

Introduction: Who makes men to differ? Why do some believe in Jesus but some do not? Is the answer to be found in man or in God? **The Apostle Paul has clearly taught that it is God who makes men to differ.** His doctrine in these verses is that God is sovereign in the salvation of sinners. But there are objections men raise against this glorious and practical truth. What are these and how should they be answered? This Paul begins to do in verse 14.

1. Paul in his great pastoral heart for the church of Jesus anticipates, actually has likely heard the opponents of the gospel say, the objection that his doctrine of the sovereignty of God in election is contrary to the character of God, v14. This is **the first objection raised against sovereign election.**
2. He likewise brings up and refutes **the second great objection** against the sovereignty of God that it supposedly is destructive of human responsibility, v19-24. This, it is my intention to expound next Lord's Day.
3. It is plain, is it not, that Paul is very concerned that you understand the truth about God's sovereignty, especially His sovereignty in your salvation. **What is his concern?** He has taken to heart what Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, John 4:21-24. He glories in this as he writes to the Philippians "... that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ... that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11). **His concern is to make you worshipers of God through Christ Jesus!**
4. **That you would be whole-hearted worshipers of God requires that you know you are absolutely secure in His grace.** Listen to Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "What the Apostle is really concerned to do is to show that you and I, in spite of what we are still, in spite of our fallibility, our frailty and inconstancy, our lack of diligence, our ignorance, and our proneness to sin - what Paul is really trying to tell us is that if we are born again at all, if we are children of God, then we will always be that, and nothing and no one in heaven or hell or anywhere else can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans, Vol 4, p151)
5. **You are to be worshipers of God in truth and sincerity!** Look at the conclusion of this section of Paul's exposition of God's righteousness in the gospel, 11:33-36. Biblical religion consists in these four dynamic realities: **(1)** You must be overwhelmed by the gospel and by God, v33a. The apostle is not clinical nor argumentative. He recognizes that he is out of his depths as he gazes at God's glory revealed in the gospel. Are you now in **breathless wonder** at the grace and glory of God? **(2)** Paul knew **grace-constrained humility**, v33b-35. "How unsearchable!" He was marked by that grace wrought humility described in Isaiah 66:2 and Deuteronomy 29:29. Has the truth of the gospel devastated your pride? Your self-confidence? Your trust in your reasoning ability? **(3)** You must be experienced in **exultant adoration**, v36. God's glory was Paul's consuming passion, Romans 14:7-8; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 1:20. **(4)** You must serve Jesus with **whole-hearted consecration**, 12:1. All your minutes, hours, days are to be your service of worship to God.
6. The Holy Spirit knows that the truth upon which **true and acceptable worship is founded is the sovereignty of God.** Nothing else humbles the sinner and places him in the only proper attitude to come before God with acceptable worship. This was the lesson King Nebuchadnezzar learned by experience.

7. **Then how does Paul refute the objection to God's sovereignty?** Not with a long, tedious treatise but with two concise and definitive answers.

8. **His first answer is direct, it is from the Word of God itself,** v14-16. The sovereign election of those He will save is simply His prerogative as God. It is God who say He is the determiner of who receives mercy and who receives compassion. The assumption with which Paul is working here is that the Scripture is the word of God and cannot be in error. Paul's conscience is in bondage to God's revealed word. **Is your thinking constrained by the Bible?** Do you say with the apostle what he says in Romans 3:3-4?

9. **His second answer is likewise direct, but comes from history,** that is it comes from the work of God in His providence, v17-18.

10. **Beloved, what ought to be your response to this great truth of God's sovereignty in the election of sinners to be eternally saved?** (1) You ought to be in breathless wonder at the grace and glory of God. (2) You ought to have the grace-constrained humility expressing itself constantly in your life. (3) You ought to experience continually exultant adoration. How much of your prayers express this? (4) You must be whole-heartedly consecrated to the glory and service of Christ Jesus, Galatians 2:20. Pray to the Holy Spirit to make these qualities to increase in your life and the lives of your brothers and sisters.