

Romans 9:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?
God forbid.

Analysis

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid— Paul voices the inevitable objection: if God chooses before works, isn't he unjust (adikia, ἀδικία)? The answer is emphatic: mē genoito (μὴ γένοιτο), 'may it never be!' (KJV's 'God forbid' captures the horror). This phrase appears 10 times in Romans, always rejecting blasphemous inferences.

The objection assumes humans deserve equal treatment from God. But this inverts the true situation: all deserve condemnation (3:23, 6:23). Justice would damn everyone. That God chooses to save any is pure mercy. Election doesn't make God unjust; it makes him merciful. The real question isn't 'Why doesn't God save everyone?' but 'Why does God save anyone?' Election magnifies grace precisely because it's undeserved and unconditional.

Historical Context

This objection is as old as election itself. Job wrestled with God's sovereignty (Job 9:14-24). Jeremiah faced it (Jeremiah 18:1-10). Jesus provoked it (Matthew 20:1-16). Paul systematically answers in verses 15-23, defending both God's justice and mercy.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Why does unconditional election offend human sensibilities about fairness?
2. How does recognizing universal guilt (3:23) dissolve the 'injustice' objection?
3. What assumptions about human 'deservingness' underlie objections to sovereign election?

Interlinear Text

Tí	οὐν	ἐροῦμεν	μὴ	ἀδικία	παρὰ	τῷ
What	then	shall we say	God forbid	Is there unrighteousness	with	G3588
G5101	G3767	G2046	G3361	G93	G3844	
θεῷ	μὴ	γένοιτο·				
God	God forbid		G1096			
G2316	G3361					

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 19:7 (References God): Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.

Psalms 145:17 (Righteousness): The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Deuteronomy 32:4 (Righteousness): He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Revelation 16:7 (Righteousness): And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

Psalms 92:15 (Righteousness): To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Job 8:3 (Righteousness): Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

Genesis 18:25 (Righteousness): That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Job 35:2 (Righteousness): Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?

Jeremiah 12:1 (Righteousness): Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?

Romans 2:5 (Righteousness): But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;