

Lecture 10- Election and Paradoxical Passages Part 1; Does God Love Everyone the Same?

*All Bible references are from NASB unless noted otherwise.

Review of Previous Lectures

Lecture 1- 2 Peter 1:10 (Eph 4:1). Every Bible-believing Christian must affirm predestination and election. It is in the Bible. How they define the doctrine differs between believers and even scholars.

Lecture 2- God is sovereign. He rules from heaven and no one can thwart His rulership. Even man's so called free will cannot thwart God's supreme rulership as seen in Scripture.

Lecture 3- Free will or free agency in the Bible is evident, but the defining description of this free will is that it is not libertarian free will. It is an enslaved will that needs to be freed. Mankind makes willful choices from the preceding desires of their heart. God is able and does influence mankind's desires to accomplish His purposes. This includes restraining sin (Gen 20:6) or hardening hearts (Rom 9:18; 11:7, 25) amongst many other things as we saw in this lecture.

Lecture 4- Jesus taught clearly that man is unable to come to Him unless the Father draws Him (John 6:44-45, 65). Only those who are given to Jesus by the Father will come and be saved (John 6:37; 17).

Lecture 5- The Bible is replete that mankind is dead, enslaved, by nature children of wrath and do not seek after God out of their own capacities. Some scholars posit that prevenient grace is given as a remedy to neutralize the inability of mankind, but was found to be without explicit Biblical evidence.

Lecture 6- God clearly has a decree/plan and purpose in our world for all things (including salvation). He is not absent and is working all things according to the counsel of His own will (Eph 1:11).

Lecture 7- One of the ways God is keeping His Word to Israel (and humanity) is through the principle of sovereign election which can be defined as God electing and predestining individuals from eternity past based on His choice alone. This choice is not based on the good or evil foreseen by God, nor does this election involve the will or works of man, but of God's choice alone (9:11, 16). This principle was at work in OT times and is currently at work in NT times as God is actively and mercifully saving those whom He has called (the remnant from both Jews and Gentiles) while hardening others according to His own sovereign purpose and for the sake of glorifying His own name.

Lecture 8- The purpose of God's election choices was to promote His own glory. Part of God's ordained means of salvation was through faith alone. Additionally, God has ordained the means of prayer, evangelism, preaching in order to effectualize His plan for the elect/remnant from the Jews and Gentiles. Most of Israel remains in unbelief and disobedience because they sought to establish their own righteousness as by works and not by faith.

Lecture 9- Election and God's Plan for the Chosen Remnant of Jews and Gentiles; Romans 11:1-36. Paul picked up the theme that he started in Romans 9 by teaching that the doctrine of election/remnant according to God's own purpose was active also in the prophetic ministry of Elijah (1 Kings 19). Therefore, we should not be surprised that the elect has obtained righteousness by faith and the rest were hardened/blinded and that is by grace, not works of any kind (Rom 11:5-7).

What is coming next:

Lecture 10- Does God desire all to be saved? Election and the paradoxical Bible passages.

Lecture 11- Did Jesus die for everyone? Isn't it obvious? Understanding *Universal* vs. *Definite* Atonement.

Lecture 12 - Election: Perseverance and Assurance. Understanding the tremendous comfort of God's Election Purpose.

*NOTE- If you want a free, but full in-depth study of the topic of Lecture 10, Google search "are there two wills in God crossway pdf"

Summary Table of "God's Purpose According to Election" (Calling) in Romans 9-11 (Rom 9:11 uses this terminology)

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**, (NASB)

Romans 9:11 even before they were born or had done anything good or bad (so that **God's purpose in election** would stand, **not by works** but by **his calling**), (NET)

Romans 9:23 And *He did so* to **make known the riches of His glory** upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

Basic Foundational Biblical Truth- Everyone is a sinner and deserves wrath (Rom 6:23). None deserve mercy. Mercy is freely given and not owed (Rom 4:1-8). It's not of works (current or foreseen- 9:11; 11:6); otherwise God's free gracious choice would not be grace (Rom 11:5-6). See Matthew 20:1-16 where God reserves the right to do mercy as He sees fit.

<p>God's Elect (11:7)</p> <p>Remnant by grace (9:27; 11:5) Called (9:7, 11, 24) Children of God (9:8) Children of Promise (9:8) Loved (9:13) Mercied/Compassioned (9:15, 18) Honorable Vessel (9:21) Vessel of Mercy (9:23) Beloved (9:25) Foolish Nation (10:19; cf. 1 Cor 1:27ff) Non-seeking; Non-asking (10:20) Chosen (11:5) Wild Olive Branch (Gentiles- 11:18) Kindness given (11:22)</p>	<p>God's Non-elect</p> <p>Children of Flesh (9:8) Not true descendant (9:7-8) Hated (9:13) Common Vessel (9:21) Vessel of Wrath (9:22) Disobedient/Contrary (10:21) Hardened/blinded (9:18; 11:7) Spirit of Stupor (11:8) Can't see, hear (11:8) Darkened eyes (11:10) Severity given (11:22) Cutoff (11:22)</p>	<p>Reason for One Being Elect opposed to Another</p>
<p>Abraham</p>	<p>Terah and Family</p>	<p>Hebrews 11:8- God calls Abraham Nehemiah 9:7- God chose Abraham</p>
<p>Isaac</p>	<p>Ishmael</p>	<p>Isaac was called (Rom 9:7) Isaac was reckoned as seed and the child of promise (9:8-9) God came and took initiative (9:9)</p>
<p>Jacob</p>	<p>Esau</p>	<p>Jacob was chosen over Esau for the reason of God's purpose of showing that HIS CHOICE (election) was the determining factor (9:11) Jacob was not chosen due to any work or goodness foreseen by God, because God deliberately elected Jacob over Esau before he was born (9:11) It was not of any works, but of God's call specifically (9:11) It was affirmed 1500 years later by Malachi that the outworking historically of God's actions in Israel and Edom (descendant groups) was begun with God's choice to individually love Jacob and hate Esau (Malachi 1:2)</p>
<p>Moses</p>	<p>Pharaoh</p>	<p>Moses received God's unconditional mercy and compassion (9:15).</p>

Moses (continued)	Pharaoh (continued)	Moses' selection to receive mercy was not based on the human will nor on the human effort , but solely on God's merciful choice (9:16) Pharaoh was raised up for the sole purpose of showing God's power and wrath and to declare His name/glory in all the earth (Rom 9:17, 22; Joshua 2:10; 9:9) Moses received mercy ; Pharaoh received hardening (9:18).
Vessels of Mercy	Vessels of Wrath	Vessels of wrath, which are prepared for destruction were patiently endured in order for God to show His power and wrath through them (9:22). The vessels of wrath were used as a contrasting show piece so that the riches of His glory would be demonstrated on the vessels of mercy who were prepared for glory (9:23).
Elijah and the 7,000 Remnant	Non-7,000 (Ahab, Jezebel, Israel)	Elijah and the 7,000 were acted upon by God to transfer them into the remnant group through God's election by grace, not by any works (11:5-6).
All Authentic Believers	All Unbelievers	The principle of God's purpose according to election is true for all groups of people, Jews and Gentiles who have been called (9:24; 11:32).

We have seen that God's purpose and will/desire cannot be thwarted. What God sovereignly decrees will come to pass according to His overall purpose to bring Glory to His name (see Lecture 6).

- **Psalm 115:1** Not to us, O LORD, not to us, **But to Your name give glory** Because of Your lovingkindness (mercy), because of Your truth.
- **Isaiah 48:11** "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can **My name be profaned**? And **My glory** I will not give to another. (see 48:9 for more about God's concern for His name)
- **Job 42:2** "I know that You can do all things, And **that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted**.
Isaiah 14:24-27 **The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, "Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand,** ²⁵ to break Assyria in My land, and I will trample him on My mountains. Then his yoke will be removed from them and his burden removed from their shoulder. ²⁶ "This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. ²⁷ **"For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?"**
Daniel 4:35 "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, **But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'**

Various Aspects of the Will of God as Seen in the Whole Counsel of God (God's Love also as a comparison)

- D.A. Carson's book, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* is extremely helpful in understanding the complexities of how God's love is presented in all of Scripture. He mentions upfront that these are five *ways* and not *types* of how we read of God's love in His Word.
 - The **first** speaks of how the Father loves the Son (John 3:35; 5:20 using Greek words *phileo* and *agapao* respectively). Also, the Son loves the Father (John 14:31- *agapao*).
 - **Secondly**, God shows his love for His creation/creatures by giving mankind the sun and rain to provide fruitful harvests for them to enjoy (Matt 5:43-48; Acts 14:15-17). This also is referred as God's *love of beneficence* by theologians.
 - **Thirdly**, God loves the world (John 3:16- *agapao*) and His disposition towards the world is one of love and a desire for them to be saved (1 Tim 2:4). He does not rejoice or take pleasure in the death of the wicked, but constantly invites rebellious mankind to repent and find eternal life (Ezek 33:11; 18:31-32). This love in theology is often called the *love of benevolence*.
 - **Fourthly**, the Bible speaks of God's choosing love, or selective love. This is a love that distinguishes between the recipients. This is a love that sometimes is hard to understand and accept. We tend to put God in a human box reminding Him that He has to love everyone equally with no distinction. Yet this is not what we find in Scripture. God chose to love and set His affection on Israel in a way that was different than the surrounding nations (Deut 4:37; 7:7-8; 10:14-15). He chose to demonstrate His love and covenant to Jacob and not Esau (Mal 1:2-3; Rom 9:11-15). Jesus reflects this selective love when He only prays for believers and not the world (John 17:9).
 - **Fifthly**, there is a conditional love that believers enjoy when they demonstrate obedience (John 15:9-10; Jude 21; Luke 3:21-22 referring to Jesus as the "Beloved Son Whom I am well pleased"). Theologians call this the *love of complacency* which harkens back to its more original meaning: "to please greatly".
- Just as is seen in the various *ways* that God's love is exemplified in the Biblical text, so also theologians recognize there are various ways in which God's will or desire is represented in the Biblical text. Consulting most systematic theology textbooks will highlight these labels: decretive will, permissive will, perfect will, preceptive will, secret will, undesired will, sovereign will, efficient will, will of decree, will of command, moral will, antecedent will, consequent will, absolute will, conditional will, will of good pleasure, etc.

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The **secret things** belong to the LORD our God, but the **things revealed** belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

Proverbs 25:2 It is the **glory of God** to **conceal a matter**, But the **glory of kings is to search out a matter**.

Even though there are numerous facets of the will of God, all of them are usually summarized under three headings:

- **Decretive Will** (sovereign will, secret will, etc.) This will of God contains His blue print for history and is the working out of all things for His ultimate purpose and plan. **Ephesians 1:10-12**, ¹⁰*with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, **things in the heavens and things on the earth**. In Him ¹¹ also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to **His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will**, ¹² to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the **praise of His glory**.* God's decretive will involves all things, but we must recognize that there are two types of actions that God had decreed/ordained to be included in His sovereign plan to the praise of His glory.
 - **Compliant Actions**- God's decretive will includes actions that are in agreement with His other desires/will. God decreed Paul to repent and believe in Jesus which is in agreement with God's command to repent.
 - **Non-Compliant Actions**- The easiest way to define this is the decree to have evil in God's world. God could have created a world without evil, but He chose to create a world and to include evil/disobedience in it. God

is careful to not be the immediate cause of evil, but He is the ultimate determiner who decided to include evil. God does decree evil actions which violate His other desires/wills (His perceptive will as an example).

- **Preceptive Will** (will of command, moral will, revealed will, etc.) This will of God is primarily rooted in God's commandments or precepts. God has commanded that no one lie, or murder, or get drunk, or have pride, etc. Additionally, God commands everyone to repent and believe in Jesus (Acts 17:30).
- **Benevolent Will of Disposition** (will of good pleasure, will of good inclination, etc.)
 - **God's good nature-** God's inclination is one of goodness. This coincides best with His love of benevolence and beneficence as seen above in numbers two and three.
 - **God's good nature-** God doesn't desire or seek evil for His creatures. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but desires for them to choose life and blessing (Ezek 33:11; 18:23, 32; Deut 5:29, 33). This is seen in Jesus' heart also when He desires to gather the people like a hen and her chicks (Matt 23:37). His nature desires for all men to be saved (1 Tim 2:4) and that none should perish (2 Peter 3:9).
 - **God's nature is in perfect balance with His other attributes and wills/desires-** This means that God makes choices out of His perfect being that don't seem perfectly consistent from our human perspective. These choices can often be paradoxical (seemingly contradictory). Notice this passage in **Deut 28:63**, *This is what will happen: Just as the LORD delighted to do good for you and make you numerous, he will take delight in destroying and decimating you. You will be uprooted from the land you are about to possess.* (NET). What we will see is that God's benevolent will/desires do not thwart Gods sovereign decrees.

"God's will is not therefore at war with itself, nor does it change, nor does it pretend not to will what it wills. Even though **his will is one and simple in him, it appears manifold to us because, on account of our mental incapacity**, we do not grasp how in various ways it wills and does not will something to take place" (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*).

Biblical examples where one facet of God's will/desires seems to be working in contrast to His other will/desires.

*God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby **neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.***

(Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 3:1)

1 Kings 22:19-23 Micaiah said, "That being the case, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, with all the heavenly assembly standing on his right and on his left.²⁰ The LORD said, 'Who will deceive Ahab, so he will attack Ramoth Gilead and die there?' One said this and another that.²¹ Then a spirit stepped forward and stood before the LORD. He said, 'I will deceive him.' The LORD asked him, 'How?'²² He replied, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets.' The LORD said, 'Deceive and overpower him. Go out and do as you have proposed.'²³ So now, look, the LORD has placed a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours; but the LORD has decreed disaster for you." (NET)

- Doesn't God desire all people to be saved (1 Tim 2:4)? Why is God seemingly "encouraging" deception? Doesn't God's decree and command to the lying spirit seem contrary to His preceptive will not to lie?
- God reserves the right to judge wicked Ahab. God uses the wicked and lying spirit to accomplish His goal of judging Ahab with death. God is not the immediate cause of this wickedness. God does no evil. His decretive will to kill and judge Ahab to vindicate His glory (justice) took precedence over His will of disposition.

(To be continued in Part 2 of this lecture topic)