

BASIC TRAINING BIBLE MINISTRIES

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ELECTION, PREDESTINATION, AND THE PLAN OF GOD

**The Biblical Case against Calvinism (Romans 9),
Lordship Salvation (Romans 10),
and Replacement Theology (Romans 11)**

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ELECTION, PREDESTINATION, AND THE PLAN OF GOD

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“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”
Romans 8:28–30

Theodicy: the vindication of divine goodness and providence in view of the existence of evil. This vindication is the objective of Paul throughout Romans. From the beginning of the book (Rom. 1:17), he is arguing against Jewish arguments (Rom. 3:1–6) he had probably heard many times in the synagogues—that God was being unjust in judging Israel (Paul has 70 A.D. in mind).

The Overview of God’s Plan

1. These verses (Rom. 8:28–30), as much as anything else, provide the need for the explanation of Romans 9–11.
2. Here, Paul is taking familiar, Old Testament phrases, used repeatedly for Israel, and applying them now to the Church.
3. Paul unites “*those who love God*” with “*those who are the called*” to establish the two sides of election: the divine call, and the human response. Nothing shows our love for God more than implicit faith in Him. To quote James D.G. Dunn:

“[Paul is] evoking Christianity’s Jewish inheritance ... in view of the following heavy emphasis on divine initiative this phrase is an important reminder that God’s purpose works out in personal response and relationship; coerced love is not love,” World Biblical Commentary, Vol. I Romans, p. 481.

4. **Note:** God demonstrated His love for us by sending His Son to die for us (Rom. 5:6–10). This (Rom. 8:28) is the first reference to our love for God in Romans, and it is demonstrated by trusting in His promise (see Rom. 8:23–25), and living by His Spirit (Rom. 8:1–4).
5. “*Called according to His purpose*” includes believers in His plan for not only human redemption, but the reconciliation of the entire universe (Rom. 8:18–23).

6. “*Whom He foreknew*” is plural, and speaks of corporate and covenant relationship. He speaks of the Church as a Body.
7. “*Conformed to the image*” (*summorphous*) goes back to the three other *sun* compounds in Rom. 8:17 “*joint heirs ... suffer with ... glorified together.*” The “*purpose*” toward which God is working involves a process, of which we are a part.
8. The word “*predestined*” refers, not to salvation, but to the destiny of those who are saved. God has an eternal plan, which encompasses both time and eternity, by which the company of believers will join His Son as a glorified family in a fully redeemed universe.
9. God’s predetermined plan (predestination), therefore, involves: calling (invitation), justification (of those who believe), and glorification (ultimate conformity to Christ).

The above considerations would naturally and logically lead to the question: “Then what of God’s plan and promises to Israel?” That is the burden of Romans 9–11.

Introduction

1. Ravi Zacharias once made a statement that truth must involve three things (I paraphrase from memory):
 - a. **Coherence**—it must make sense, be understandable, logical.
 - b. **Consistency**—truth cannot contradict itself. Two opposite ideas, like “God loves the world” and “God only picks certain people to be saved” cannot be synchronized.
 - c. **Correlation**—truth must relate to the world as we know it, and to both natural and moral law.
2. The teaching of Calvinism fails on all three points. This explains why Calvinists must constantly twist simple and clear statements of the Bible to force their “system” into the Bible. It also explains the self-contradictory nature of Calvinist teaching.
3. For example, in a discussion with a “Lordship” proponent, (which is based on Calvin’s teaching on perseverance), he made the two following statements: “*We are saved by grace through faith*” and “*God will reward those who live godly lives with eternal life,*” Though these two statements are self-contradictory (one posits salvation by grace, the other by works), he could see no contradiction in them!
4. Three things to keep in mind in approaching Romans 9:
 - a. God chose Israel—the least of all people—to bring us both the written and the Living Word (Deu. 7:6–9).
 - b. Here, Paul is arguing against Jewish misconceptions, such as Jewish national salvation due to lineage or circumcision, and Jewish superiority to Gentiles.

- c. Jesus made it clear that to whom much is given, much will be required (Luke 12:48). Romans 9–11 argues this principle concerning Israel—the most blessed of nations. Each of these principles is at work in Romans 9.

Thesis

1. Since Calvinism, as a theological position, is becoming a dominant position in America;
2. And because Calvinism presents a picture of God that is both un-biblical and demonstrably repugnant;
 [**Point:** Based on their extreme position on God’s sovereignty, Calvinists must admit that God is the Author of sin and evil. Calvinism cannot resolve the problem of theodicy: If God is good, then why is there evil in the world?]
3. And since the stronghold of Calvinist teaching is based on a woefully inadequate interpretation of Romans 9–11 (usually just part of chapter 9);
4. And because of many Christians’ inability to counter Calvinist teaching;
5. We will seek to put Romans 9–11 within its context of the book to show that:
 - a. The Calvinist position is based on extremely poor *exegesis* of the text, and of the context of the entire book.
 - b. That the issue of Romans 9–11 is not primarily salvation, *per se*, but rather of Israel’s rejected privilege and God’s masterful inclusion of the Gentiles to fulfill His strategy in history.
 - c. That election is both corporate and individual, that it involves a call to service—not salvation—that it can be rejected by man, and that its rejection involves the loss of its privileges and prerogatives.

In essence, Romans 9–11 is an overview of Israel’s history dealing with her past (Romans 9), her present (from the standpoint of the Church Age, Romans 10), and her future (Romans 11).

In these chapters, the Apostle Paul answers three questions which he previously anticipated on the part of Jewish readers:

1. What is the advantage, if any, of being Jewish (Rom. 3:1)?
2. Does Israel’s unbelief (the majority) nullify God’s faithfulness (Rom. 3:2)?
3. Is God unjust in His dealings with Israel (Rom. 3:5–9)?

Paul’s Goal in Romans:

1. To present the full scope of the Gospel in life and history.
 Paul tells us the scale of God’s plan is to deliver creation from bondage (Rom. 8:18–28). We need to stop thinking of “salvation” in purely personal terms only.
2. To present God’s liberation strategy throughout human history.
 With the fall of Adam, God implemented His rescue mission for Earth.

3. To defend the righteousness and the justice of God against misconceptions and perversions which dishonor His name.
4. To challenge the Church/believers to rise to our calling, to play our part in the liberation of both Israel (Romans 10–11) and of all creation from the bondage and corruption of sin (Rom. 8:11–28).

*“When we properly understand Romans, we see that far from being an easily-discarded afterthought or culturally-bound and theologically-arcane rabbit trail, Romans 9–11 is the pinnacle of Paul’s message, forming the necessary hinge between what Paul has written in Romans 1–8 to how Paul applies this message in Romans 12–15 ... Without Romans 9–11, Paul could not have written Romans 12–15.” J.D. Myers, *The Re-justification of God*, pp. 29–30*

“Before we can examine the text of Romans 9:10–24, we must understand three contextual keys to this section of Romans. We must understand what Paul means by the word “salvation” (deliverance from wrath), that election is to service, and that election can be both individual and corporate.” Ibid, p. 31

ROMANS 9—ISRAEL’S PAST: ELECTION AND PRIVILEGES LOST **THE CASE AGAINST CALVINISM**

Paul’s primary objective in Romans (especially Romans 9–11) is to vindicate the justice of God against charges of injustice to Israel, and to reveal His plan throughout history. For the idea of the “justification of God,” see Mat. 11:19; Luke 7:29, 35, and Rom. 3:24–26.

*“The primary thought of the apostle in these chapters is not individual salvation, but the philosophy of history ... Israel’s election had for its object the service of his fellow men. St. Paul is concerned not so much with individuals, as with nations and masses of people. He speaks of God’s choice of Israel, not to eternal life as such, but to privileges and duty ... God’s chosen men are His ‘choice’ men.” W.H. Griffith-Thomas, *Commentary on Romans*, pp. 115–116, 156–157*

See *God’s Strategy in Human History*, Forster, Marston

Principle

Every difficult question in Romans 9–11 has already been explained earlier in the book! The most basic principle of Bible study is that you never study a text out of context.

1. Rom. 9:1–3, and again in Rom. 10:1, is Paul’s great sorrow. If Augustine/Calvin are right, why would Paul, who calls both on Christ and the Spirit as witnesses, grieve for lost Israel when God, in His sovereignty, will choose not to save them?
 - a. Paul’s willingness to be lost for Israel’s sake reflects Moses in Exo. 32:32. In neither case was it possible, but still expressed.

- b. If Israel's salvation is not possible, what is basis for the grief? Even more, if God did not want Israel saved (Calvinism), why the grief?
2. In Rom. 9:4–5, why does Paul list the privileges of Israel's election? These privileges were designed to point the way to faith in Christ (see Rom. 2:28–29; 3:21–22, 29–30; 4:9–12). Note that there are five "elections" in Romans 1, stated or implied:
 - a. Of Jesus to be Savior, vv. 3–4 (see Isa. 42:1)
 - b. Paul, to be an apostle, v. 1
 - c. The nations, v. 5, to hear the Gospel
 - d. The saints in Rome, v. 6, as part of the Church
 - e. Israel, the original "elect" nation, v. 16 (also first privileged to hear the Gospel)

The word "chosen" implies "called unto service, blessed with privilege."

Israel's Privileges

1. "*Israelites*" is a designation "*according to the flesh*" (Rom. 9:3b). This distinction is crucial regarding the Messiah (Rom. 1:3; 2:28; 4:1; 9:5, 8), as it distinguishes His natural lineage from His supernatural origin.
2. In Rom. 9:6, Paul will rely on this previous distinction, "*They are not all Israel who are of Israel.*" That is, not all born physically into Israel attain to the spiritual heritage of faith.
3. All Israelites were of the "elect" people, possessed of eight privileges:
 - a. Adoption: "*Out of Egypt I called My Son,*" Hosea 11:1. The initial "call" was answered by the first Passover, the "blood of the lamb," Exo. 12:7.
 - b. The Shekinah Glory: Cf. Exo. 13:21; 14:19–20; 19:12–13, 18
 - c. The Covenants: Noah (Genesis 9), Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3), David, 2 Samuel 7)
 - d. The Law: Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5
 - e. The Service: Tabernacle/offerings/feasts, Exodus 25–26; Leviticus 23
 - f. The Promises: Messianic and Millennial, Gen. 22:17–18; 2 Sam. 7:12–13
 - g. The Fathers/Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Exo. 3:6
 - h. Christ (the Messiah): "*according to the flesh*" (cf. Rom. 1:3). "*who is over all, the eternally blessed God.*"

"This is one of the most distinct statements of our Lord's proper deity that is to be found in Scripture." John Brown, *Analytical Exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, p. 305

Crucial Points

1. Each of these privileges of their election pointed to and typified Jesus Christ in some way.
Note: *“The eternally blessed God”* (Rom. 9:5), is a clear statement of deity, which becomes crucial in Rom. 10:9.
2. Christ is the eighth—the number of new beginning. With Him, and through Him, the new covenant is inaugurated (Jer. 31:31–34; Mat. 26:28). With the rejection of their Messiah, Israel forfeits her privileges, and brings divine cursing on the nation (see Mat. 27:25).

Israel Forewarned of Continued Unbelief

- By Moses, Deuteronomy 27–28; 30:14–20 (“choose”—volition!)
- By the prophets—Paul’s point in Rom. 9:25–28; 10:16–21; 11:8
- By Jesus the Messiah—outer darkness, Mat. 8:5–13 (faith issue); parable of the vineyard, Mat. 21:33–45, *“The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.”*
- Of these warnings, Romans 9 is the outcome and explanation.

3. Rom. 9:6, Regeneration Essential

“They are not all Israel who are of Israel.” The Abrahamic Covenant was based on faith, Gen. 12:1–3; 15:6.

- a. What does “Israel” mean? Gen. 32:28 (Jacob/Israel), see Hosea 12:3–4, *“He wept, and sought favor from Him, he found Him in Bethel.”*
- b. In Rom. 2:28–29, Paul has already laid down that a true Jew must be born again by faith. This is reinforced with Abraham, Rom. 4:1–8.
- c. In Oba. 1:17, the possession of Israel’s promises is dependent upon trusting in the Messiah.

4. Rom. 9:6–13, Doctrine of Israel’s Election

In vv. 6–8, Paul confirms the necessity of personal faith to be a “child of God,” as he has already made clear in Rom. 2:28–29; 3:21–26; and 4:1–6.

However, when he gets to the point of election (vv. 9–13), the focus is the Messianic line. Inevitably, the lineage required the selection of some, and the exclusion of others. This was not so that those rejected could not enter eternal life, but rather so that by the coming of Messiah, life could be offered to all men (Rom. 1:5; 3:22).

- a. In Rom. 9:7, Abraham’s *“seed”* refers to Jesus Christ, Gal. 3:16, and to all who believe in Him, and only to them (Rom. 4:1–3, 11–16; Gal. 3:6–8, 26–29).

- b. In Rom. 9:8–9, “*children of the promise ... word of promise,*” has Paul not already laid down that this is based on faith? See Rom. 4:13–16. See also Gal. 3:6–7, 26–29.

Note: The idea that this election of Isaac was to salvation is proven false when we consider that Ishmael, by all biblical indications, was a believer:

- 1) Hagar knew the Lord, Gen. 16:13–14.
- 2) Ishmael was included in the Abrahamic Covenant, Gen. 17:10–14.
- 3) God established an “*everlasting covenant*” with Ishmael, and promised to bless him, Gen. 17:18–20.
- 4) God heard Ishmael’s prayers, Gen. 21:16–17.
- 5) God was with Ishmael as he grew, Gen. 21:20.
- 6) When Ishmael died, he—like Abraham—“*was gathered to his people,*” a phrase not used of unbelievers, Gen. 25:8, 17.

- c. In Rom. 9:10–11, the point is “*not of works,*” which indicates both God’s Sovereign and wise choice, as well as His gracious purpose, Rom. 11:5–6. The “*purpose of God according to election,*” here, is to bring the Messiah into the world (Rom. 9:4–5), for the salvation of all mankind!

“... *according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.*” Eph. 1:9b–10

- 1) When used in relation to men, God’s “*purpose ... according to election*” (Rom. 9:11) is to bring Christ into the world, that men might be restored to a right standing with Himself through faith, Rom. 1:5, 16–17; 2:28–29; 4:1–3, 11–17.
- 2) Remember Rom. 8:28–29? Those who are “*called according to His purpose*”? Eph. 1:3–14 explains His purpose, which is faith in Jesus Christ.

“*Paul goes out of his way to point out that God’s purpose in election is not limited only to ‘His people’ or to people who are justified by faith. He mentions how God chose the older son to serve the younger son (Rom. 9:12), God chose Pharaoh to serve His purpose (Rom. 9:17), and in alluding to Jeremiah’s illustration of the potter and the clay reminds the people that God raised up King Cyrus to accomplish His will (Rom. 9:21).*” J.D. Myers, *The Re-justification of God*, p. 49

5. In Rom. 9:6–13, Abraham was called by grace, Isaac was born by promise (through faith, see 4:17–22), and Jacob was called apart from works (9:11). Sound familiar? (Eph. 2:8–9).

“*These chapters ... have been most misunderstood and misapplied. Their most dangerous perversion is that which draws from them the doctrine of God’s arbitrary predestination of individuals to eternal life or eternal perdition. It can be shown that such is not the intent of these chapters. They do not discuss the doctrine of individual election and reprobation with reference to eternal destiny.*” M.R. Vincent, Greek Scholar, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. III, pp. 133–135

Some Critical Considerations Regarding Election

- The fact that Jesus Christ is the “*Elect One*” (Isa. 42:1) makes it clear that election is not to salvation. Rom. 9:2–4 show that His election is to service.
 - All who are “elect” (another term is “anointed”), whether they are believers or unbelievers, serve some purpose in relation to Jesus Christ.
 - Isaac was the “elect,” to bring Christ into the world, but all indications are that Ishmael was also a believer.
 - In the Old Testament, King Saul was God’s “elect” and “anointed,” but by his unfaithfulness, he lost his privileges and opportunities (1 Sam. 13:13–14). This passage—one of many—destroys the Augustinian/Calvinist concept of sovereignty as determinism.
 - Cyrus was also “called” and “*anointed*” for God’s purpose, though he was a pagan king (Isa. 45:1–5).
 - Jesus “called” twelve disciples, named them “apostles,” gave them supernatural power—yet one was Judas. Judas chose not to believe, and thus served God’s purpose, betraying Christ to crucifixion (John 6:69–71; Mat. 10:1; 26:23–24).
 - Unsaved Israel is still referred to by Paul as “elect,” even though they still need to be saved (Rom. 10:1; 11:28).
 - It is a fallacy to say that “election” is to salvation! Esau was “chosen” by God to “*serve the younger*” (Gen. 25:23), which he never did, and thus was “*hated*” by God (Rom. 9:12–13).
6. In Rom. 9:14–18, Moses and Pharaoh illustrate God’s mercy and wrath (see Rom. 11:22). Is there unrighteousness with God? This is the question of the Jew who believes that the blessings of Messiah’s coming should automatically be conferred on all Israel. Paul’s goal is the vindication of the justice of God (Rom. 1:16; 3:22–26).
- a. In Rom. 9:14–16, Paul refutes the idea that either human desire or effort can merit God’s grace. That God shows mercy on whom He will does not imply arbitrary action on God’s part, when all the rest of Scripture makes it clear that God bestows mercy freely on all who believe.
 - b. Just as God’s response to Moses illustrates the failure of the Jewish expectation for national, blanket, justification, even so Pharaoh illustrates the fate of those, even Jews, who harden themselves in the face of revealed truth.
 - c. Paul has already shown how hardening takes place (Rom. 1:18–32; see also Eph. 4:17–19), and has shown that continued hardening in the face of offered mercy (Rom. 2:4–6) results in greater wrath.
- Note:** In the story of Pharaoh, there are twenty references to hardening; exactly ten to Pharaoh and ten to God. However, just as Paul teaches in Rom. 1:18–32, Pharaoh hardens his heart first, then God hardens Pharaoh’s heart.

- d. God's purpose in longsuffering is to bring each of us to repentance and faith (Rom. 2:4–6; Acts 17:26–30—for “*all men*”). First Peter 5:5b and Prov. 3:34 tell us that God gives grace to the humble, but resists the proud.
- e. The reference to Moses is from Exo. 32:32–33; 33:19 in response to Moses' prayer for a “blanket forgiveness” for Israel. When God said, “*I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion,*” this is consistent with His later statement (Exo. 34:6–7) that He gives mercy or judgment based on men's faith/obedience vs. unbelief/disobedience.

“Paul is not discussing the predestination of individuals to salvation or condemnation, but is asserting God's absolute sovereignty in the choice and management of nations for world functions.” Henry Halley, Halley's Bible Handbook, p. 527

- 7. Rom. 9:17 tells us that God raised up Pharaoh, a hardened unbeliever to use His unbelief to demonstrate God's power, so that the whole world would hear of His greatness and believe, as did Rahab (Joshua 2 and 6). Pharaoh was not excluded from this.
 - a. Pharaoh's hardening did not begin when Moses showed up. He had already rejected the message of creation (Rom. 1:18–21), as well the light of conscience (Rom. 2:14–16).
 - b. Just as God used Pharaoh, so He would later use Israel (Rom. 2:17–24; 3:5–20). By Israel's volitional hardness (Mat. 27:25), Christ was crucified and the Gospel was turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 14:27; 18:6; 22:21). Remember that, in all fairness, God sent the Gospel first to the Jews (Mat. 10:5–6; Rom. 1:16).
 - c. Paul will later argue that Israel is “*without excuse*” (Rom. 1:20; 2:1) because, though they heard, they did not believe (Rom. 10:18, see also Heb. 4:2). You simply cannot have both “unconditional election” (determinism/Calvinism) and volitional accountability.

“As to the scope of the passage, it will become obvious that it is all about God's dealings with men and nations historically and dispensationally, and is not about individual salvation and destiny beyond the grave ... John Calvin is wrong when he reads into these verses election either to salvation or to damnation in the eternal sense. That is not their scope.” J. Sidlow Baxter, Explore the Book, VI, pp. 88–89

Regarding Rom. 9:19

“... Paul's use of epistolary diatribe argumentation (see Rom. 3:1–8) ... the question in Romans 9:19, “Who can resist God's will?” does not come from Paul, but from someone who disagrees with Paul. As such, I find it interesting when Calvinists quote Romans 9:19 to defend their position, for in so doing,

they are actually quoting a person who objects to what Paul teaches.” Forster and Marston, God’s Strategy in Human History, p. 71

8. Rom. 9:20–24, the potter analogy, cannot mean anything contrary to the Scripture Paul refers to in Jer. 18:1–11. If you simply read the text, you cannot come away with any idea of cold determinism.
 - a. When Paul speaks of “*vessels of wrath prepared for destruction*,” the word “*prepared*” is *katartizo*, in the middle voice. They prepared themselves, by the hardening process of willful unbelief, just as Paul has already explained in Rom. 1:18–32 and Eph. 4:17–19.
 - b. In Rom. 9:22–23, Paul links the sovereignty of God more to love and mercy, than to power and control (see also Rom. 2:4–5). It is a distortion to press God’s sovereignty to extremes at the expense of His other attributes. All areas of divine essence work in harmony.
Note: Any system of theology that portrays God contrary to His revelation of Himself through Jesus Christ is demonstrably false. See Heb. 1:1–3 and Phil. 2:5–9.
 - c. For “*vessels of honor ... no honor*,” see 2 Tim. 2:20–21. As the potter analogy in Jer. 18:1–11 shows, whether we are vessels of honor or dishonor is based on the choice we make!
9. In Rom. 9:25–29, Paul quotes Hosea 2:23; 1:10; Isa. 10:22–23; and 1:9 to show that God is being consistent with His previous warnings to Israel, both in judging them, and in including Gentiles in the Royal Family. Note that the “*remnant*” are those saved “by grace through faith,” compare Rom. 10:4–15; 11:5–6.

“There is no question here of predestination to heaven or reprobation to hell; in fact, eternal issues do not really come in throughout this chapter ... We are not told here, nor anywhere else, that before children are born it is God’s purpose to send one to heaven and another to hell ... the passage has to do entirely with privilege here on earth.” Harry Ironside, Lectures on Romans, pp. 109–110, 116

“When the elect nation stumbles and falls, God puts aside the elect nation and then does the unthinkable, He elects the non-elect, that is, the Gentiles.” Robert D. Brinsmead, Election in the Light of the Old Testament Background, p. 12

10. In Rom. 9:30–33, Paul quotes Isa. 8:14; 28:16 to show that Christ is either a stumbling-stone or a cornerstone, depending on our response to the Gospel. The biblical idea of “repentance” is primarily of a change of attitude from arrogant self-sufficiency to humble dependence (again, Jacob with the Angel, Gen. 32:26–27; Hosea 12:2–6).

- a. When Paul says “because they did not seek it by faith,” the clear implication is that they could have, but refused.
- b. Here, he lays full responsibility for their unbelief on them. He will go on in Romans 10 to show them that the remedy is to believe the Gospel!

“The Jews actually did expect that the benefits arising from the coming of the Messiah would be conferred on all Israelites, and, if not their exclusive possession, would be participated in by Gentiles only on their renouncing Gentilism and merging themselves in the Holy Nation ... Justification [was] presented as a free gift equally to Jew and Gentiles, to be received by them in the belief of the Gospel. The Jews, with comparatively few exceptions, refused, on these terms ... and were, in consequence, not only excluded from their enjoyment, but severely punished for this last and greatest of their sins, their rejection of Messiah and His salvation.” John Brown, Analytical Exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, pp. 283–284

Summary of Romans 9

1. Israel as a nation was chosen (“*elect*”) to give the world the Word of God, and as a lineage for Christ/Messiah to come into the world.
2. This “*election*” did not guarantee individual salvation for Jews, nor did it preclude anyone else from believing.
3. The issues of election, hardening, and salvation by faith have already been laid out earlier in Romans.
4. Romans 9–11 is Paul’s extended answer to the questions posed earlier in Rom. 3:1–8.
5. Determinism was never taught in the early Church by anyone until Augustine in the 5th century. All the apostolic fathers, who learned directly from the original apostles or their students, taught that all men have free will, and that faith is a volitional choice.
6. Careful *exegesis* and contextual consistency leaves absolutely no basis for an Augustinian/Calvinistic interpretation of Romans 9.

ROMANS 10—ISRAEL’S PRESENT: INDIVIDUAL OPPORTUNITY **THE CASE AGAINST LORDSHIP SALVATION**

There are not nearly so many questions in regard to this chapter as in chapter 9. However, many fail to see that Romans 10 answers most of the questions in chapter 9!

1. Rom. 10:1 tells us again about Paul’s grief. If Paul, under the filling and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, desires Israel’s salvation, is it not because that salvation is possible? Paul says “Yes!”
2. In Rom. 10:2–3, Israel’s failure to “*possess their possessions*” (Obad. 1:17) is traced to three vital factors:

- a. Their “zeal” lacked illuminated knowledge (*epignosis*). Go back to Rom. 1:21 to find the cause.
- b. Their zeal was not for the truth of “God’s righteousness,” but rather “to establish their own righteousness.” The word “establish” pictures raising up a monument to their own pride (again, 1 Pet. 5:5).
- c. This misguided zeal and selfish pride could not “submit to the righteousness of God,” through faith in the Messiah. The word “submit” is a military term (*hupotasso*), which means “to take your rightful place under authority.”

Note: In v. 16, Paul makes it clear that it is not that they did not hear the truth, but that they heard and rejected it!

3. Rom. 10:4 tells us that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment (Mat. 5:17) and termination of the Law for everyone who believes. Paul’s point is that they would not believe (see Luke 7:29–30). By His death, Christ “abolished” the curse of the law (see Gal. 3:16; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14).
4. The Rom. 10:5–8 passage is great! Here, the apostle contrasts self-righteousness as “hard believe-ism,” and biblical faith as “easy believe-ism”. The quote here is from Deu. 30:12–14.
 - a. Hard believe-ism. You must keep the whole law to be righteous. See Gal. 3:10: fail in one point you are cursed. If you could ascend into Heaven and bring Christ down, or descend into the abyss and bring Him up in resurrection, then you could affect your own salvation! Today, in Calvinism or Lordship salvation, it is to persevere to the end, and/or make Jesus “Lord of all.”
 - b. Easy believe-ism. “The word of faith” is the message of faith in Jesus Christ. Go back to Rom. 1:5—the “obedience to the faith.” Since the Gospel calls on us to believe, to obey is to respond in faith. John MacArthur has a book out called *Hard to Believe*, in which he actually promotes “hard believe-ism”!
5. In Rom. 10:9–13, faith is the solution to Israel’s dilemma.
 - a. “Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus”: The key here is “Lord,” which goes back to His deity (Rom. 9:5). This becomes even more clear when we get to the quote in v. 13, from Joel 2:32, where “LORD” means Jehovah.
 - b. Believe—what? “God has raised Him from the dead.” He is a risen Savior. This, of course, includes believing in the crucifixion and burial prior to resurrection. True faith cannot long remain a secret!
 - c. “You will be saved”—which is precisely Paul’s prayer for his kinsmen (Rom. 10:1). Israel is not doomed due to some “unconditional election,” but rather by their unbelief.

- d. The proper sequence is contained in vv. 10–13: First comes faith, then comes confession. Verses 11–13 make it clear that it is “believing,” not confessing, that brings salvation.

Note: Rom. 10:12 is critical. “*There is no distinction*” goes back to Rom. 2:11, “*For there is no partiality with God.*” Christ is Lord over “*all*” (creation/nations) and “*is rich to all who call on Him.*” This also goes back to 3:22–23, the offer of eternal life is “*to all* [unlimited offer] *and on all who believe.*” The same “*all*” who have sinned are the “*to all*” to whom the offer of righteousness is made.

The “all”s of Romans

- **All** nations are included in the invitation of the Gospel message, Rom. 1:5.
 - **All** men are sinners in need of salvation, Rom. 3:12, 19, 23.
 - “*The righteousness of God through faith*” is offered to **all** (universal offer), and is bestowed upon **all** who believe, Rom. 3:22.
 - Abraham is the spiritual “*father of all ... who believe,*” Rom. 4:11, 16.
 - Because of the sin of Adam, death passed unto **all** men, Rom. 5:12.
 - God works (*energeo*—energizes) through **all** things for the good of those who love Him, Rom. 8:28.
 - Jesus Christ was delivered up for **all** men, Rom. 8:32.
 - Jesus Christ is Lord over **all** (mankind), and is rich unto **all** who call upon Him, Rom. 10:12.
 - “*... God has committed ... all [men] to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all,*” Rom. 11:32.
 - “*For we [believers] shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ,*” Rom. 14:10. Emphasis is added.
6. Rom. 10:14–15 tells us the reason for the confessional aspect of vv. 9–10. Preaching provides hearing, and hearing leads to believing, and believing results in calling on Him. The power is not in the preacher, but in God’s Word (v. 17).

Note: The confessional aspect of our faith is because we have been “called/elected” for a purpose—to proclaim Christ to the whole world (Mat. 28:18–20; Acts 1:8).
 7. Rom. 10:16–21 accounts Israel’s willful disobedience. The phrase “*not obeyed the gospel*” goes with Rom. 1:5 and 16:26. Since the Gospel message is “*the word* [message] *of faith*” (Rom. 10:8), obedience means to believe it. However, don’t forget that in the broadest sense, all doctrine is “*gospel,*” therefore to believe and obey it is to apply it to life. See Rom. 15:18—“obedience.”
 - a. In Rom. 10:16, Isaiah anticipated Israel’s unbelief (Isa. 53:1). Note that this is the first verse of the most vivid Old Testament prophecy of the cross.
 - b. Paul’s conclusion in v. 17 is that faith is the response to hearing the “good news,” as also Acts 15:7–8 and Eph. 1:13–14 show. God’s Word is “the breath of life,” spiritually.

- c. Note from Rom. 10:18 that some might argue that Israel never heard, but Paul goes back to the witness of creation (see Rom. 1:18–21; Psalm 19:1–4). Remember, this same argument applies to Pharaoh (Rom. 9:17–18).
- d. Rom. 10:19 tells us that Israel not only had creation as evidence, but Moses warned them of their future rejection (Deu. 32:21). So important is this warning that Paul refers to it in Rom. 10:19; 11:11, 14. The word “*provoke*” is *parazelloo*, and means “to emulate alongside of another.” Israel will emulate the Church, in fact surpass the Church, in world-wide missionary zeal.
- e. In Rom. 10:20–21, the prophet Isaiah anticipated both the Gentile response, and the Jewish rejection (Isa. 65:1–2). Verse 21 goes together with Rom. 9:22 about God being longsuffering with “*vessels of wrath*,” which then goes back to Rom. 2:4–5, showing that God’s longsuffering is designed to “*lead you to repentance*.” If Calvinism is right, there is no chance for repentance except for those specially chosen by God. This is another nail in the coffin of a false teaching!

Point: Paul’s point in Rom. 10:14–21 is to show that Israel is fully accountable for their rejection. They were given first priority in hearing the message, especially in light of their greater spiritual privileges (9:1–5). The principle of greater accountability, therefore, applies (Luke 12:48). They are guilty of willing, obstinate unbelief, just as those in Luke 7:30! The “elect nation” became “non-elect” by their stubborn unbelief.

Let me quote at length from *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, by Sanday and Headlam, p. 293:

“This section [Rom. 10:14–21] seems to be arranged on the plan of suggesting a series of difficulties, and giving short decisive answers to each: (1) ‘But how can men believe the Gospel unless it has been preached?’ Answer. ‘It has been preached as Isaiah foretold’ (v. 15). (2) ‘Yet, all have not accepted it’ (v. 16). Answer. ‘That does not prove it was not preached. Isaiah foretold also this neglect of the message’ (vv. 16–17). (3) ‘But perhaps the Jews did not hear’ (v. 18). Answer. ‘Impossible. The Gospel has been preached everywhere.’ (4) ‘But perhaps they did not understand’ (v. 19). Answer. ‘That again is impossible. The Gentiles, a people without any real knowledge, have understood. The real fact is they were a disobedient, self-willed people.’ The object is to fix the guilt of the Jews by removing every defense which might be made on the ground of want of opportunities.”

Point: All of Paul’s arguments would be false if the Calvinist interpretation of Romans 9 was true. A God of justice does not condemn men to eternal judgment without sufficient opportunity to believe, contrary to what confused Calvinism says.

ROMANS 11—ISRAEL’S FUTURE: RESTORATION AND DESTINY
THE CASE AGAINST REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

Paul’s point in concluding chapter 9 is that Israel’s rejection is solely due to their own unbelief. In chapter 10, he declares that salvation is freely offered to individual Jews; and now, in chapter 11, that God will yet future fulfill all His promises, when Israel turns to Him in faith.

As Calvinism is a distorted view of Romans 9, so Replacement Theology (the claim that the Church replaces Israel) is a contradiction of Romans 11.

1. Rom. 11:1–6 talks about the election according to grace.
 - a. Twice (vv. 1–2), Paul refutes the idea that God has “*cast away*” His people. The verb *apotheto* means “to repulse, reject, repudiate.”
 - b. Paul himself, “*an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin,*” is living proof of this. His point is that the door of salvation is still open to individual Jews.
 - c. Remember that Israel’s corporate election was to bring the Messiah, not to eternal salvation, *per se*. All Israel, as a nation, were and remain “elect” for service (see 11:28–29), but individual justification has always been on the basis of faith (Rom. 4:1–6).
 - d. Take note that God “*foreknew*” Israel, as a corporate “elect body,” but this was not determinative of their salvation. This is critical in light of Rom. 8:29, “*whom He foreknew ...*” the Church, as a corporate body or entity.
 - e. The case of Elijah’s complaint (1 Kings 19:9–14) is just the opposite of Moses’ prayer (Rom. 9:15). Moses pleaded for Israel, Elijah complained against Israel. In both cases, God reserves the right to act according to His infinite wisdom, for He alone knows the hearts of men (1 Sam. 16:7; John 7:24).
 - f. Paul declares that “*at this present time,*” just as in Old Testament times, a remnant of Israel exists “*according to the election of grace.*” This is personal and individual, and is based, not on physical generation—as is Israel’s election—but rather on regeneration by faith.
 - g. The point of Rom. 11:6 is a corollary to Rom. 4:16. Grace and works are contrary to one another (Rom. 4:1–5), but grace and faith demand each other. Grace and works are mutually exclusive, but grace and faith are mutually attractive. Grace is God’s undeserved initiation on the basis of the work of Christ. Faith is man’s non-meritorious response to that grace. Every individual must choose to respond, whether in faith or in unbelief (Joshua 24:15). Grace is offered freely to all (Rom. 10:13), but is received only by those who believe. Grace is **available** to all men, and faith is **possible** for all men (Rom. 1:20; 2:1). Thus, the justice of God is vindicated.

- h. Grace always implies faith. Grace invites, faith responds. “*Obedience to the faith*,” Rom. 1:5, is the phrase *eis hupakoen pisteos*, which means “the obedience which consists of faith.” See Acts 6:7; Rom. 10:18; 2 Thess.1:8. The verb *hupakouo* simply means “to hear and obey.”

Since the call of the Gospel is to believe in Jesus as the Savior, obedience is by the response of faith. As used in the LXX (Septuagint), which uses *hupakouo* to translate the Hebrew *shama*, the implication is to “give ear, answer, heed.” This is what Paul calls, in Gal. 3:2, 5, “*the hearing of faith*” (*Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 38a, p. 17). Paul speaks of faith or believing 61 times in Romans. “*The genitive construction is probably to be taken as embracing both the sense [of] ‘response which is faith’ and ‘obedience which stems from faith’*” (*Ibid*).

In Paul’s phrase, “*obedience to the faith among all nations or His name*” [Rom. 1:5], we have our attitude: “*obedience to the faith*,” our assignment: “*all nations*” [Rom. 16:26], and our authority: “*His name*.” (John Phillips, *Exploring Romans*, p. 16).

2. Rom. 11:7–15 explains the divine interplay of Israel and the Gentiles. Paul intends to show that Israel’s rejection is, (a) partial, (b) temporary, and (c) purposeful.
 - a. In v. 7a, why did “Israel not obtain”? Paul has already answered this (10:1–4): they refused to believe in Christ as the Messiah. They refused to see it by faith (9:31–32).
 - b. In Rom. 11:7b, who are the “*elect [who] have obtained it [righteousness]*”? They are believing Gentiles and Jews (10:9–13), now “Church”—not “Israel.”
 - c. In Rom. 11:7c–10, the rest (unbelieving Israel) have been “*blinded*.” In Rom. 9:18, he speaks of “hardening” (*skleruno*—“obstinate”), here the word is “*poroo*—“calloused”). Both Rom. 1:18–32 and Eph. 4:17–19 show how this process occurs, as the result of willful unbelief.
 - d. In Rom. 11:8–9, the “*spirit of stupor*” is well illustrated by Stephen’s rebuke in Acts 7:51, “*You do always resist the Holy Spirit*.” Their “*table*” refers to their sacrificial feasts, which became more important to them than what they pointed toward—the Messiah Himself. See also Luk.7:30.
 - e. It was this very deplorable end that **Jesus Himself warned of** in Mat. 8:10–13; 13:11–15; and 21:33–45. From the time of Moses, through all the prophets, and by the Lord Jesus Himself, Israel was warned of the outcome of their hardness and unbelief. No nation ever had greater light or opportunity. No nation ever responded with greater willing blindness and unbelief!
 - f. In Rom. 11:11–15, the role of the Gentiles, during this period (Church Age), is to fulfill the prophecy of Moses (Deu. 32:21; Rom. 10:19). That is to “*provoke*” Israel to emulation of missionary zeal. Note that Paul pursues this course, “*If by any means*

I may ... save some of them” (Rom. 11:14). Note that, in the wisdom of God, Israel’s blindness will work toward:

- 1) “*riches for the world,*” v. 12a
 - 2) “*their [ultimate] fullness,*” v. 12
 - 3) “*the reconciling of the world,*” v. 15
 - 4) “[their final] *life from the dead [resurrection],*” v. 15
3. Rom. 11:16–24 tells the “olive tree analogy.” Paul is now speaking to the Gentiles, (see v. 13), not the Church, *per se*. Take note that the “*natural branches*” (elect Israel) are broken off due to unbelief, so that the wild branches (non-elect Gentiles) can be grafted in, through faith!
- a. As Paul admits, this figure is “*contrary to nature*” (v. 24). This means that it is not natural, but supernatural from God.
 - b. The “*firstfruit*” and the “*lump*” Paul declares to be “*holy,*” that is, set apart to God. This is the whole nation.
 - c. In v. 17, we, the Gentiles, have been grafted into the tree by faith, and we partake of the “*root*” (Jesus Christ—Isa. 11:10; 53:10) and the “*fatness*” (spiritual blessing). However, we do not become Israelites, but remain the “Church—in Christ.”
 - d. The branches “*broken off*” is due to “unbelief” (v. 20). There is no way that they could believe, according to Augustine/Calvin. In this view, they are held accountable for something they could not do but, somehow, this is just! While Israel as a nation is “*broken off,*” individual Jews are still free to believe in Christ.
Note: 25 times in the Old Testament, the phrase “cut off from his people” is used of loss of national privilege (Phillips, *Exploring Romans*, p. 173).
 - e. Gentile believers, rather than boasting in their blessing, should take warning (vv. 21–22). Note here “*goodness ... severity,*” parallel “*mercy ... harden[ing]*” (Rom. 9:18). God shows “goodness ... mercy” to those who believe, and “hardening ... severity” to those who refuse to believe.
 - f. In Rom. 11:23, there is a bombshell! Paul makes it clear that unbelieving Jews still have the opportunity to believe. In fact, that is his prayer (Rom. 10:1). If the issue of election earlier (Rom. 9:6–13) was salvation, then being the “elect,” they would all be saved. This, in fact, is the very idea Israel held, which Paul refutes at every turn.
4. In Rom. 11:25–32, the “*mystery*” is explained.
- a. The doctrine of the “*mystery*” is dealt with in many places (1 Cor. 2:7; 15:51; Eph. 1:9; 3:3–9; 5:32; Col. 1:26–29, to name just a few references).

- b. In Rom. 11:25, we have one of the most succinct statements of the doctrine. It is the divine plan, known before the world began, that Israel would reject her Messiah, the nation in judgment would be set aside (70 A.D.), and the Church would serve to reach the world with the truth of God’s Word—until the time of Israel’s restoration. The Church Age would culminate with the Rapture of the Church (1 Cor. 15:50–57; 1 Thess. 4:13–18); then the revival of Israel will begin with 144,000 Jewish evangelists (Rev. 7:4–8).
- c. As well, in Rom. 11:25, the “*until*” is a time-limitation word. The clock of Israel begins with the incoming of the “*fullness of the Gentiles*” (the Rapture). This is not the same as “*the times of the Gentiles*” (Luke 21:24), which refer to Gentile political domination of Jerusalem, lasting up to the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation.
- d. Rom. 11:26–27 tells us that, ultimately, “*all Israel will be saved*,” that is, all true Israel—those who trust in the Messiah. The “*covenant*” referred to is the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31–34; Eze. 36:22–38).
- e. In Rom. 11:28–32, note that, even in unbelief, Israel as a nation is still “*elect*,” that is, “*called for a purpose*,” though not saved. I have labored to make it clear that “*election*” does not refer to salvation, but to position and service. God does not change His mind about His eternal purpose (v. 29).

The genius of the divine plan is that Israel gives birth to the Church, so that the Church can then restore Israel (vv. 30–31). Once again, note the “*all*” used twice in v. 32. Paul began this usage in Rom. 3:22–23. It is consistently used for the universal offer of righteousness through faith to “*all*,” then of the assurance and security of those “*all*” who believe in Jesus Christ.

Note: In the infinite wisdom of God, as Israel was the means of reaching the Gentiles, even so, the Gentiles will play a role in winning Israel back to God, vv. 11–32. Consider the Book of Ruth:

- 1) Elimelech, by disobedience, loses his and his sons’ inheritance.
 - 2) Ruth, by faith, enters into the blessings of Israel.
 - 3) Boaz, Elimelech’s brother, redeems the lost inheritance, and takes Ruth, the Gentile, as his bride.
 - 4) By Ruth’s faithfulness, embittered Naomi is restored to fellowship and joy.
 - 5) In bearing Obed, Ruth assures Israel of her future King, and enters into the Messianic lineage (Ruth 4:18–22; Mat. 1:5).
 - 6) Ruth illustrates the role the Church will play in restoring Israel to her lost privileges and possessions.
- f. By the way, have you noticed how many times the word “*mercy*” has been used in Romans? Not until Rom. 9:15–23 is it found, then five times. Again, not until 11:30–32, then four times. This sets the spiritual parameters for Rom. 12:1–2, and the

remainder of the book! Christians should live with Israel in mind, warned by her judgment and laboring for her salvation, as we are to provoke her to emulation.

6. Rom. 11:33–36 is a “Hymn of Praise” for the wisdom of God.
 - a. Verses 33–34 tell us that God’s ways are beyond human comprehension. Who but God could take Israel’s rebellion and turn it into blessing for the entire Gentile world? (Isa. 55:8–9)!
 - b. In Rom. 11:35–36, God’s ways are without human contribution. God requires neither counsel nor assistance from the human race to accomplish His great objectives. He alone is the Source, the Agency, and the glorious end!

ROMANS 12–16—LIVING IN GRATITUDE FOR GOD’S MERCIES

Paul’s opening exhortation (12:1–2) is that, having been shown such mercy, we ought to offer our lives as “*living sacrifice[s]*” to the honor and praise of God.

I plan to do an overview of this section of Romans in the future.



Some Supplementary Notes

I. The Election of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

In each of these individuals, crucial elements of election stand out.

- A. Note three critical things in the Abrahamic Covenant:
 1. Election is a call to separation.
 2. Election involves privilege and heritage (inheritance).
 3. Election is for a purpose, or destiny, related to the Promised Seed, the “*Elect One*” (Isa. 42:1), the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. The central focus is the “*Seed*,” going back to Gen. 3:15, in whom all families of Earth shall “bless themselves” (Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; Gal. 3:16).
- C. Each of these three individual “elections” makes a point:
 1. With Abraham, it is the “*obedience [of] faith*” (cf. Gen. 15:6; Rom. 1:5).
 2. With Isaac, it is supernatural birth (by grace) Gen. 18:9–14; Gal. 4:22–31; Rom. 9:8.
 3. With Jacob, it is “*apart from works*” (Rom. 4:6), and involves the covenant name, given in response to his faith and submission to God, Gen. 32:24–30.
- D. It should be pointed out that election is to service, and that service is designed to honor the “*Seed*,” Jesus Christ, who is above all—God’s “*Elect One*” (Isa. 42:1).

- E. Some are “called” in the Old Testament who were unbelievers, such as Cyrus (Isa. 44:28; 45:1), yet they served God’s over-arching plan to somehow effect the coming of the Savior into the world.
- F. It is clear, from both Gen. 3:15 and 12:3 that the plan of God was for the blessing of the whole world, but would be based on faith.

II. The Election of Israel as a Nation (Exodus)

The lessons above are all reviewed and enforced in the Exodus story.

- A. Moses is uniquely prepared to be the human instrument of Israel’s deliverance, Exodus 2; Acts 7:20–30.
- B. At the burning bush (Exo. 3:1–4:17), Moses was called into God’s service. Note that, at the Inn, he almost lost this privilege, due to his unwillingness to obey the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:9–14). So, we see that election requires covenant. Rejection of the covenant forfeits the privileges of the election (Rom. 9:1–5).
- C. At the same time, Pharaoh is also “called” by God, to play an adversarial role. He is chosen, as all instruments are, because he is suited, by his own will and character, for the purpose which God intends.
- D. Both the call of Pharaoh, and the mighty signs his opposition help to bring, has a universal purpose, in keeping with the Abrahamic Covenant: “*That My name may be declared in all the earth,*” Exo. 9:16; Rom. 9:17.
- E. Although Israel was already the “called/elect” nation, they had to make that call personal, by responding to the offer of deliverance, and applying the blood of the lamb, at the Passover (Exodus 12). This was a volitional/faith decision on the individual’s part. Thus, the general election/calling must be confirmed personally by the “[election/calling] *according to grace,*” which requires an individual, free-will response of faith (compare Rom. 4:16 with Rom. 11:5–6). “*Election [according] to grace*” implies “election according to faith.”
- F. Note that Moses made it very clear that the basis of Israel’s election was the love of God (Deu. 7:6–9).
- G. Both the Egyptians who joined the Exodus (Exo. 12:38) and the story of Rahab (Joshua 2, 6) give us a post-script showing that God’s purpose to bring saving faith to Gentiles was fulfilled.

III. The Election of Grace

- A. By comparing Rom. 11:5–6 with 11:28, it is evident that Israel’s call as a nation is distinct from the personal “*election [according] to grace.*”

- B. Paul parallels this idea earlier in Romans (4:16) when he says, “*Therefore it [i.e., promise/inheritance, vv. 13–15] is of faith, that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed ...*” It is clear that “*according to grace*” means “by faith,” which is a personal response to the offer of grace. “*To all the seed*” means to all who believe—not just to Jews.
- C. Note that in the confirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15:1–21), God alone passes through the cut offerings; thus, He alone is held accountable to fulfill it. His part is unconditional (Gen. 12:1–3, “*I will*”). But it must be personally received by faith (v. 6).

In the law we see all the elements of a conditional covenant—the promises of which are dependent upon both parties’ volitional agreement and commitment. “If you ... then I will ...” (cf. Exo. 19:3–6; Deu. 4:1–31; 11:26–28; 27:11–28:68).

In the Old Testament, there are both unconditional and conditional covenants. The unconditional (like the Abrahamic, Gen. 12:1–3) are stated in the language of absolute sovereignty, “*I will.*” They are corporate, and an expression of God’s unconditional purpose, which He alone can and will fulfill. The conditional are personal, having the language “*If you ... then I ...*” and demand personal faith to be fulfilled.

- D. Salvation is an unconditional covenant in so far as its general (corporate) provision (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14, Psalm 2:7, 12; 110:1–4, etc.) However, it is conditional in its personal application (Psalm 2:12; Isa. 26:3; 28:16).

Note: God first chose Israel by choosing her head—Abraham. Then later, He chose the Jews according to their volitional response to applying the blood of the lamb at the Passover. God first chose the Church by choosing her Head—Jesus Christ (Isa. 42:1). Then later, He chose the Church by our volitional response to the Gospel, by which His blood was applied to us.

IV. The Eternal Purpose of God

Here are three different ways of looking at Rom. 8:28:

“And we know that He [God] is energizing [Pres. Act. Ind.] together with those who love God [Pres. Act. Ptc.] (believers) all things for good, to those (as yet unbelievers) who are being called [Pres. Act. Ptc. *Dat.*] according to His purpose.

or

And we know that He [in context: God or the Spirit] is working together for [unto the goal of] the good with those who love Him, with those who are being called according to His purpose.

or

And we know that He is working all things together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (as revealed in Rom. 8:11–27).

Note: The purpose of God has been declared in Rom. 8:11–27: to be led by the Spirit as adult sons in sharing in both the sufferings and purpose of Christ, in order to bring liberation to all creation. How this works out in history is shown in Romans 9–11, and is the basis of the appeal of Rom. 12:1–2!

1. In context, Paul is arguing for God’s eternal purpose that believers are to work together with Him for the deliverance and liberation of all creation (Rom. 8:11–17).
2. He portrays all of creation as groaning in bondage to corruption, longing to share in the “*glorious liberty of the children of God*” (vv. 18–22).
3. To accomplish this deliverance, God has given us the spirit of adoption, to call upon the Father, in the enabling power of the Spirit, to achieve His intended ends in history (vv. 23–27).
4. In the sphere of energized prayer (*cf.* James 5:16b), we are to “*work together for good ... to those who are being called*” (v. 28), even as we pray.
5. This “*good*” is predetermined by God for all who believe (vv. 29–30). The plan of God for the saved (elect—“*according to ... grace,*” Rom. 11:5–6; 4:16) is that we join Him in the work that He is accomplishing.
6. This same point is made in Eph. 1:1–14 and Col. 1:19–29 and 2 Tim. 2:8–13. God’s “*purpose*” is the liberation of all creation through Christ, and to include us in this work (Mark 16:20; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1; Rom. 8:28).
7. This over-arching purpose is found throughout the Old Testament in all the “promised seed” promises (Gen. 3:15; 12:3; 21:12; 22:17–18; 49:10; Psalm 2:7–12; Prov. 30:1–4; 2 Sam. 7:12–16, etc.)

Note: In Gen. 21:12, “*in Isaac your seed shall be called.*” The word “*called*” is *Niph.* Fut. of *qarah*, translated in the LXX by *kaleo*: (Fut. Pass. Ind.). The meaning is “to name, identify, nominate, summons.” Paul, in Gal. 3:16, declares this “*Seed*” to be Jesus Christ.

Then, in Gen. 22:18 and 26:4, “*in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,*” the word “*blessed*” is *barak* (*Hith.* Pret. 3pl.), translated in LXX by *eneulogeo* (Fut. Pass. Ind.). The *Hithpael* stem is reflexive, the subject acts upon himself or herself.

Point: Those who choose to “bless themselves” by faith in Christ, are the “called.”

Note: In Gal. 3:6–9, Paul clearly shows that the “Gospel” was proclaimed to Abraham in the words, “*in you all the nations shall be blessed,*” which he follows with these words, “*so then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.*” By this simple format, Paul interprets the *Hithpael* meaning of the verb *barak*.

Summary

God’s purpose in the election of Israel, was that through them, as a “chosen” people, He might reveal Himself to the whole world, both by His written Word, and through the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Principle

Election is selection which demands exclusion, for the ultimate purpose of inclusion. God had to reject all others but Abraham, and reject all nations but Israel, in order that by His exclusion, all nations might be included in His plan of salvation.

1. Election involves selection which demands exclusion.
2. However, the purpose of the initial election is for the inclusion of those initially excluded.
3. God chose Israel out of the nations, thus all other nations had to be excluded from Israel's calling, which was to bring the Savior into the world.
4. Through Israel's exclusive calling, God is able to now include all the nations in the offer of salvation through Jesus, the Messiah of Israel.

Election in the Bible is both (1) corporate and (2) individual, and involves both privilege and responsibility. If the responsibility is rejected, the privilege is lost (2 Pet. 2:10).

V. Early Hints in Romans of Paul's Intent in Chapters 9–11

Romans 9–11 was not written in a vacuum. As always, the principle of context is critical to interpretation. In these three chapters, Paul answers questions and re-enforces points made earlier in the book.

- A. That the Gospel message is precisely that which God had promised throughout the Old Testament Scriptures (Rom. 1:1–2)
- B. The Jewish heritage of Jesus the Messiah, along with His deity (Rom. 1:3–4; 9:5b)
- C. That due to Israel's status as God's chosen nation, the Gospel was to go "*for the Jew first and also for the Greek [Gentile],*" (Rom. 1:16), and that salvation was available to "*everyone who believes*"
- D. That the principle of hardening, regarding Pharaoh in Romans 9, has already been explained concerning the Gentiles, whom "God gave over" to their own chosen lusts, in the face of sufficient revelation (the light of creation, 1:19–20, and conscience, 2:14–15) to make them "*without excuse*" (Rom. 1:18–32)

Note: In regard to "*those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality*" (Rom. 2:7), who receive "*glory, honor, and peace*" (Rom. 2:10), see Acts 10:1–6, 34–35, 43–44; 11:13–17—the centurion Cornelius is a living example of what Paul is teaching.

- E. That the Jews were equally "*without excuse,*" as were the Gentiles (Rom. 1:20; 2:1), precisely because they would not repent of their unbelief (2:4), but in the "*hardness [of their] unrepentant heart*" (2:5), they were heaping up wrath from the justice of God

- F. That there is no partiality with God (2:11), who treats all men equally and, by the same standard, accountability to the light they have been given; this includes:
1. The light and witness of creation, Rom. 1:18–21
 2. The light of conscience, Rom. 2:14–16
 3. The light of inspired revelation, Rom. 3:1–4
- G. These considerations give rise to four questions in the mind of Jews in Paul’s day, which he answers in Romans 9–11, namely:
1. What, then, is the advantage of being a Jew? (Rom. 3:1)
 2. Does Israel’s unbelief nullify God’s faithfulness? (Rom. 3:3)
 3. Is God unjust to inflict wrath, whether on Jew or Gentile? (Rom. 3:5)
 4. Is there any difference in God’s dealing with Jew vs. Gentile in regard to salvation? (Rom. 3:9, 21–23)

VI. The Overview of the History of Israel (Romans 9–11)

Here, Paul looks at Israel’s election: past, present, and future. It is worth noting that in all the early messages of the Acts, the apostles give an overview of Israel’s history (Acts 2:14–36; 7:1–53; 13:16–41; 21:37–22:21).

In each case, the overview was intended to bring rebellious Jews to repent of their unbelief and come to faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah. It was made plain that they were able to believe, and would be accountable if they did not (Acts 2:38–39; 7:51–53; 13:38–41; 22:17–21).