

Romans 9.10-13 Jacob Chosen and Election, Election Excursus  
131-134  
Ray Mondragon

[Romans 9.10-13, Genesis 25.23 Jacob Chosen & Election 131]

We are going to enter a discussion on a topic which is debated by Christians and, unfortunately, my view is a very small minority one, and a little outside of our circle. I don't want to cause a controversy or any problems, but I think we can discuss it—and obviously I don't want to impose what I believe, (even though it is the right view—just kidding), so you can take the information and do what the Bereans did: evaluate it and accept what is Biblical about it. In fact that should be done with everything that you listen to or read.



We are in the section of Romans which I have called the Vindication of God's Righteousness, chapters 9-11. Paul talks about Israel as his people and is very sorrowful that they have rejected their Messiah and are now set aside being disciplined. And he lists the unique privileges that they had and have lost some because of this. But one of these privileges is their adoption as sons, as the children of God—which refers to the promise given by the Abrahamic covenant making them descendants that I am identifying as the true or spiritual descendants since they are contrasted with the 'children of the flesh'. They came through Isaac and not through Ishmael. God's election of Israelites is not based solely on natural or physical descent.

In fact God's election involves supernatural intervention. That was the main problem with both Sarah and Abraham: they were past the age of childbearing, Sarah had been barren all of her life and now was over 90 years old. And we are going to see that Rebekah also was barren and

had divine intervention before she had the two boys that are in view in this passage. And not only Rebekah, but if you remember Jacob's wife also was barren until God revived the womb of Rachel as well. So it is not based solo on physical and natural descent; it is in that they are ethnic Jews as well, descendants of Abraham and Isaac, but that is not the basis of it.

**God's Election - 9**

1. Not based on natural physical descent

Here Paul is not talking about the gentiles or the church in its broader sense of gentile, in this context.



Now we deal with Jacob, so I call it the choice of Jacob over Esau, verses 10-13:

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| I. Introduction                         | 1.1-17    |
| II. Provision of God's Righteousness    | 1.18-8.39 |
| III. Vindication of God's Righteousness | 9-11      |
| A. Past Sovereign Election of Israel    | 9.1-29    |
| 1. Sorrow of Paul Vindicated            | 9.1-5     |
| 2. Word of God Vindicated               | 9.6-13    |
| a. Choice of Isaac over Ishmael         | 9.6-9     |
| b. Choice of Jacob over Esau            | 9.10      |
| 1) Conception of Twins                  | 9.10      |

9.10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, 12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

In the Greek text it is one long sentence from verse 10 through 12. The NASB puts a period after verse 12, which I have shown. We oftentimes look at the main clause and in this sentence it is a little difficult. The NASB adds a subject and it has a subject complement and an equative verb. What do you see if the sentence starts in verse 10?

*‘And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;*

There is a semicolon after ‘Isaac’ following with a comment or elucidation concerning Rebekah:

*...for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad,*

Then he adds: *so that God’s purpose according to His choice*

There is the word from the word group of where we get the idea of election and the doctrine of election.

*...His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,*

Now we have a comma,

*...it was said to her, “THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.”*

What do you think the main elements are, what is the main independent clause?

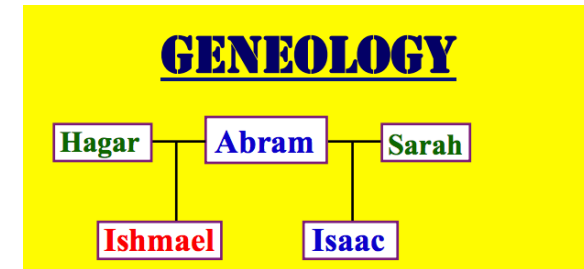
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It starts with Rebekah also. In the NAS, ‘there was’ is added. (The verb ‘to be’ is not always expressed in Greek.) Then it jumps ahead to *it was said to her*, referring back to Rebekah; and the main idea here is the comment that is said to her, *The older will serve the younger*. The point he is making here is that there is a distinction that goes contrary to not only natural custom but even Jewish tradition or Biblical teaching; God is selecting one over the other. That is the thrust of the passage. Everything else adds to and elucidates this idea of a statement that was spoken in the book of Genesis dealing with a distinction that God is making between two sons, identified as twins. So everything in between, including verse 13, just simply tells us something about Rebekah and what God is telling her regarding this choice that He is making between the younger and the older.

Back to verse 10; now we break it down and look at the different parts. We go sentence by sentence, usually clause by clause and sometimes word by word.

2.10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;

‘And not only this’ refers to the incident in the story of Abraham referring to Isaac and how God made a distinction between Isaac as opposed to Ishmael, and how it affected the line, the promises and the covenant. And then, he continues, I am going to take you to the next step in Genesis and will talk about another personage—and as I said, another one that had a problem with birth, and I would say that her giving birth was just as supernatural as Sarah’s, with divine intervention.



‘And not only this’ refers to Abraham, who had a child by Hagar, but it was the promise which was to come through Sarah and Isaac. They had to wait until God miraculously brought conception and birth. And then we have the story of Isaac.

9.10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;

‘And not only this’, the story goes on in Romans, but there was Rebekah also, so he is going to introduce the next phase in the plan of God in the outworking of the Abrahamic covenant as it pertains to Isaac and there is going to be a choice made there as well.

So a short reminder of the book of Genesis and to put these passages in their proper sequence.

**Isaac** Genesis

1. Birth of Isaac - 21.1-3 *Then the LORD took note of Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had promised. 2 So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in*

his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. 3 Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.

After waiting many years we finally have the birth of Isaac through God's supernatural intervention.

2. Sacrifice of Isaac - 22.1-13 *But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ... 12 He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."*

And throughout we have 'tests' of Abraham and the climactic and major test is God's telling him that he needs to sacrifice Isaac—this son through whom go all the promises—on an altar. You can image the emotion and thoughts—and the promises???

He was probably in a situation similar to the Jews of the 1st Century. Everything hinged on Isaac and it took supernatural intervention to have the son, and now he's probably a teenager and he is supposed to sacrifice him?

But God provides a substitute for Isaac, and in the passage He is teaching something of the sacrificial and substitutionary nature of the eventual Messiah. He will be a perfect sacrifice that is a substitute for sin in that Abraham believed that God was capable of raising Isaac from the dead because everything hinged on him.

3. Death of Sarah - 23.1 *Now Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. 2 Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan; ...*

Chapter 23: Sarah, obviously old, dies. Her burial follows in the chapter.

4. Rebekah Joined to Isaac - 24 ...47 *"Then I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him'; and I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists.... 51 "Here is Rebekah before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has spoken."*

Now the focus is on Isaac and all of chapter 24 is the search for Rebekah, or the wife, and at the end are joined in marriage but are unable to have children. Then skipping to the next chapter...

5. Birth of twins - 25.19...20 *and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean*

*of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. 21 Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived....23 The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger."*

...we have the incident of the conception and birth of the twins. That gives you the context. I want to highlight a couple of things in this passage. In 25.23 is the context of this passage and where part of the quotation comes from in Romans 10.10...

9.10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;

I don't want to get off on the difficulty of translating. We owe a great debt to those who take the time to translate Scripture, and they are always in a dilemma of transferring the thought from one language to another language. And in this long clause here, which is a temporal dependent clause in English, it is not easy to translate the actual Greek words—and notice there are only 4 words and yet it takes Paul 8 words to translate, all the way to the comma. But the translators are trying to give the essence of what's here and I am not saying that it's a bad translation. But to give you something of the literal idea, going word for word, there is a present participle, ἔχουσα (éh-khoo-sah), with the idea of having something. In this case it is 'having', you might say, 'from one sex act'.

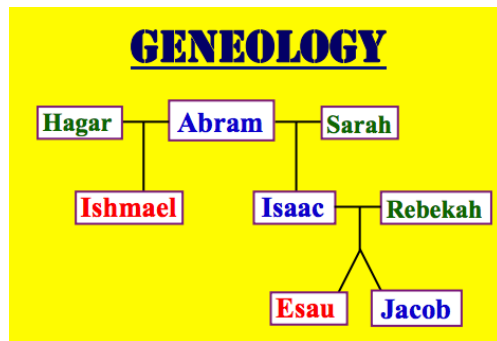
ἐξ ἑνός κοίτην ἔχουσα (eks heh-nós koi-tayn é-khoo-sah)  
'from one (man's) sex-act having'

And notice the word κοίτην (koi-tayn), from which we get the English word that refers to the sex act, the ἐξ ἑνός (eks henós). All there is here is: By one, or from one act, something came about, or having something as a result of that one idea.

### Meaning

1. Conceived twins...= by 1 act

So the word 'conceived' and the word 'twins' are not in the Greek text. There is not a word that conveys the idea but this little phrase does, because there are two in view with the Genesis account saying there were 2 sons.



Paul is making a distinction between the two children in the same womb and he is even going contrary to tradition or what's natural. The first son has the blessing of the father, and God is reversing that and saying 'I'm sovereign over what I choose, in election.' That introduces a lot of problems when we talk about God choosing some and seemingly passing over others. We will talk about that later. But already you can see that there might be some theological problems and in fact in the next passage Paul is going ask: Doesn't that seem unfair? Doesn't that seem not right? And, I think in the next passage Paul is going to address the subject of justice, and vindicate the justice of God.

I. Introduction	1.1-17
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1) Conception of Twins	9.10
2) Commentary on Election	9.11-13

So we have not only Isaac, but through Rebekah we have twins from one man, or more specifically, one act and the line will go through Jacob, not Esau. Another thing to keep in mind—and this will be more evident as we get to the final quote—he is talking about Jacob, and in the context, about two *nations*. It's a quote out of Malachi, at the end of the OT. We are talking about the Edomites; the descendants of Esau are not part of Israel, just as we have Ishmaelites and a variety of other peoples, and by the way, after Sara died, Abraham re-married and had other children who are not part of the promise. All of those produced descendants that historically have always been antagonistic to the nation of Israel—primarily Arab tribes and peoples.

9.10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

Verse 11 is expanding concerning Rebekah, expanding upon this idea of the twins and giving a little bit more detail: *for though the twins*—and by the way, the word 'twins' does not occur in the Greek text; it is inserted to add clarity, but it does refer back to them—*for though the twins were not yet born...*

All of this is decided ahead of time in the plan of God,

... *and had not done anything good or bad*,

So it's not dependent upon *man*; it is solely:

...*so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand*,

And that word *choice* is one of the words in the word group translated *elect* in some places, or 'to choose' in the sense of divine choice, and that is the word relating to this whole doctrine of election.

9.10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 or though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

### Meaning

1. Conceived twins... = by 1 act

2. Choice - ἐκλογή (ehk-lo-gáy) There is a Hebrew word that occurs almost a hundred times in its noun and verb form, 'bakhár', which is the OT equivalent

### Election

I. Introduction

II. Doctrine of Election

A. Terms

1. OT verb - 'bahar'

2. NT - ἐκλέγομαι (ehk-lé-go-mah-ee) verb is 22 times in the NT

ἐκλεκτός (ehk-lek-tós), adjective also occurs 22 x  
ἐκλογή (ehk-lo-gáy) noun here in 9.11

3. Usage

One of the main things we are learning from this passage is that God's Election, at least pertaining to the nation of Israel, is part of His sovereign purpose. His 'purpose', verse 11, according to His choice,

His election, 'would stand'. This is why I think it is important because I think it has a part in the overall plan of God. It is unfortunate that we have a hard time understanding it and a lot of people are fearful of it. But I believe it is a very comforting and encouraging doctrine much like the whole idea of sovereignty as well, being closely related to it.

### God's Election - 9

1. Not based solely on physical natural descent
2. Is part of His sovereign purposes

At the end of the passage: 'so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand', ie, that it would be evident, that Jews in the 1st Century would recognize that God is sovereignly working and in fact is choosing people that Jews might not expect or not anticipate—especially if their understanding of God's word is a little fuzzy because during the church age that choice and that purpose of God extends to the gentiles.

And that's why the *provision* of God's righteousness includes both Jew and gentile based on the finished work of the Jewish Messiah, and that alone, apart from works. But by the NT time, the Jewish people had perverted the means by which God brought people into a saving relationship. They were basing it on the Law and as a result they missed their Messiah...

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...Then he emphasizes it here: 'not because of works but because of Him who calls'. God's election, God's blessing, God's privilege—all is dependent on God who calls and, by the way it's the same word that we have seen over and over, especially in chapter 8, *καλέω* (*kah-léh-o*), the calling of God. So we have already looked at that idea of God calling, but in chapter 8 it is broad: Jew and gentile, and that choice is going to stand and he is defending it in chapter 9.10-13. So another principle, especially in terms of Israel: it's not dependent on man's works.

### God's Election - 9

1. Not based solely on physical natural descent
2. Is part of His sovereign purposes
3. Is not dependent on Man's works

9.10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

But because of Him who calls.

9.10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, 12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

Then in verse 12, going back to Rebekah: *it was said to her*, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." In other words, this distinction that God is making is summarized in the Biblical passage:

9.10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, 12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

'The older will serve the younger' which takes you back to the Genesis passage 25.23,

### Isaac Genesis

1. Birth of Isaac - 21.1-3
2. Sacrifice of Isaac - 22.1-13
3. Death of Sarah - 23.1
4. Rebekah Joined to Isaac - 24 ..47
5. Birth of twins - 25.19...20
6. Choice of Jacob - 25.23

The LORD said to her, "*Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger.*"

One of the points that I will be stressing throughout 9-11 is that we are dealing with the nation of Israel *corporately*. Here it is epitomized by individuals, obviously Jacob and Esau, real human beings, but it anticipated the history of the nation of Israel and the descendants that will come through Jacob. And I

think we need to view these verses not only individually, but also corporately. ‘Two nations are in your womb’, so he is speaking of the descendants of Jacob, that would be Israel and the nation of Israel. And the descendants of Esau, that would be the Edomites and they have a long history.

Genesis 25.23 *The LORD said to her, “Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger.”*

‘Two nations in are in your womb’ and ‘two peoples will be separated from your body’, so she is still pregnant, ‘and one people shall be stronger than the other’.

Then the quotation in Romans 9.12, “THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.” So we have the choice or distinction that God will make between Jacob and Esau. And we can expand our little chart here:



Israelites are descendants of Abraham, of Isaac (but not Ismael), of Jacob (not Esau). In Romans 9.6-13, Paul is talking about the descendants, all of Israel, and within them, 6-9, there is a *true* Israel that he is addressing in the 1st Century that could include true believers even in the OT as well.

Then the concluding verse,

9.13 Just as it is written, “JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.”

‘Just as it is written’—now he is jumping from Genesis, the *first* book of the Bible to the *last* book of the Bible. And this is after a lot of

history. The quotation comes from Malachi which I will explain later, but essentially he says,

9.13 Just as it is written, “JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.”

‘JACOB I LOVED’...

9.13 Just as it is written, “JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.”

... ‘BUT ESAU I HATED’. Now that’s a strong statement and I think it has some idiomatic meaning here in terms of Jewish Hebrew idioms. But it is a strong statement; there is no doubt about it. You don’t want to soften the statement. But basically the distinction that God is making is a sharp distinction here, and when we come back to this, I will expand the Hebrew idiom.

Now I want to give a little introduction to what we will focus more on, coming in and out of this passage that we are looking at. And I will put it in a broader context of the doctrine of election.

## Election

### I. Introduction

#### A. Issues

I want to discuss briefly some of the issues with this whole doctrine. Probably the main issue that people have is: If God chose some, then why did He not choose *all* or elect *all*? That is a major problem and issue. And I think we have a partial answer here in this passage itself.

So doesn’t this violate man’s volition if God has already chosen some and predestined? These seem like ideas that almost violate or undermine the idea of volition. And as I have said before, when God works, He works in a sovereign way, but there is a tension that we need to maintain between the sovereignty of God and the volition of man that God has granted, so within I think a limited sphere man has full volition but I think God, in tension with that, also chooses and predestinates and all of the issues relating there. So we have a tension that is difficult for us to understand and as a result we have a difference of understanding.

Another issue relating to why God doesn’t elect all, will be answered in the next passage, at least in terms of Israel, and we may be able to extend that principle beyond Israel as well, in terms of the general principle of God’s election. Some would say, Well, this doctrine seems to be God arbitrarily choosing and I would say, No, because in virtually every passage that deals

with election, there is also a statement of a *purpose* associated with it. So God has a *purpose* in electing. Now some of the debate is over that purpose, and when it comes to the choosing or electing of believers in the church age, one of the issues in it is whether or not God chooses some to salvation and/or for other purposes which would include, for example, the Ephesian 4 passage, where many would argue that there is a purpose stated and it is not dealing with salvation at all. But we will discuss some of those things later.

## B. Essential Understanding

Next we will begin with some essential understanding to help us sort out some of the issues and problems with the doctrine.

God's Election should cause us to trust His sovereign plan! I think that just as His sovereignty is comforting, so also the concept of God's election goes along with it. One of the points that goes with it is that had God *not* chosen to save, none would be saved. So I think the doctrine is necessary for *anyone* to be saved. The issue is not why did God not save all, but why did God save *any* if you look at *justice*.

So God's election should cause us to trust His sovereign plan as He has revealed it.

[Romans 9.6-11 Introduction to the Doctrine of Election 132]

The 1st Century Jews felt they were missing out on much of what God had planned for them in terms of what He had promised.

9.6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."

Paul begins by noting that the word of God has not failed. Considering what follows, probably he is referring to the Abrahamic Covenant. So he is not talking about the Bible in general, although I think that is true as well, but more specifically, the Abrahamic Covenant as it pertains to the nation of Israel.

Then these chapters deal with the nation of Israel. He will give the reasons why the word of God has not failed, and this is very important because he is explaining in this whole passage, 9 through 11, why God has set aside the nation of Israel and is now working with the gentiles. This, to a Jew in the 1st Century, or in the OT, this was *unheard of*. These are 'dogs', outcasts, pagans and God is bringing them *in???* And

they don't have to go through the Temple, and don't have to go through the Law—and all they have to do is trust in this Messiah that the nation and the Roman Empire crucified? What is going on? What is God doing?

So Paul takes them all the way back and says: What God is doing in the 1st Century is a pattern that He is following, even from the very very beginning when He first called Abraham. And he is identifying **1st century** Israel from two perspectives, saying, for they are not all true Israel who are descended from ethnic Israel. So those descended from Israel, if you think of the descendants of Abraham, even historically, they are not all true believing Israel.

That's the point he is going to make. Nor are they all *children of God*. When he uses that word 'children', he is talking about **1st century** Israelites or believing people descended from Abraham, but not all of them *historically* are the children of God, not all of them are in the *line* that God promised through Abraham. So he is distinguishing Israel in general, ie, believing descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, from what he is identifying in verse 6, whom we would describe as true **1st century** Israel or regenerate Israel.

Then verse 7, *nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."*

Even from the beginning God has begun to 'select'. We will talk about that whole concept, or a doctrine that we describe as a doctrine of election. That only goes back to Abraham's descendants. It's not through Ishmael, and every Jew would be familiar with that and say, 'Yea, we know; we have had problems with the Ishmaelites throughout our history.'

And then he goes on. Not only through Isaac: in verse 10 God separated and distinguished between even the *sons* of Isaac, Jacob and Esau. And obviously Jewish people would be familiar with that.

9.10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

Then he says, *for though the twins were not yet born*, and this gives us some insight into God's perspective on this doctrine and we will come back to it. But there is a very important phrase in verse 11: *so that God's purpose might abide or remain*, ie, so that we would know. God was making clear His purpose. *God's purpose according to His*

*choice*: So there seems to be this concept, this broad idea that involves choices that God made as part of a plan and part of His purposes.

So we are going to look at that concept: What is this purpose and what is this idea of God's choice? And that leads us to this broader doctrine of *elección* and I thought it would be useful to answer the question.

And, obviously there is a lot of controversy over it, a lot of difficulty with it. A lot of people are afraid of it. People get angry over it and my hope is that we bring some clarity on it. You may not agree necessarily with everything I say, but at least you will see the options and the possibilities, and if that's all that I can communicate, then that's good.

The main thing that I want to accomplish is at least explain where people differ on election and give you the option that I think is the best one in each of the stages we will go through. There are several stages that lead up to the different controversies this whole area; you will see them as they come up.

So we are dealing with an area that is not easy; in fact, I don't even bring it up or mention it to an unbeliever because they just can't understand a lot of these things anyway. So we would consider this 'solid food', like Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3.2, *I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able..* So in general, even the body of Christ, and in the 1st Century the Corinthians, were not able to handle doctrines like this, or Biblical concepts.

The writer of Hebrews starts to talk about the doctrine of Melchizedek and then he stops in the middle of it; he picks it up later on. But he stops in the middle of it because the audience he is writing to are dull of hearing as well. He makes a similar statement, Hebrews 5.12 *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God.* And what we are doing here, this is not elementary; this will stretch your thinking, your theology, if you will, because in some places, like the doctrine of the Trinity, in fact part of this involves human responsibility and God's sovereign hand, we will get a little bit into that.

These are not easy things to put together, and like one of our classmates always likes to remind us: Isaiah 55, the ways of God are beyond our comprehension and some of these we may never be able to put together. So the writer of Hebrews: *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.* So I am trusting that you are not in the category of the Corinthians that Paul writes to, nor the Hebrews that the writer of Hebrews writes to, but you all are going to think clearly, and we will guide ourselves as we walk through this whole area.

So, let's talk about Divine Election.

## **Divine Election**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **A. Issues**

##### **1. Favoritism**

This idea of Divine Election raises in humanness and in our thinking that there seems to be some favoritism there. 'What about Ishmael? Why did God pass over him? Why did God focus on Isaac? There seems to be some favoritism here, even in the OT.

But generally when we talk about this doctrine we are talking about it in terms of believers in the church age. And one of the things I have been saying is that Romans 9-11 deals with *Israel*. And the reason I want to go through this is that I think there are some different categories of this whole area. So, one of the main issues is this idea of 'favoritism'. Is God 'playing favorites'? And some would even say, 'Is God choosing one over another? That doesn't seem right'. Related to this idea of God 'playing favorites' is the question, 'If God chose some, Isaac over Ishmael, if He chose Jacob over Esau, why didn't God choose or elect *all*? And we know that is not the case because obviously not everyone goes to be with the Lord in eternity. So some of the issue is dealing with destinies and God 'playing favoritism, and this kind of leads to the idea that is also present in Romans 9-11:

##### **2. Human Volition**

What about Human Volition? Doesn't this kind of erase the whole concept of man's will? In fact this is the heart of the whole controversy. And there are different ways of approaching this whole issue, and part of the problem is one's view of human volition and whether you lean in the direction of human volition and/or in the direction of God choosing or God's work. I'll go over that more when we get there.

And what about the issue of Free Will. In the past, when we got to passages that deal with volition or man's will, I didn't call it 'Free Will' because any sinner's will is not 'free' because it is always tainted by sin, since the fall of man. So I don't like to use the word 'free will'. I call it human volition. Does God override it? And with these issues of selection and choice, is the human volition somehow undermined or compromised? So that is one of the issues we will deal with.

##### **3. God's Justice**

And one of the other issues that is raised, even in Romans 9, what about, 'Isn't this unfair that God takes this idea of favoritism? This seems to be something not righteous, not just, not fair. So we, in fact Paul, will get into God's justice, but this issue is of the justice of God not selecting all, eg, or selecting some and not others. That seems to be inequitable.



#### 4. Fatalism

And some would accuse, particularly the viewpoint that I'll take, saying, Isn't this just another form of fatalism? or, if you wish, Christian fatalism? Are we talking about God setting in motion a plan with no variation in it? Is God ordaining every molecule, every electron, every path? That kind of goes along with human volition: does this totally obliterate human volition?

#### 5. Arbitrary

And doesn't this make God pick Joe instead of Alex, picking one instead of the other as just a kind of an arbitrary choice? And I think this is answered in almost all of the passages that deal with election because in most of them we have a clear *purpose*. In fact only a small number of passages pertain to the Christian and to the individual and a small percentage of them deal with eternal life. They all have a purpose in a broader and bigger plan of God. Even in Ephesians 1.4 there is a purpose statement in there when God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world: *that we would be holy and blameless before Him*. So none of the choices that God makes are arbitrary; they are part of a bigger plan. We may not understand it or all of the aspects of it, but there is no arbitrariness in God's election.

#### 6. Evangelism not needed

And there are some ultra Calvinists that would even say that evangelism is not needed. Why evangelize if God has for-ordained and God has already made choices of those that He is going to pass over? He has already made the choice so there is no need for evangelism. Again God has commanded us, for one reason, and He wants us to be involved in His work and none of us know who are the elect and who are not. So we go forward with what God has told us to do because that's part of what He has orchestrated in His plan. And the means by which God will use us in that plan he has identified as what we call evangelism.

So these are the main issues that hopefully we can sort out. And, some of them we may not satisfactorily answer, but these are the ones that I will try to address. There are also, lesser important issues that arise which are somewhat related to the other categories that I just laid out.

These are the *responses* that I think we ought to have to this doctrine. I think these are the Biblical responses.

### B. Responses

#### 1. Humility - depravity

Rather than anger I think this doctrine, like any doctrine, should elicit certain responses. I have listed a few here related to trusting what God has set in motion and what He has revealed in terms of His plan

and His purposes. I should just simply bow down before Him, accept what God has designed and in humility praise Him, give Him all the glory and trust *Him* with this whole doctrine of election.

#### 2. Joy - God's grace

Secondly, if you are a believer, *you* are a chosen one, and just as Israel in the OT was the chosen people of God. In this age, in this dispensation, as members of the body of Christ, *we* are the chosen, the elect, and to think of being outside of that is a depressing thought, but the alternative is to praise God and His grace and it should produce a certain amount of joy. So that is a response I am hoping this whole study elicits, appreciation that in eternity past God chose *me*.

#### 3. Confidence - promises

Thirdly, it should give us *confidence*. If God has orchestrated things in eternity past, and has worked them out in time—as we have been seeing over and over in different portions of Scripture—we see His plan. And if He has orchestrated things in the past, then we can be assured of anything that He promises and is still in the future. And, as we saw at the end of Romans 8, there is great security for those that have trusted in Christ; nothing can separate us from the love of God, nor anything in the future. We are *promised* that we are secure. So it gives us *confidence* in our relation to God because God is the one that fulfills promises.

#### 4. Motivation - holy living

Motivation should hit us and this is where the Ephesians 1.4 passage comes in, motivating us to holy living. That's the purpose of the choice. It's not just simply for us to be blessed—and it is—but it is also that we would in fact *walk* in a different way. We are chosen *to walk, for* holiness, and it should motivate us to live the whole Christian life that we just studied in chapter 6-8.

#### 5. Worship - glorifies God

Another response: I think it should cause us, in humility, to elicit worship and glorify God. God has revealed something of His plan and this is a glorious doctrine. It's not one that is intended to elicit controversy or fear, or anxiety or questioning, but it should not only humble us, but humble us to the point that we worship God.

So these are some of the responses that I hope we have. And if we argue amongst ourselves we may need to go back to these responses and maybe even 'agree to disagree' because we are dealing with an issue that we probably will not solve completely.

Before we get into the doctrine itself, I think we have to lay a little foundation—my understanding of some essential doctrines that I think we have to understand in order to put the doctrine of election in its proper perspective. And from these perspectives I reach my conclusion which I'll share as we get into it.

## C. Essential Understanding

### 1. Nature of Man

We need to understand the nature of man and understand *depravity* which is the doctrine related to the doctrine of man. And it is in Romans 1-3 where Paul describes the lostness of mankind and the reason for the lostness and the deadness in the unbeliever. Also we have seen in the Bible—in Genesis 3 (the first sin), in Romans and in Ephesians as well—that when it speaks of death it is not talking about ceasing to breathe and the heart not beating. So what does the Bible mean when it talks about death? I drew from Genesis 3 that it has these characteristics:

#### **Death** in Genesis 3:

1. Spiritual (7-9) - separation First and foremost: We saw that Adam and Eve were separated from God immediately after they sinned.

2. Intellectual (7) - darkened The NT calls it 'intellectual darkening'. The minds of unbelievers are darkened; they cannot see spiritual truth.

3. Moral - shame There is shame for their actions. *Volition* is a part of it. And I believe that our will is affected as well. The reason we fall into shame is because we have made choices, wrong decisions that are contrary to what God has said and that brings shame which we saw in the account of Adam and Eve.

4. Emotional (10) - fear It involves the emotions, Genesis 3.10, we have fear.

5. Social (11-12) - blame It even involves our relationships with others: Adam blamed Eve.

6. Purpose (17-18) - damaged It involves the purpose of man. The unbeliever is dead in his trespasses and sins.

7. Physical (19) - pain & death It even involves the physical—not that Adam and Eve cease to breathe, he lived another 930 years before he stopped breathing—but I make the point that the text, 3.19, speaks of *pain*, turning back into dust biologically. Today we know that even before we are born our selves are continually dying because of sin. So there is death and our physical cells are dying. Look in the mirror and you can see it immediately; and yet you continue to breathe and have your heart beating.

And when we were in Romans 3 we found almost the same elements.

#### **Death - Romans 3**

1. Spiritual (10) - none righteous None have a relationship with God and I think this is a kind of summary:

“*THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE*”; This is a general statement, the spiritual, like Ephesians 2, we are spiritually dead.

2. Intellectual (11) - none understands There is none that understands.

3. Will (11) - none seeks There is volition: there is none that seeks God. So volition has been involved. This will come into play in the doctrine of election and to what *extent* is volition involved. Those that take a slightly different view than I take will say that man *must* believe. All of the commands that call us to respond to God and to believe in Him and to repent from sin—those are appeals to our volition.

And the issue is when we speak of depravity: those in our camp basically believe in depravity, but also believe that it does not extend to total depravity in terms of the will. That is, God has left the will to be able to respond; otherwise all of the commands are moot, ie, why even issue commands if man is incapable of responding?

I think that, in some way, the will is also involved in depravity and according to the Biblical text, 3.11 *THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD*; and beginning in verse 12 *ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE*,. This is a result of volition and this is all of mankind's decisions.

4. Decisions (12) - useless *TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS* because they are tainted by sin; they don't have any spiritual effect. That's deadness. And this is in a doctrinal passage; this is a description of depravity, so our decisions are involved. The perspective I am going to take is that *none* are going to respond unless God intervenes. I think the doctrine of election begins with God in eternity past. He began the plan before He even created the universe, before Genesis 1.1. So depravity and death involved volition and the outworking of volition: decisions...

5. Communication (13-14) - putrid It involves communications, 13 “*THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE. NOTICE THE ANALOGY WITH SPEAKING. WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,*” “*THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS*” With their tongues they keep deceiving; this is the outworking of decisions, 14 “*WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS*”; The whole area of communication is *dead*. That is a description of depravity and lost humanity.

6. Actions (15-17) - destruction “*THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD*”, so it works itself out in overt

actions against others. 16 *DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, 17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.*

7. Emotions (18) - no fear of God “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.” Emotions are also involved. Man is utterly incapable of reaching God—I would even say incapable of even responding to the calling and gospel message. We need for God to intervene. And I think some of this is brought out when we talk about the doctrine of justification that we have also been looking at in Romans. But in the meantime we also have to understand the doctrine of God.

### (C. Essential Understanding

1. Nature of Man)

2. Nature of God

When it comes to God, we need to remember who God *is* in electing. He is a holy God which means that He cannot tolerate sin. He will not have a relationship with sinful man, apart from payment for his sin because of His holiness. And there are a lot of passages, eg, Isaiah 6.3, angelic creatures: *And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts,*

And there are hundreds of passages that stress the holiness of God and His righteousness, Psalm 145.17 *The LORD is righteous in all His ways And kind in all His deeds.* He is righteous; we saw it in Romans, the stress on the righteousness of God throughout the entire book.

And the pinnacle passage perhaps, is justification by faith, how we enter into that righteousness: 3.26 *for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.* He is the one that brings justification; there is nothing that we can do because of depravity. He is the just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

We also saw in Romans 8 that He is omniscient. He has foreknowledge—He sees everything in advance, knows all the options, all of the possibilities—and we can trust that, whatever He has planned, that includes the doctrine of election. This is the best option, at least the one He would effect. Psalm 147.4 *He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. 5 Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.* He knows everything and when He chooses Isaac over Jacob, God knows what He is doing.

And He loves us—all of humanity. And the passages say that “*WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD*

*WILL BE SAVED.*” Romans 10.13. I think that the viewpoint that I am presenting sometimes would be accused of limiting God, but I believe that God’s option is for whoever calls on His name. Ezekiel 18.23 “*Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked*”, The implied answer there is No. ...*declares the Lord GOD, “rather than that he should turn from his ways and live? God desires the sinner to turn and come, and the door is open to whoever.* The view that I have of depravity is that our wills are affected with all of the other areas, such that without God *intervening* none would respond. Genesis 3: Who initiates the conversation when God is going to restore Adam and Eve? It is God Himself; Adam and Eve are fleeing. That’s the nature of depravity.

So my point is that it’s not Why did God not choose *all*? The issue is Why did God choose *any*? Based on the *justice* of God He would have been perfectly righteous and just to totally destroy and bring death to Adam and Eve; that was what was promised: 3.3b *God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’*” This is the Hebrew infinitive absolute: you will *die dead*. That is what God promises. That’s the penalty for sin.

The question is Why did God bring *anyone* and Why did He bring an opportunity for change in Adam and Eve? So God is loving. In the NT: 1Timothy 2.3 *This 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.* He is talking about prayers for kings and authorities, men in high places. The assumption that these are unbelievers. ...God wants *all* to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

He is not choosing some and rejecting others, being hard and judgmental, but it involves His love and His grace. In fact, in Romans he is going to talk about bestowing mercy upon those whom He will and compassion upon those that He will. So the Lord is merciful, gracious, compassionate. All of these come into plan in this doctrine.

And the goodness of God: Psalm 119.68 *You are good and do good; Teach me Your statutes.* This is part of the doctrine of God, the plan of God is *good* because God has put it in place. And He is pleased to reveal some of it to us. We need to keep the whole personality and nature of God in view when we talk about this doctrine of election.

3. Nature of Salvation

In Romans 8 we focused on this plan that is laid out in verses 28-30. The word ‘election’ is not in there, but because it

is stated in Ephesians 1.4 and other places, Titus 1.1, etc, so it is the plan of God that begins with election. But he speaks of foreknowledge in the passage, and I think Paul is somewhat assuming that we know other passages in Scripture focusing on foreknowledge.

So God is setting out the options in that election and what we also have is God predestinating. And we find that, in the way that makes sense in the rest of Scripture, God setting in motion a plan where He is orchestrating the details, putting people in certain families, nations or situations which could give them opportunity to come into a saving relationship in accordance with what He had set in motion in eternity past.



And, also in the Romans passage He is calling us—in time He calls the unbeliever. God starts with natural revelation and if a person responds to natural revelation, it doesn't matter where in the world he is, God will send a missionary or a Bible or a gospel message and, though not in the Romans passage, I think God will work His plan out by bringing those that He has chosen, by convicting them. There are passages where the HS convicts us of sin, convinces us that we are lost, that we are dead spiritually, and convinces us that there is nothing we can do.

And when we are convicted adequately, as He is working on our wills to convict us, He also illumines us such that we see that the only option is what God has provided in His Son on Calvary and what Jesus did on the cross. That is the only way, our only option. And once our minds are convinced of that, once we are illumined and we put our trust in Him we are justified—also not in the Romans passage because He is dealing with it from God's perspective, laying out God's plan. But we know all the passages like in Acts 16.31 *They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved,* All of this is in the Romans 8.28-30 passage.



And he also looks toward the future, glorification. The nature of salvation is that, from start to finish, God is the one that does it all. Salvation is by grace through faith, apart from works. We have no part in it other than believing and God even works our will. And, I could make a case, from a few passages that even faith is a gift. Everything that we receive is a gift of God. Even 'glorification' in the Romans passage is put in the aorist (past) tense as if it's already completed, even though it looks to the future in terms of time.

So that's nature of man, God and salvation. All of this pictures God as a good God. He does not desire that any perish, He is a merciful God, loving—yes, He is just but when it comes to mankind, the only way we have access to Him is if He gives mercy. That's in Romans as well.

## Divine Election

### I. Introduction

### II. Doctrine of Election

#### A. Terms

The main terms, as usual, were used in an ordinary sense in the culture, not having anything to do with the 'spiritual'. This is a very common word.

1. Ordinary sense - to choose
2. Hebrew - 'bakhar' in OT occurs 170 times, the majority of them pertaining to God, 51 times in the NT (verbs, nouns and adjectives).
  - a. Ordinary sense just as you decided what to do on a given morning, etc.
  - b. Qualitative sense
  - c. God Choosing some objects over others
3. Greek
  - a. Verb - ἐκλέγομαι (ek-lé-go-mah-ee)
  - b. Adjective - ἐκλεκτός (ek-lek-tós)
  - c. Noun - ἐκλογή (ek-lo-gáý)

## Terms

1. Ordinary sense - to choose Luke 10.42 *but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*  
Mary makes a decision to sit at Jesus' feet, and Martha was busy.  
Acts 15.22 *Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas-...*  
After the first missionary journey, they are preparing to send others with Paul and Barnabas. The church made choices.  
Genesis 13.11 *So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan,...*  
Abraham let Lot choose one option over the other.
2. Hebrew - 'bakhár' OT Examples:
  - a. Ordinary sense - good, bad Deuteronomy 30.19 *"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,*  
Judges 10.14 *"Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress."*
  - b. Qualitative sense - choice Judges 20.15 *From the cities on that day the sons of Benjamin were numbered, 26,000 men who draw the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah who were numbered, 700 choice men. 16 Out of all these people 700 choice men were left-handed; each one could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.*  
By 'qualitative' I mean that it is sometimes used to describe something that is 'choice', select, like some products that are identified as the 'choice products', ie, very select.  
Proverbs 8.10 *"Take my instruction and not silver, And knowledge rather than choicest gold.... 19 "My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, And my yield better than choicest silver.*
  - c. God choosing -  
Individuals - Deuteronomy 18.5 *"For the LORD your God has chosen him and his sons from all your tribes, to stand and serve in the name of the LORD forever.*  
God chooses individuals...

Temple - Deuteronomy 12.5 *"But you shall seek the LORD at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come.*

A lot of passages about *dwelling* in the Temple, a location...

Jerusalem - 1Kings 8.16 *'Since the day that I brought My people Israel from Egypt, I did not choose a city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house that My name might be there, but I chose David to be over My people Israel.'*

God chose Jerusalem as His *dwelling place*, and center for His people.

Israel - Deuteronomy 7.6 *"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,*

He chose Israel over and against other nations and that is the usage we have primarily in Romans 9-11.

This is the range of meaning of these terms translated 'elect' or 'election' or 'to choose' in this more restricted, technical, theological sense. And then, from this range of meaning, when we go to individual passages, we make a decision as to how this word is used in this particular context. Context decides meaning. I am developing all the possibilities of how this word could be used. The Hebrew word is used in these 3 broad categories. There might be some sub-categories that you could attach. But in general it is the qualitative sense and God is making the choices and decisions. And there are a lot of things that God is choosing where it is very specific—and the word 'bakhár' is used.

## Terms

1. Ordinary sense - to choose
2. Hebrew - 'bakhár'
3. Greek We have a group where most of these occur. 51 of it, 22 appear in the verb form, and 22 also of the adjective form; the majority dealing with the theological sense, but some in the qualitative sense as well. The Noun form is in Romans 9.11 that we looked at. It occurs only 7 times. So if you add these all together you get 51 uses of that Greek word.
  - a. Verb - ἐκλέγομαι (ek-lé-go-mah-ee)  
Ordinary sense - Luke 14.7 *And He began speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor at the table, saying to them,*

Jesus choosing 12 - John 15.16 *“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.*

God choosing - Ephesian 1.4 *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love*

b. Adjective - ἐκλεκτός (ek-lek-tós)

Elect, chosen ones - Romans 8.33 *Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies;*

*Titus 1.1 Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,*

Mark 13.20 *“Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.*

c. Noun - ἐκλογή (ek-lo-gáy)

chosen, choice - Romans 9.11 *for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,*

Romans 11.5 *In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice.*

## Responses

1. Humility - depravity
2. Joy - God’s grace
3. Confidence - promises
4. Motivation - holy living With humility and with joy and with confidence we can go on motivated to live out why we have been chosen and the calling that we have, living it out in holiness and also in ministry.
5. Worship - glorifies God

If we have problems with apparent contradictions we have to remember that the issue is not with the Scriptures, the issue is with our understanding. And we have to continually come back to that point of humility that just because we don’t understand something doesn’t make it untrue. The word goes beyond our intellectual capability and there is always some tension in some of the areas. It is best to try to hold the tension and avoid going to one side and neglecting or denying or undermining the other side.

What God has told us in His word is beyond our capability to understand. He wrote it so that we could take it a face value, but if we try to take it deeper than that, we are moving into realms that do not have the intellectual capacity to understand. Therefore a constant sense of humility and of trust in the Scriptures is absolutely important in all of Bible study. And we want to trust that loving, sovereign, holy God that we have talked about. Also we have to remember that the effects of sin or damage in our own lives hinders us from being able to understand a particular concept. That’s where our faith steps in and we can ask Him to help us see what He sees.

[Romans 9-11 Doctrine of Election - Terms & Categories 133]

We are doing this excursus on Election because the passage in Romans 9 at least deals very directly with this concept, and the words are used in chapter 11 as well. Particularly the passage in 9.6-9 tells us about God selecting and choosing. So I want to give a ‘big picture’ of that concept which sometimes we look at it narrowly, from the perspective of God choosing individuals and us, and particularly from Ephesians 1.4. I think sometimes if we don’t take a step back we get a distorted view.

9.6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: **“THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED.”**

Paul is communicating this within ethnic Israel, all those that are descendants from Israel. He is going back to the 1st Century Jews who are asking, ‘What has God done? Has He abandoned us, the nation of Israel, the covenants, all that He promised? And what’s the deal now that He is offering this justification by faith to gentiles who don’t have to go through the Law nor live by the Law?’ He is going to answer by going back into their history and reviewing a little bit of their beginnings **to show them that God is simply dealing in the 1st Century much like He has done from the beginning of Israel’s history where He selected some over others.**

So, in verse 7 ‘nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants’, ie, not every descendant of Abraham was not only part of Israel but He calls them ‘children’. Not every Jew in the 1st Century is a child of God—nor were they even from the very beginning. Then he makes the distinctions **““THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED.”** So the nation will not come through Ishmael. But he is including, I think, the justification that he developed in chapters 1-8.

Then verse 11, a very powerful statement, about the next generation, distinguishing between two twins—same mother, same descendants, still from Abraham.

9.11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

'God's purpose' is just two words: the one for purpose and the one translated 'choice', we can translate it 'God's electing' or 'God's choosing purpose'. He is establishing a principle: His purpose according to His choice would stand.

So chapter 9, as I take it is dealing with Israel, not with the church or believers per se, but some of the principles that He develops are applicable to the believer and individuals. That is the viewpoint that I am going to take in this.

### **Divine Election**

- I. Introduction
- II. Doctrine of Election
  - A. Terms
  - B. Concept

### **Biblical Concept**

1. General Sense

We want to look at the broader concept of God making decisions. We can consider the *general* sense.

### **God's Choices**            Tough Decisions Ahead

#### > General Concepts

God's will            God desires certain things. In fact He desires that *all* be saved. The word does not occur, but it implies the sense in which we are considering it.

Decrees            The Bible also lays out what theologians describe as *decrees*. [My course on Theology Proper, on my website [forhisglorynm.com](http://forhisglorynm.com) goes into more detail.] It seems that God in eternity past has made some determinations concerning 'big things' which unfold as history unfolds. That is, God is giving us His plan that He set forth ahead of time, which theologians call decrees. And I think they involve, to some extent, *dispensations*:

Dispensations            God at different time frames makes choices to deal with humanity in different ways. There is a dispensation before the Fall, where conditions were different and man was given the opportunity to make *a* choice—and he makes the

wrong one choosing His own way rather than God's, listening to the serpent rather than God's word. That introduces an entirely different *dispensation* from the Fall of man to the Flood. It is God making certain choices in certain ways during certain time frames.

Creation, Adam/Eve, Cain, Flood, Nations, Abraham, Israel, Covenants, Exile, Incarnation, Kingdom

We can even see some individual choices: God chose to create a universe in eternity past; He didn't need to do that. God is self-existent—He doesn't need *anything* outside of Himself, not even the universe, but He chose to create.

When Adam and Eve sinned, God was not obligated to offer them redemption or salvation. But God began the whole process of redemption with Adam and Eve, Genesis 3. He convicted them, explained to them, illumined them and even provided a sacrifice. He set forth all the parameters, for salvation throughout human history, with just Adam and Eve.

Choices were made with Cain, to bring a Flood, to save a family—'Noah found favor in the eyes of God', Genesis 6.8. He was not a special person that didn't have a sin nature. That word 'favor' comes out of a Hebrew word group for 'grace'. It's a 'grace' word. Noah, like, every other sinner, found grace in the eyes of God, the same as we do in a different time frame.

So God *chose* to save some and destroy others. Likewise with the nations. God chose nations, not only to just exist, but with the tower of Babel and the scattering as a result of the confusing of the languages.

Then amongst those nations God selected one individual, a choice, Abraham. Now Abraham had a purpose, that electing purpose working itself out in terms of the Abrahamic Covenant and the creation of the nation of Israel. But part of that, I think, includes the salvation of Abraham as an individual. So also Isaac, Jacob, etc.

I think Paul in the 1st Century in Romans, is separating out, saying that not *all* that are descendants of Israel are *Israel*, and I think he is identifying the few Jews in the 1st Century that were regenerate in contrast to ethnic Israel that rejected the Messiah.

The exile as a discipline, the Incarnation and everything in the New Testament: God was making choices in eternity past; and still future from our time, there will be a Millennial Kingdom that God will effect, again by His sovereign and divine choice because it is part of His broad plan.

These are the general concepts and there are lots of specific examples:

> Specific Examples

Messianic Line We saw in Genesis 3.15 that God has already revealed that there is going to be a seed of the woman that will in fact solve the problem of evil. Then after Genesis 3 you can trace the line of Messiah and throughout this line there are choices. There is one individual in each generation when a particular son carries on. For example, David had several sons, and Solomon wasn't the first, but he was the son that would carry on the line of David until the Messiah.

Abraham's descendants The emphasis of the Romans 9 passage is the line of Abraham's descendants.

Levitical Priesthood I mentioned the Levitical Priesthood from amongst the descendants of Abraham so you can consider them.

Elijah / Elisha Jesus calls attention to choices in the lives of Elijah and Elisha. In Luke 4 He says there were many widows in the time of Elijah but he went to help *one*. Why that particular one? Well, there is a plan in all of God's electing and choosing *purposes*.

Then he states that there were many lepers in the days of Elisha but it is only Naaman that Elisha heals of leprosy. The word 'choosing' is not there but the idea of God's choice is in a broader sense.

Miracles of Jesus Jesus didn't heal *everyone*. The miracles have a particular purpose and certain individuals were healed and others not. What's the basis of those choices?

Mary: why this humble girl out of all the girls of Israel? Well, she is in the line of Messiah, but there were other young virgins.

12 Disciples You could even say that there was a choice in terms of Judas himself, not for salvation, but a choice in terms of being the 'son of perdition', much like we will see in Romans 9. An example that Paul uses is Pharaoh during the time of the children of Israel in Egypt.

**Biblical Concept**

1. General Sense

2. Categories

a. Angels - 1Timothy 5.21 *I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.*

If there is a choice there, I would say that it is a choice of *preservation* and allowing or permitting other angels to fall.

b. Christ - Luke 9.35 *Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"*

Even Christ Himself, obviously not for salvation, because He was sinless, but to be the propitiation for sins. Here, at the transfiguration, God the Father identifies Christ as the 'chosen' or 'elect' one. You could also say it's a *qualitative* choice.

c. Individuals for Tasks

1. Cyrus - Isaiah 45.1 *Thus says the LORD to Cyrus His anointed, Whom I have taken by the right hand, To subdue nations before him And to loose the loins of kings; To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: ...4 "For the sake of Jacob My servant, And Israel My chosen one, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor Though you have not known Me.*

Some of God choices of individuals are not for salvation; He chooses people for all kinds of purposes. Cyrus was chosen to bring God's people back to Israel. In fact, Isaiah, a hundred years earlier, predicts Cyrus *by name*.

2. Pharaoh - Romans 9.17 *For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.*

There is a particular reason that Pharaoh was chosen.

3. Patriarchs - Romanos 9.6-13 ...7b *"THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." ...9 ...SARAH ...10... Rebekah... 13 ...JACOB...*

4. Moses - Psalm 105.26 *He sent Moses His servant, And Aaron, whom He had chosen.*

Moses was to be the deliverer of Israel.

5. Levitical Priests - Deuteronomy 18.5 *"For the LORD your God has chosen him and his sons from all your tribes, to stand and serve in the name of the LORD forever.*

6. Kings - 1Samual 16.8-10 ...10 *Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these."*

In the case of David, and others, salvation is presupposed when they are chosen for a particular task.

7. Others Such as Zerubbabel...

**Biblical Concept**

1. General Sense

2. Categories

a. Angels - 1Timothy 5.21



- b. Christ - Luke 9.35
- c. Individuals for Tasks
- d. Israel We will look at Israel later.
- 1. Source - Deuteronomy 7.6 *“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 “The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*
- 2. Corporate - 1 Kings 3.8 *“Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted.*
- 3. Purpose - Isaiah 43.7 *Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made.”*
- 4. Separation - Deuteronomy 14.2 *“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth*
- 5. Design - Genesis 18.19 *“For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.”*
- 6. Discipline - Amos 3.2 *“You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”*
- 7. Security - Isaiah 44.1 *“But now listen, O Jacob, My servant, And Israel, whom I have chosen: 2 Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you, ‘Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; And you Jeshurun whom I have chosen.*

### Biblical Concept

- 1. General Sense
- 2. Categories
  - a. Angels - 1 Timothy 5.21
  - b. Christ - Luke 9.35
  - c. Individuals for Tasks
  - d. Israel

- e. Believers - Ephesians 1.4 *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.*

In reference to the church age. Having seen the ‘big picture’ we can understand some more passages, like the Romans one, in terms of God’s election in a broader sense. It doesn’t always refer to salvation. In fact, some say it does not even apply in Ephesians 1.4.

So that is the concept in its broadest sense and then down to its narrow sense.

Now I am getting into the controversy.

### Divine Election

- I. Introduction
- II. Doctrine of Election
  - A. Terms
  - B. Concept
  - C. Doctrine

**Common View** This is not my view, but the common one:

“God foresaw those who would choose Him and then He chooses them”

God chooses those that would choose Him. Those are the so-called ‘elect’. I think the church in very large measure, and even in our free-grace, evangelical, very conservative view churches lean in that direction as well.

But I want contrast two views both of which would be from the most conservative perspective from within the free-grace camp, I will let you basically decide on your own. I what to bring out the issues involved so that it helps you make a decision. I fall in the #2 category.

[Romans 9.10-13 Doctrine of Election - Church Age Believers 134]

2 Views	#1	#2
Depravity of will -	capable	total

Many look at depravity in terms of volition and say that man is capable of believing the gospel message. The intellect is not eradicated; there are brilliant people. But there is none who seeks after God, all have turned aside: they are incapable of believing. I could say, then, that God gives *faith*, so they can believe:

Philippians 1.29 *For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him,...* Or,

2Peter 1.3 *seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.*

Also, John 6.29 *Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."*

I think God not only convicts, works within us to make us understand the gospel, but I think He even gives us *faith*. I am not going to 'quibble' over it with someone who has another view. There is a tension there that we have to accept.

	<u>#1</u>	<u>#2</u>
<b>Volition -</b>	free will	none seeks

I will contend that depravity is total in the sense that the will is not only affected but more than likely volition is affected just as much. We make choices every day. But depravity has put us in a situation that we will never choose God because 3.11 *THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE*, ie, all have made decisions, have turned aside, *HAVE BECOME USELESS*; I think this is volition. Remember, when I described depravity from Genesis 3, I mentioned that volition is involved as well. Then 3.12 continues *THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.*" So I see depravity affecting the will as well.

#1: Do we have free will? None seeks; our will is damaged by depravity and sin and is in a place where it *won't* seek. It is not really free but is affected by the rest of the sin nature.

<b>Offer -</b>	whoever believes	whoever believes
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What about the Offer? #1: 'whoever believes' and I would say Yes; there are passages referring to 'whoever', 'anyone'. I don't believe in double predestination—the idea that God has selected some for hell. I don't think that is a Biblical thought. I would hold the same idea and stress the passages throughout the gospel of John, etc. that 'whoever' believes on the Lord will be saved, irrespective of this concept of selecting. I would go back to the 'None seeks', the *offer* is available, ie, God is not blocking the way, but depravity is such that none seek Him.

<b>Responsibility -</b>	man fully	man fully
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And, because man has volition, he is 'fully responsible' and, I would agree with the passages that support this, but here is the tension: man is fully responsible. God is *never* responsible because of holiness. Man and fallen angels are fully responsible for their own sin and are always condemned on the basis of rejection of Jesus Christ.

<b>Salvation -</b>	God & belief	God's work
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# 1 says that salvation is a total work of God but man must receive it as a free gift by grace, and I would say even faith possibly could be a gift. God's convinces me and gives me everything I need to believe.

<b>Faith -</b>	essential, required	essential, required
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Is faith essential? #1: Yes. Is it required for salvation? Yes, Scripture is very clear that apart from faith you cannot please God; it is essential for everything. Again this is a tension: God working in an individual in convicting and illuminating—starting with calling and even, eg, Acts 16.14 ...*Lydia... a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.* I think God opens the heart and we respond. Philippians 2:13 *for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

	<u>#1</u>	<u>#2</u>
<b>Basis -</b>	<b>foreknowledge</b> those who believe	<b>sovereign choices</b> nothing in man

What is the basis of this election? #1 foreknowledge; I'm not sure if every one reading this would say that this is all that is involved. And 'those who believe', ie, the necessity of belief as well as foreknowledge.

I would say #2 sovereign choice, ie, God choosing in eternity past or before the foundation of the world, and it's not on the basis of God foreseeing who would believe or on the basis of *anything* in man. This will be developed further in Romans 9. Again, Romans 9 deals with Israel so whether or not that also applies to the individual—we will talk about it when we get to the passage. #2: God's sovereign choice—now He has purposes—and He has a plan, but He is sovereign over that choice. So that is where I fall, on #2.

<b>Purpose -</b>	not salvation	various
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And I would say that God chooses with a variety of purpose. #1: when it comes to this doctrine of election they clearly say that it's not for salvation. And I would say that there are lots of passages where it is not for salvation, but I would not *exclude* salvation. So I would say #2: *various* purposes.

<b>Objects -</b>	corporate Israel	also individual
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In #1 even in Ephesians 1, they would claim they have plurals in chapter 1 referring to a corporate choosing of the church in general. And I would say, in terms of plurality yes, but Paul is addressing a church which includes individuals. And if you are going to say 'corporate', what about all the other things, Ephesians 1:1-14, one sentence and a similar structure that goes through the whole passage and it refers to different *blessings* that God has blessed us with. The first one is the doctrine of election, but there is predestination, redemption—is redemption corporate? I can see that predestination would be corporate, but what about the others and the verbs, in

