

Lecture 9- Election and God's Plan for the Chosen Remnant of Jews and Gentiles; Romans 11:1-36

*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.

Because the majority of national Israel is unsaved, does this mean God has rejected His people?

Romans 10:21-11:6

^{10:21} But as for Israel He says, "ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE." [Isaiah 65:2]

^{11:1} I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!

For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

² God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in *the passage about* Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

³ "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE." [1 Kings 19:10, 14]

⁴ But what is the divine response to him? "**I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL.**" [1 Kings 19:18]

⁵ **In the same way then**, there has also come to be at the present time **a remnant according to God's gracious choice.**

⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

- God is sovereign in His choices (mercy and hardening), but this doesn't negate human responsibility to seek Him. Paul writes that God has reached out to the stubborn Israelites "all the day" (cf. Genesis 6:5). This is a genuine longing on God's part (10:21; cf. 1 Timothy 2:4). Neither the evidence for sovereignty or human responsibility in the text should be used to deny the other. Some paradoxical theologies should be recognized to be held in tension by the Biblical writers. A great example is the doctrine of the Trinity. No human analogy offered to defend Trinitarian theology stands up to philosophical or theological scrutiny. All human analogies fail at one point or another.
- Even though God's sovereign plan has included not choosing many Jewish people at this time, this does not mean that God has rejected His corporate people Israel. This is possible since God has established a covenantal loving relationship in ancient times ("whom He foreknew"). See Lecture 7 for more info on meaning of foreknowledge.
- The election doctrine of the remnant which has God choosing some from among the many (see chapter 9) is still at work and Paul himself is proof. God chose and elected Paul (and other Jews like Peter, Matthew, etc.).
- The election doctrine of the remnant is shown evident in the OT by Paul quoting 1 Kings 19. In the midst of national rebellion against God, Elijah felt alone as if he was the only person left alive who was saved. God enlightens Elijah that His sovereign electing purposes are still at work. God has chosen and elected 7,000 individual Jewish people to not bow the knee to Baal. God's faithfulness is always at work even if it is only to a small number (remnant).
- Even now, there exists a remnant of believers solely for the reason that God graciously chose them (11:5). This might sound unjust/unfair, but we must remember that it is only from God's grace/compassion that anyone is chosen and that God doesn't annihilate everyone in His righteous justice (Ps 78:28; Lam 3:22; Neh 9:31; Deut 4:31).
- In case we have missed all the previous teaching from Romans 8-10 (especially 9), Paul reminds us that if even a hint of works come into play in our thinking for the basis of God's choice, then we have abandoned his teaching that we are saved by grace (cf. Rom 3:24; 4:16; 5:2; 5:15, 17; Eph 2:5, 8-9; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 3:5). Grace forbids any works (actions) on the part of the individual out of their free will, efforts, ancestry, or foreseen choices. See Lecture 8.

2 Timothy 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a **holy calling, not according to our works**, but according to **His own purpose** and **grace** which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity (before time began).

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the **basis of deeds** which we have done in righteousness, but according to **His mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

What then is the outcome of God's process of election in the people of Israel and by extension, the Gentiles?

Romans 11:7-10

⁷ What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were **chosen [the elect] obtained it**, and the **rest were hardened**;

⁸ just as it is written, "**GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY.**" [Deut 29:4; Isaiah 29:10]

⁹ And David says, "**LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.**" [Psalm 69:22]

¹⁰ "**LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER.**" [Psalm 69:23]

- The conclusion made by Paul after his teaching of chapters 9-11:6 is that Israel did not receive the righteousness it was seeking because it sought it as through works and not by faith (9:32).
- The elect (Jews and Gentiles) have obtained it, but the non-elect who did not obtain righteousness were hardened (God gave them a 'spirit of stupor').
- Paul quotes from the three categories of OT Scripture. The Torah (Deut 29:4), the Prophets (Isaiah 29:10) and the Writings (Psalm 69:22-23) to show that his teaching of God's hardening of the non-elect has Biblical precedent.
- Paul's understanding of the hardening of the people in order to accomplish God's sovereign purposes is consistent with his other experience with the Roman Jews (see Acts 28:25-28). Further, this was consistent with Jesus' same

approach in His ministry (see Matt 13:10-17 which quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 where God hardens the people to not respond to Isaiah's preaching; John 12:37-41).

- The outcome is that at the present time, God's plan included blinding/hardening most of the Jewish people in accordance with His purposes according to election. The elect are recipients of God's grace and righteousness.

Yet the cause of eternal reprobation is so hidden from us, that nothing remains for us but to wonder at the incomprehensible purpose of God, as we shall at length see by the conclusion. But they reason absurdly who, whenever a word is said of the proximate causes, strive, by bringing forward these, to cover the first, **which is hid from our view**; as though God had not, before the fall of Adam, freely determined to do what seemed good to him with respect to the whole human race on this account, — because he condemns his corrupt and depraved seed, and also, because he repays to individuals the reward which their sins have deserved. (from Calvin's commentary on Romans 11:7).

If corporate Israel has been mostly blinded, is this current situation irreversible? Have they fallen permanently due to God's hardening and their rebellion? How has the partial Jewish hardening (11:7, 25) affected the Gentiles?

Romans 11:11-16

¹¹ I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

¹² Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment [fullness] be!

¹³ But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

¹⁵ For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will *their* acceptance be but life from the dead?

¹⁶ If the first piece [firstfruits] *of dough* is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.

- Even though corporate Israel has stumbled, they have absolutely not fallen out of corporate election. Their stumbling is not permanent and is part of God's plan in order to make the Jewish people jealous through the abundant mercy and grace that God is now showering on the Gentiles.
- The Jews did transgress and are responsible (Rom 10), but if their transgression was used by God to bring riches to the Gentiles, how much more will be their full salvation (not partial!)? This is the first intimation of Paul teaching that God's calling and promises to the patriarchs will be super abundantly fulfilled when God saves ALL Israel (11:25-26). If the doctrine of election and God's calling apart from the will of man is not true, how can God guarantee that He will save ALL Israel (fullness) at the end of the age? What if they resist Him as they have done throughout their entire history? No, God can and will save them because He is sovereign.
- Paul desires to provoke some of his fellow ethnic Jewish people to jealousy and be saved (which means they are currently lost).
- Their acceptance by God will be resurrection for all the elect (11:15)!
- Paul writes that the first fruits and the branches are holy because the original lump and root is holy. This refers to the original calling and promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as being the root and lump.

Since the Jewish people are mostly hardened should this cause the Gentiles to boast and brag about their current calling?

Romans 11:17-22

¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,

¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you.

¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."

²⁰ Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;

²¹ for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

²² Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

- God's election purposes included breaking off some of the Jewish branches in order to graft in wild Gentile believers to partake with the Jewish remnant of the covenant promises of the root (Abrahamic covenant- Gen 12:3).
- Gentiles are supported by the Abrahamic root and not vice versa. This should cause us to be humble, fearful, and not presume that we deserve to be grafted in as opposed to Jewish unbelief. Gentiles can fall into the same trap of unbelief as ethnic Israel and be cut off.
- Verse 22 gives a warning of anyone (Jewish or Gentile) or any group being cutoff because God can be severe.

What is the final stage (outcome) of God keeping His covenant promises to ethnic corporate Israel?

Romans 11:23-27

²³ And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

²⁴ For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural *branches* be grafted into their own olive tree?

²⁵ For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery-- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation-- that a **partial hardening** has happened to Israel **until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**;

²⁶ and **so all Israel will be saved**; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." [Isaiah 59:20]

²⁷ "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." [Isaiah 59:21; 27:9; Jer 31:33-34]

- The Jewish people are still naturally and easily able to be grafted back into God's covenant root promises if they do not remain in their unbelief.
- Paul does not want Gentiles to be proud ("wise in our own estimation"). He is revealing a mystery heretofore unknown. This now revealed truth is that the partial hardening of Israel will be lifted once the full numbers of elect Gentiles have come to faith (11:25).
- The final stage (outcome) of God's covenant promises will be that He reveals His sovereign elective purposes in choosing and saving ALL ethnic Israel at one time at the end of the age. He will fully remove ungodliness and sin from the entire corporate people of Israel! (11:26-27)
- Other passages confirm that this will happen at the end of the 7 year tribulation period (Dan 9:24-27) which is also called the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:7). Two-thirds will perish, but the one-third that remains will be made alive, saved, and restored to the fullness of all the OT promises in the millennial kingdom (Zech 13:8-9; Ezek 37).

How are we to understand God's purposes according to His plan of election throughout all of history?

Romans 11:28-32

²⁸ From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of *God's* choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;

²⁹ for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

³⁰ For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

³² For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

- The current situation highlights that the partial hardening of corporate Israel has caused them to be enemies because they reject the Gospel which brings righteousness through faith. However, from God's perspective corporate Israel

still has election status corporately because God made the choice of covenant promises to the patriarchs. This doesn't mean that all corporate Israel is saved (see Rom 9:1-6; 10:1; 11:14).

- Originally the Gentiles were disobedient and Jews showed mercy. Now the Jews are disobedient and Gentiles are shown mercy. The current situation the roles are reversed. Nevertheless, the future will see the Jewish people be restored back to a full state of mercy.
- God's purpose all along was to consign all groups (Jews and Gentiles) to disobedience to show mercy to all groups.

What should be our response to God's comprehensive purposes according to His plan of election?

Romans 11:33-36

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches
both of the **wisdom** and **knowledge** of God!

How **unsearchable** are His **judgments** and **His ways**

are **unfathomable [incomprehensible]!** [same word in Job 5:9; 9:10; 34:24 referencing God's greatness]

³⁴ For WHO HAS KNOWN **THE MIND** OF THE LORD, OR
WHO BECAME HIS **COUNSELOR**? [Is 40:13]

³⁵ Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? [Job 41:11]

³⁶ For **from Him** and **through Him** and **to Him** are **all things**. **To Him be the glory forever. Amen.**

- God's wisdom, knowledge, judgments and ways that He operates in our world are unsearchable and unfathomable.
- No one has inside access to God's mind (knowledge or ways) and no one can give Him counseling or insight.
- Has anyone ever given God advice/counsel which obligates God to reward that individual for such wisdom that God overlooked (11:35)?
- God is the source, the means, and the goal of all things. To Him is ALL glory forever (**Isaiah 48:11**; 42:8)!!

Job 38:1-4 ¹ Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind: ² "Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words?"

³ Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them. ⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. (NLT)

Job 40:1-8 ¹ Then the LORD said to Job, ² "Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God's critic, but do you have the answers?" ³ Then Job replied to the LORD, ⁴ "I am nothing-- how could I ever find the answers? I will cover my mouth with my hand.

⁵ I have said too much already. I have nothing more to say." ⁶ Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind: ⁷ "Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them. ⁸ "Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just so you can be right? (NLT)

Job 42:1-3 ¹ Then Job replied to the LORD: ² "I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you. ³ You asked, 'Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?' It is I-- and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me.