey God's command/will
 - God willed the crucifixion of Jesus by means of many sinful actions (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28)

God's Desire to Save?

- Two Wills of God?
 3. God wills things to exist that He hates in themselves for the accomplishment of the greatest good
 - ❖ God's ultimate good is the manifestation of the riches of His glory for the highest happiness of His people (Rom. 9:22-23)

²² What if God, willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

²³ and in order to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory?

(Romans 9:22-23)

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