

DID GOD CHOOSE US OR DO WE CHOOSE HIM? UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

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Romans 9:6-26

- I attended a seminar the other day here in Muskogee and the topic had to do with something fairly close to this. The Professor kept using the word “Elect” but with a tone that seemingly communicated that it is not even a biblical term.
- That brings us to Paul’s letter to the Church at Rome. Romans chapter 9, starting with verse 6. I’m going to ask 2 questions as we look at verses 6-13, & then by verse 14 Paul starts asking the questions. So the final 3 questions are in the text.

1. IS ELECTION BIBLICAL?

ROMANS 9:11a “in order that God's purpose of election might continue...”

- The word “Elect” with all its variations is used repeatedly throughout the Bible. Therefore we cannot, with any integrity, deny the doctrine of Election or that there is a group of people called the Elect. The words are there; God uses them. The question is not, “Do you believe in election?” The question is “What do you believe about election?”

2. IS ELECTION CONDITIONAL OR UNCONDITIONAL?

- The Remonstrance / The Remonstrants.

ROMANS 9:6-13 6 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.”

10 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.” (There is a Hebrew Idiom behind this. cf. Luke 14:26)

3. IS THERE INJUSTICE ON GOD’S PART?

ROMANS 9:14-18 14 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! 15 For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” (Ex.34:19) 16 So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. 17 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.

- The only way anyone is reconciled to God is by the mercy of God.
- We naturally deserve His wrath, but Christians get His love—Jesus, who is God, even became a man and took the wrath that was deserved so He could justly give Christians that loving-kindness. We naturally hate Him and His ways because our hearts are sick with sin and self-centeredness, but Christians get new hearts and minds that delight in what is perfect, —Him and His ways (though we still battle sin and stumble in many ways). We naturally deserve to be cast from His joy-increasing presence and thrown into the presence of His judgement, but Jesus experienced that as a substitute on the cross so Christians could be reconciled to God as adopted children—at His right hand, where there are pleasures forevermore. These are just a few blessings Christians are given in Jesus. This is all mercy.
- And mercy, by definition, cannot be deserved. Since the “wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23) the shocking thing about the gospel is not that God chooses to show mercy to some, but that God chooses to show mercy to anyone! “Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means!”

4. WHY DOES GOD STILL FIND FAULT?

ROMANS 9:19-21 19 You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” 20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? (*contradict God?*) Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

- **Q. Do you see what Paul’s hypothetical man is asking in verse 19? A. He basically saying,** “Well, if, ultimately, God is sovereign over salvation—*whom he saves and doesn’t save*—I am not responsible for my sins!” **Q.** And what is Paul’s response? **A.** v.20. Why? Because God clearly communicates He is sovereign & we are responsible.
- **Job 38:1-4** 1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: 2 “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. 4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.”
- **As I once heard Voddie Baucham say,** “Your arms are too short to box with God.”
- **“Who are you, O man, to answer back to God?”**

5. WHAT IF GOD’S GLORY IS MOST CLEARLY SEEN IN THIS?

ROMANS 9:22-26 22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared *beforehand* for glory— 24 even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? 25 As indeed he says in Hosea,

“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’
and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’”

26 “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”

- **Tim Keller’s comments on verses 22-23 are helpful here:** In verse 22 Paul says that while God is the author of our salvation, we are the authors of our damnation. Notice that Paul says here that God “bore with great patience the objects of his wrath.” This shows that evil people are not made evil by God. He bears with them. He never gives anyone quite what they deserve. He is unjust to no one. And then Paul adds that these objects of wrath are “prepared for destruction”— but he doesn’t say by whom. Contrast this with verse 23, where it says clearly of the objects of God’s mercy that “he prepared [them] in advance for glory.” By implication, it appears that the vessels of wrath are prepared for destruction by themselves (remember 1: 24, where God hands people over to the life and death they have chosen). – Keller, Timothy. *Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading* (God’s Word For You - Romans Series Book 2) (pp. 57-58).
- I think perhaps one of the main reason people land on believing Condition Election is because they can’t comprehend how a loving God would work like that. The bigger problem however, in my opinion, is that many elevate the Love of God above the glory of God. If the chief end to which God made the universe was display His love, that would be one thing. But what is the chief end to which God created the universe was to display His glory? And “What is the glory of God? It is at least the combined magnitude of all God’s attributes and qualities put together” (Tim Keller) including love.

Q1. Isn’t Paul speaking about Jews only in chapter 9? **A.** Look at verses 23-24 again. As well as verses 6-7 (cf. Romans 4:11-12, 16). Eph 1:3-14. John 10 “I have other sheep who are not of this fold...I must bring them in also.”

Q2. What’s the point of evangelism, if God has already chosen whom he will save? **A.** Jesus tells us to and that’s how God gather’s His people into His Church. **Acts 13:48** “As many as were appointed to eternal life believed.” **Acts 18:10** “I have many in this city.” **2 Timothy 2:9-10.** “I am suffering...but I endure it all for the sake of the elect.”

Q3. What if I have unceasing anguish in my heart over this? **A.** You’re in good company with the Apostle Paul (Romans 9:1-4). And yet, that should not block the joy that God has destined for you to know in being chosen by Him to share in His glory. And it should not block you working your tail off to find the elect through telling people the gospel and praying for God to save.

Q4. Why does it matter if I believe this or not? **A.** If you’re going to waste your life, all you need is two things: Confidence in yourself and lack of faith in God. But if you’re going to live a life not wasted, to the glory of God and the maximum good for your neighbor, you’re going to need radically humility and radical confidence in God!

Q5. How do I know if I am one of the elect? **A.** Your faith is in Jesus and your aim is at obeying Him (Love Jesus/His People)

JOHN 10:14-18 14 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. 16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN TRACKED CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN TO LIVE, DIE, ARISE, & TRACK YOU DOWN TO SHOW YOU MERCY!

- **Acts 13:17** 17 The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it.
- **Mark 13:20** 20 And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.
- **John 15:16** 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.
- **Ephesians 1:3-6** 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace...
- **1 Thessalonians 1:4-5** 4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.