

**Title:** Election and Reprobation

**Scripture:** Romans 9:6-13

**Series:** God's Saving Grace

1. Introduction:

a. No portion of Scripture more persuasively teaches the doctrine of predestination than Romans 9. This chapter teaches that our salvation rests ultimately on the grace of God alone, not on anything we have ever done or will do.

i. Most evangelical believers today reject the idea that God chooses who will be saved through unconditional election despite the clear teachings in the Bible. They deny this doctrine in three main ways.

1. The first and most common way is to avoid texts that expressly teach the doctrine, like Romans 9.

2. Another common way to deny the doctrine of election is to twist key passages to fit personal beliefs. For instance, in Romans 9, some argue that Paul refers to nations, not individuals.

a. In our text, Paul's argument about election involves specific individuals like Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and Esau. He directly talks about God choosing one person over another.

3. The third denial stems from the false idea of prescience, a heretical belief claiming that God looks ahead in time and chooses those

who will come to Christ, electing them for salvation in the past. This notion is both dangerous and unbiblical. Later in our chapter, in verses 10 to 12, Paul will address this false belief in more detail.

- b. If you remember, in the opening verses of Romans 9, the Apostle Paul lamented the fate of his fellow Jews. Although his kinsmen had been given the covenants and promises, they had rejected the redemption accomplished by Christ. His very people had turned against the Savior.
    - i. **John 1:11** He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.
  - c. Therefore, today's portion of Scripture was meant to answer the questions that would naturally flow from Paul's statements.
2. Verses 6-9: Did God fail to save?: But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, (7) and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." (8) This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. (9) For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year, I will return, and Sarah shall have a son."
- a. Paul was concerned that his expression of **great sorrow and unceasing anguish** might be misunderstood as suggesting that God's promise to Israel had failed and His purpose of salvation was

frustrated. Therefore, he clarifies that while a wonderful promise was made to Israel, it was never intended for the entire nation but for the true Israel, those who, like Abraham, would believe in God's promises. Those promises pointed to a future savior who would make atonement for sin.

- i. Paul rejected the thought that salvation could be inherited through biology or being part of Israel's visible nation. He emphasized the difference between the visible church and the invisible church, highlighting that not all visible church members are saved. Being part of the visible church doesn't guarantee being chosen by God for salvation.
- ii. In other words, God knows who belongs to the invisible church, those who are truly His. While we might deceive others about our salvation, nobody has ever deceived God about their heart condition.
- iii. So, Paul is making a similar argument here. Being an ethnic Jew and part of Israel doesn't guarantee salvation. If you remember, the Pharisees in Jesus' time made this mistake. They said, "Abraham is our father" (John 8:39) as if that automatically guaranteed them entrance into the kingdom of God.

1. Paul is very clear! Not every Jew was guaranteed to receive the promise. From the Old Testament, Paul explains that being a descendant of Abraham didn't assure entry into God's kingdom. Ishmael, though a child

of Abraham, was not the child of promise and was, therefore, rejected.

a. Paul reminds his readers that the promise was made in Isaac, not Ishmael. Beloved, the children of the flesh are not the children of God. The children of promise are counted as the seed. **For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son" (v. 9).**

i. **Romans 2:28-29B** For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. (29B) But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit...

iv. So, the covenant promise was not destined to be fulfilled in all the descendants of Abraham but only in the hearts and lives of those who, by God's grace, would place their trust in Jesus.

1. **Genesis 15:6** And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

v. In other words, only by submitting to the Gospel could someone be saved.

1. We are taught that Abraham's belief in God made him righteous and not his heritage. Beloved, this is so important. We can have no claim to salvation apart from faith in Jesus. Who we are, where we were born, who are family is, none of these things can

save us. Each person must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

- b. It is essential to realize that although the statement “**For not all who are of Israel are Israel**” is negative, the positive truth of this statement is, “There is, indeed, a true Israel.”
  - i. Therefore, Paul teaches that God's rejection of Israel is not total. His word had succeeded and never would fail. True Israel will be saved.
    1. **Romans 9:27** And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved,
- c. In verse 8, God's people are called “**the children of the promise!**” What does this mean? It means that our salvation was not due to anything in us but it is entirely due to God's covenant promise. It is God’s promise that effectuates the new birth!
  - i. **John 1:12-13** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, (13) who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
- d. Beloved, promise, an act of God, supersedes lineage, and verse 9 teaches us that if Issac was a child of promise, then it must necessarily be true that he could not be a child of the flesh. We read, **for this is what the promise said: “About this time next year, I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.”** Issac was a product of God's promise, the sovereign grace of God,

just like the elect are children of the eternal promise of God to the Son.

i. **Issac was born at the appointed time** through God's sovereign will. This was not due to any human effort. Abraham and Sarah tried to have a child for decades, but they were unsuccessful. Issac came when God determined he would come, and he came in a manner by which all glory would have to be given to God.

1. **I will return.** God would come and accomplish his plan. Abraham and Sara had to continue to wait on the Lord.

ii. **And Sarah shall (although dead) have a son.** The promise was fulfilled, and the child of the promise was born miraculously. Isaac's birth is prophetic of the new birth. He came from a barren womb. He was a child of promise, the product solely of divine, sovereign power and grace. That is the only way any person can be saved. It must be the sole work of God.

1. We can only conclude that Isaac's miraculous birth is a foretaste of the new birth because human effort or merit had nothing to do with it.

e. Did God fail to save? Never! All the elect will one day be saved!

i. **2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

3. Verse 10-13: The Purpose of God in Election: And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, (11) though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— (12) she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” (13) As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

a. Paul says, "**And not only so**," to make us think beyond the example of Isaac and Ishmael. Why? It's easy to think, and some would argue, that Isaac was chosen over Ishmael because Isaac's mother was Sarah, while Ishmael's mother was Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian slave. But in the case of Jacob and Esau, they had the same parents and were even twins, with Esau being the eldest. Both boys were born in answer to the same prayer.

i. **Genesis 25:21** And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

b. Nevertheless, in spite of their similarities, before these twins **were born, or had done anything either good or bad**, their mother was already told, “**The older will serve the younger.**”

i. Beloved, note that God had already chosen before Esau or Jacob were born. His choice came before they could act independently or make good or bad decisions. God loved Jacob by His own will. This idea challenges many as they wrestle with questions of fairness and free will. Our chapter

will address these concerns. However, it's important to recognize that God's ways surpass human understanding. Trusting in His control brings peace amid uncertainty.

- c. This truth is intensified as the apostle quotes Malachi 1:2-3: "**Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.**"
  - i. The Nature of God's Love:
    - 1. How do we deal with Paul's words? We have to be careful to distinguish between the various ways the Bible refers to the love of God.
      - a. The Bible speaks of God's universal love, which is also called God's benevolence. God has a basic attitude of goodwill toward all his creatures, but this is not what we are discussing in this chapter.
      - b. In this chapter, we describe God's *love of complacency*. It is a love that delights in the object of one's affection. This is the love the Father has for the Son. Christ is the beloved, but the Father, in pouring out his *love of complacency* upon his only begotten Son, extends that love to all who are elect in Christ. This is the love that always leads to salvation.
  - d. The Ground of Election: According to the Apostle, the elect are chosen **in order that God's purpose of election might continue**. The Apostle teaches that it is God who decides who is saved. Everything depends



on God. The Apostle says that God's elective choice is not **of works but because of him who calls**. In God's providence, He efficaciously calls some and not others.

- i. Our passage teaches that God's decree came before the boys were born, before they had done any good or evil, **to make certain that God's purpose according to election might stand**. Their election was based not on what the boys would do in their future lives but on what God did in eternity past. The decree was issued according to God's purpose so that his purpose would be exalted and established. God's purpose is the ground of election.
- ii. Beloved, true Israel (true believers) have always come to God through his sovereign choice. Jacob would be saved because God decreed it to be so. What is remarkable is that God could have chosen Esau and rejected Jacob if he wanted.
  1. What should astonish any Christian is not that God hated Esau but that he chose to love Jacob. All men are sinners. All men, including Esau and Jacob, deserve the wrath of God. The wonder in our passage is that God, because of His sovereign choice of election, chooses to love any sinner.
  2. Beloved, discussions of predestination will inevitably involve the free will argument. However, arguing man's free will in Romans 9 is unbiblical.

- a. Our text does teach that our salvation rests ultimately and eternally on free will, but it is not our free will; it is God's. It is the free will of the Creator, the Redeemer, who, in his sovereign grace, pours his mercy out upon those he chooses.
- e. Therefore, this chapter denies and destroys the false doctrine of prescience. The apostle demolishes every argument for this heresy.
  - i. The apostle forces us to look at the two unborn children, Jacob and Esau. Paul reminds the reader of God's decree **that the elder should serve the younger** and that this decree was made **before either boy was born**. Simply put, the eternal standing of each boy was decreed before they were even born. God did not foresee anything in either Jacob or Esau.
    - 1. The prescient says that our election is rooted in some sort of work we do, but that would make our salvation conditional. A conditional election contradicts every point the Apostle is making.

#### 4. Final thoughts:

- a. Romans 9:6-13 says that God's will determines who is accepted and rejected. God's divine, sovereign will is the source of both **election** and **reprobation**. While humans still have responsibility, there's no way to earn God's favor through our actions. His plan doesn't

depend on what we do but on His choice in eternity past.

- b. Romans 9:13 unquestionably teaches the doctrine of predestination from which God's **election** and **reprobation** flow.
  - i. **Election** is God's eternal purpose to cause certain individuals to be in Christ and receive His special grace so that they may live to God's glory and obtain everlasting salvation.
    1. **Acts 13:48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.
    2. **Ephesians 1:4A** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him...
  - ii. **Reprobation** is God's eternal purpose in choosing some people to receive special grace while passing over others, leading them to face everlasting punishment for their sins.
    1. **Romans 9:17-18** For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." (18) So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.
  - iii. The question that is often asked is, "How is it possible for a Loving God to ordain certain individuals to everlasting punishment?"

1. Those who pose this question don't grasp grace and reveal a flaw in their theology. Their question suggests they believe God owes humans something. A better question might be, "How can a God who demands punishment for sin choose some for eternal life and glory?" Remember, the astounding grace lies in Christ's sacrificial death for sinners, predestined to become His followers!
  - a. **John 10:14-15** I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, (15) just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

5. Benediction:

- a. **Deuteronomy 7:9** It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples,

**Public Reading of Scripture**  
**Deuteronomy 7:6-12**