

No Household Gods

Romans 9:13-16



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FOCAL Read Responsively Romans 9:13-16 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. (14) **What shall we say then? [Is there] unrighteousness with God? God forbid.** (15) For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (16) **So then [it is] not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.**

In ancient times every pagan household kept its own “gods”. These household gods, small carved statues smaller than today's “Barbie Doll”, were kept in a small bag, closely guarded, and highly treasured. If a person lost their household gods that whole family became paralyzed with fear. “Our gods are gone, what shall we do!” When the patriarch **Jacob** wanted to get away from his father-in-law he stole **Laban's** household gods (**Genesis 31:30**). Laban was afraid to do anything to Jacob lest his gods be lost forever.

Nothing is really changed today, even though times are more *modern*. Though few of us have little carved statues that we consider “gods”, far too many trade a blessed life in service to the One True God while clinging to their ineffective false “gods”. The Only True God tells us:

Exodus 20:3-6 Thou **shalt have no other gods before me. (4) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness [of any thing] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the earth beneath, or that [is]**

in the water under the earth: (5) Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation] of them that hate me; (6) And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Our God is a jealous God – He wants us to love Him above all others. **Our God is in control of all things** – if He is not then we should cease praying to Him.

The very name and title “**God**” implies One Who has a power that cannot be revoked nor denied.

When you are being tried, falsely accused, or persecuted by another who is stronger than you, and you take this to God in prayer – what are you praying for? If God is not sovereign over the **will of man** then *what in the world are you praying for?* Why waste your breath if God cannot change the heart of a man? **When you are trying to do something that is beyond your puny human power, and you take this to God in prayer – what are you praying for?** If God is not sovereign over the **works of man** then *what in the world are you praying for?* Why waste your breath if God cannot change and control the works of man? **When we are tried by disease we pray, asking the God Who is sovereign and in control of all to remove that disease or to guide the doctors so as to remove the disease.**

The God Who casts out disease is the same God Who is Lord over all – *or else He is not God*. There is nothing, *nothing beyond the grasp and control of God*. The Scripture says:

Numbers 23:19 God [is] not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do [it]? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

He is *outside of that which He created*. He is not mortal, not fallible, not subject to sin, not prone to error. **God is in control of that which He created**. Yes, the Creator **took on Himself humanity in the Person of Jesus Christ so He could atone for our sins**. Yes, He came and offered Himself as the solution for the sin nature in each and every one of us. But if He is not in control of that which He created He *cannot be God* – for God *governs* and is *not governed* by that which He made.

It is fashionable today for the “religious” as well as the “not so religious” crowds to *hunt down and ridicule those who believe in the Sovereignty of God*. The hackles rise on the backs of both Sadducee as well as Pharisee when God is presented *as God* to a lost and dying world. You need to understand this, dear ones, above all else: You can't have it both ways. If you want God to be sovereign over your life in the bad things, then He must be sovereign over *all aspects* of your life. Our society today wants a somewhat psychotic God, One Who is Sovereign *only when we want Him to be*

sovereign. Yet this type of God *cannot possibly be God nor is this the God of the Scripture*. The God of the Holy Scripture of necessity changes the human will and the human work as He sees fit. The True God **caused a worldwide flood, while saving Noah and his family**. The True God **called a Chaldean named Abraham, and promised him a land and a people**. The True God **destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, while saving Lot's family**. The True God **allowed Joseph to be cast into a pit by his brothers, then raised Joseph up to be co-ruler with Pharaoh**. The True God **saved Moses as a baby, and raised him up to be one the greatest prophets who ever was**. The True God **crushed Egypt and Pharaoh under ten plagues, and forced these people to let Israel go free**. The True God **called the young boy Samuel to be His prophet, then used Samuel to call David to be king**. The True God **guided the stone that David threw so that it killed Goliath against his will**. And it is the True God **Who willingly went to Calvary, offering Himself to be a payment for your sins**. Jesus Christ tells us:

John 10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

There are two “household gods” that you must put away if you want to be blessed by the True God. You must put away the **god of your will** and the **god of your works**. Just as Jacob told his people to **put away their strange gods (Genesis 35:2-3)**, we too must put away our will and our works and surrender our lives to Him in Christ. The True God will not share a throne with any other. If

you want to be saved, you can only be saved by surrendering your life to Jesus Christ. If you want to be blessed in life, you can only be blessed by following in the footsteps of Jesus.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.

It Is Not Of Him That Willeth

FOCAL Romans 9:16 So then **[it is] not of him that willeth,**

If God is sovereign – and the Scripture teaches that He is – then I must surrender my will and my wants to God if I want to be blessed. I have no choice! **It is not of him that willeth**. This chapter of Romans is filled with illustrations that show us **God is in control** – and if you and I want to be blessed, we must surrender to that control.

We Bring Trials On Ourselves When We Will Not Surrender Our Will To God.

God alone is God – He alone is sovereign. If this is true (and it is) then there is only one smart move for each and every one of us. We *must* bend our will and our knees to God *or He will do it for us*. Look at God's illustration:

Romans 9:7-9 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, [are they] all children: but, **In Isaac shall thy seed be called. (8) That is, They**

which are the children of the flesh, these [are] not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. (9) For this [is] the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.

The Bible gives us a wonderful illustration of the *foolishness of human will and the certainty of God's will* in the history of **Abraham**.

We don't know much about Abraham. The Bible introduces his family shortly after God *confuses human language at the Tower of Babel*. **Abraham was a Chaldean, an ancient Babylonian, and probably descended from one of those people who tried to build the Tower of Babel.** Abraham had a beautiful wife named Sarah but *no children*.

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: (2) And **I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:** (3) And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Of all the things that God promised Abraham this dear

old man heard the loudest **“I will make of thee a great nation”**. Abraham and his wife were childless. Every day this dear couple willed a child, hoped for a child, did everything they could do to get a child. And every day Sarah, beautiful as she was, remained barren. God promised Abraham and Sarah a child – yet year followed year, and the promise of God seemed to be unfulfilled. Abraham tried a number of things. He had a servant that he trusted that he would adopt and let this man be his heir. God rejected this. **It is not of him that willeth**. You can't bring a child by your own will, Abraham. Wait on Me, wait on the Sovereign God, and I will bless you! As the Scripture says:

Psalms 27:14 **Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.**

Wait on the LORD, on the Almighty, on the Great I AM, the Ancient of Days. Wait on Him. If you want to be blessed, **be of good courage**. Look to God, wait, and trust that He shall bless you. In another place we read:

Isaiah 40:28-31 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, [that] **the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? [there is] no searching of his understanding. (29) He giveth power to the faint; and to [them that have] no might he increaseth strength.** (30) Even the youths shall faint and be

weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: (31) But **they that wait upon the LORD shall renew [their] strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint.**

We *must* put away the household god of our own will if we want to be blessed of the Lord!

Abraham was told to wait on God. At first he did wait. Yet as time passed and no heir came, Abraham allowed Sarah to talk him into going into the maid **Hagar's tent**, a decision that would bring a child forth named **Ishmael, the father of the Arabs**. Oh, what a mess we make of our lives when we try to live them in our own power! Oh, how terrible are the mistakes we make when we try and put our puny wills in a place that should be occupied by the Will of Almighty God! Ishmael was born. Abraham thought, “Here is my heir. I have made him by my will. I have create him by my hand. I have *helped God out* by what I have done – and this is surely very good”. When God comes to Abraham – now an old man – the LORD says to him:

Genesis 15:1 ... **Fear not, Abram: I [am] thy shield, [and] thy exceeding great reward.**

“Abraham, I'm all you need. Just trust Me – I am God. Believe what I have promised – it will come to

pass. It is not of him who willeth, Abraham, but it is of Me that you will be blessed.” What was Abraham's reply?

Genesis 15:2-3 And Abram said, **Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house [is] this Eliezer of Damascus?** (3) And Abram said, Behold, to me **thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.**

What were Abraham's solutions to his problem of childlessness? Were his solutions successful? Why or why not?

“LORD, life just hasn't been good to me. Here's my heirs, LORD – pick which one you will and let me know who you want. Shall my heir be Eliezer, my faithful servant, or Ishmael my son by Hagar? Which child shall be my heir,, O Lord? Which child?” The Lord replied:

Genesis 15:4 ... **This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.**

“I choose *neither Eliezer nor Ishmael* – but I will keep My Word. These are children of *your* will, not Mine. I

am God, and though you are past child bearing age you shall have a child from Sarah. **IN ISAAC SHALL YOUR SEED BE CALLED**".

Life would be so much easier for all of us if we would just learn to surrender our wills to God. He is in control! Abraham spent years worrying about having a child. God promised the child – wouldn't He do what He promised?

Numbers 23:19 God [is] not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do [it]? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

What did Abraham gain by trying to circumvent the will of God? His worry created the child **Ishmael**, which in turn created the **Arabic nations**. These nations today stand in opposition to the **children of Israel**. **The children of the flesh can never be the children of promise**. Oh, how much better to wait upon the Will of God! **How many trials have we brought into our lives when we will not surrender our will to God?**

How many times have we looked with tenderness at our own Ishmael, only to discover that the work of our hands is now our greatest enemy. How much better would it have been to trust in the Lord?

It Is Not Of Him That Runneth

FOCAL Romans 9:16 **So then [it is] not ... of him that runneth ...**

It's not how hard you run – but whether **you are running for God or running for yourself**. If you're running for yourself you are surely running in place!

The Bible tells us of **two brothers** – neither one much in the way of morality if the truth be told – **Esau and Jacob**. God told **Rebekah and Isaac** when these children were yet in their mother's womb:

Genesis 25:23-28 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations [are] in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and [the one] people shall be stronger than [the other] people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

It was God's Will that the elder serve the younger, that Esau would serve Jacob.

Why was that? I have no idea! Yet God Who alone is God *decreed* that **Jacob** would be the child who was blessed. **Jacob would later be renamed Israel (Prince of God)** and would become the forefather of God's Chosen Nation **Israel**.

Esau worked hard to bless his father **Isaac**. Esau was

like a lot of you men. He hunted deer, and Isaac loved to eat the deer that his son brought home. Though God had told **Rebekah and Isaac that Jacob was to be the leader** Isaac decided that he would bless Esau over Jacob anyway. “After all”, I'm sure he reasoned, “Esau is my firstborn and deserves the blessing”. Yet, what did God decree?

Romans 9:10-13 And not only [this]; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, [even] by our father Isaac; (11) (For [the children] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) (12) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. (13) As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

God chose **Jacob to be the forefather of Israel** while that child was yet in his mother's womb. This was God's decree, a decree that He shared with Rebekah and Isaac. The parents of these children should have submitted to the will of God, knowing that **what He decreed, would surely come to pass.**

But Isaac never prepared Esau for that day. He stubbornly decided that he would prefer Esau over Jacob, and give the blessing to Esau no matter what might come. Because he refused to do the right thing

**.... Jacob tricked and lied to both Esau and Isaac
.... Isaac's wife Rebekah joined her son in deceiving his father**

**.... Esau's heart was broken by deception
.... A family was torn apart so that brother stood against brother**

The children of Esau would become the nation **Edom**, a people who would hate and despise **Israel**. The Edomites eventually ceased being a threat to Israel as, in time, God removed that nation from power.

The household god of the human will is twinned with the household god of human works. Neither god has the power to ultimately bless anyone.

Oh, if only Isaac had obeyed the will of God, his family would have remained intact. If he had of only remembered the promise of God, and had waited on God.

Look at the case of Pharaoh. Our text tells us:

Romans 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

It was God Who gave Pharaoh his power, just as it

was God Who made Lucifer chief of the angels. The person who forgets their Maker is the person who is deluded by Satan and as confused as Pharaoh! It would be less foolish to be your own surgeon!

All power comes from God, and through God, and is given by His hand and not ours. Pharaoh became convinced in his mind that *he himself was a god*, that he achieved his greatness through his own inherent godliness. How foolish is the man who will perform surgery on himself, but much more foolish is the man who will be his own god! God told Pharaoh **I raised you up, that I might show My power in you (Exodus 9:15-17)**. God told Pharaoh, **“I raised you up, I made you, I created you, I gave you power. You exist for no other reason than to bring glory to Me. How dare you stand against Me, the Creator of all things?”**

We are alive today for one reason and one reason alone – we live to worship the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We exist to bring glory and honor to Him. Our works are to be submitted to Him. If we will not submit our lives to Him, we will in time find ourselves taking an untimely bath in the Red Sea. As Spurgeon once said, **God always prepares a Red Sea for Pharaoh.**

Romans 9:18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will [have mercy], and whom he will he hardeneth.

God approached Pharaoh ten times, each time giving him an opportunity to repent and turn to the One and Only God. **Yet Pharaoh because of his assumed power refused God, hardening his heart over and over again (see Exodus 7:13; 7:22; 8:15; 8:19; 8:32; 9:7)**. It was only after Pharaoh repeatedly rejected God that we read:

Exodus 9:12 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

If a person refuse to bend to the will of God, refuse to surrender as the work of God to the work of God, then in time all hope may be lost! **It is not him that runneth, but of God who showeth mercy.** Those who trust themselves to the Lord will be blessed. Those who reject the Lord will one day find themselves rejected of God, as the Scripture says:

Psalms 37:34-36 Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see [it]. (35) I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. (36) Yet he passed away, and, lo, he [was] not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

But It Is God That Showeth Mercy

FOCAL Romans 9:15-16 For he saith to Moses, **I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.** (16) So then [it is] not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but **of God that sheweth mercy.**

How terrible to reject the LORD, then to find yourself rejected of Him! How awful, for such a state is never God's first choice for us. He loves us, and waits to show us mercy – if we will only put away our household gods.

We serve a merciful and loving God. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. But we must put away the god of our own WILL and the god of our own WORKS.

Can you with the Psalmist say:

Psalms 13:5 But **I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.**

If not, then today is the day that God calls you to His loving embrace. If you have never given yourself to Him, call upon the Name of Jesus and you shall be saved. Trust in His mercy – believe that He gave Himself for you. Ask that He come into your life and change your life. Oh that you would call unto Him:

Psalms 69:13-14 But as for me, my prayer [is] unto thee, O LORD, [in] **an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation. (14) Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink:.....**

Jesus mourned for those **who would not come to Him that they might have life (John 5:40)**. He warned that those who would keep clinging to their household gods of **will and works** would one day lose everything. **For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it (Matthew 16:25)**. God wants to bless your lives. Turn to Him fully, surrender all false gods – and be blessed forever!

May God touch your hearts with His Word.