

The Ordo Salutis

The Order of Salvation

A Study

As of: 2/21/2021

Step 3: Sovereign Election/Predestination

"A 'god' whose will can be resisted; whose designs can be frustrated; and whose purpose can be checkmated; possesses no claim to Deity, and so far from being a fit object of worship, merits nought but contempt." A.W. Pink

"...there is no foundation for comfort in the enjoyments of this life, but in the assurance that a wise and good God governeth the world..." Wiliam Law

"Why God draweth one and draweth not another, seek not thou to judge, if thou wish not to err." Augustine

"In the final analysis- what we have to determine is if it is acceptable with us if God operates in the Universe as though He owns it." Blair Bradley

Note: As I illustrated earlier, several of the “Steps” of the Order of Salvation overlap and even cooperate together- so that they work almost simultaneously. Several scholars put Predestination before Foreknowledge. My feeble effort here is NOT to contradict these men, but merely to illustrate that Predestination and Foreknowledge are unique Acts of God in the Salvation of unworthy sinners.

Various English translations of the Bible interchange words like, “election”; and “elect” with “choice” and “chosen”. These words mean the same thing. They illustrate the absolute Freedom of God in pre-determining; choosing; or electing *some* unworthy sinners for Salvation- while leaving others to themselves. Now, contrary to popular opinion- Sovereign Election/Predestination- is NOT solely a New Testament Truth but is taught in both the Old and New Testaments. For example:

Genesis 18:19

“For I have chosen him [Abraham], so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.”

Here we see that God “chose” Abraham. But on what basis did God choose him? Because he was godly? No, Abram was a sinful idolator, who worshipped pagan gods, before God chose him. So, on what basis did God choose Abraham? Because he possessed some

internal “Goodness” about him? No, Abram was a lost sinner before God chose him. So, on what basis did God choose Abraham? Look at the end of verse 19:

... so that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.”

So, the only reason God chose Abraham was so that God could bring upon him what God had already spoken about him. What? God chose Abraham so that what God had already *decreed* about him- would happen.

So, this had nothing to do with any quality or nobility that God saw inside of Abram; nor did it have to do with anything that Abram did or would do. God sovereignly chose Abram for one reason: It pleased God to do so. And in choosing Abram this way- God’s Decree came to pass.

But did Abraham *cooperate* with God in His choosing him? No, Abraham didn’t know anything about God or God’s Plan for him- until God first spoke to him in **Genesis 12:1**. Did God ask Abram if he *wanted* to be chosen? No, God sovereignly *imposed* His Will on Abram by choosing him. God *interrupted* all of Abram’s plans; He *violated* Abram’s will; and He *inserted* Himself- *forcefully*- into Abram’s life- to save him- without any regard as to what Abram wanted or desired. God even changed the man’s name and altered his Destiny:

Genesis 17:5-8

5 “No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

6 “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.

7 “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.

8 “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

... again, on what basis did God do all this? Yet, God was not finished. And God then sovereignly commanded Abraham to keep God’s Covenant.

Genesis 17:9-14

9 God said further to Abraham, “Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.

10 “This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised.

11 “And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.

12 “And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants.

13 “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

14 “But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

Now this would be enough. Yet God was still not finished. Next, He changed Abraham’s wife’s name and promised Abraham that she would bear him a son- in her old age- and that God’s Blessings would be on that son.

Genesis 17:15-17

15 Then God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.

16 “I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”

Now keep in mind that God was saying all of this about a future son- while Abraham’s son (through his Adultery with Hagar) was already alive. And in his sin and unbelief, Abraham tried to cause God to choose Ishmael as the “promised son”.

Genesis 17:18-22

18 And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You!”

19 But God said, “No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

20 “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.

21 “But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.”

22 When He finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

Now I would suggest to you- that this sovereign Imposition; this sovereign Interruption; this sovereign Violation; this sovereign, forceful Insertion- is what Grace is. And without Grace- nobody is saved. The Truth is that this is how God saves *everyone*. And this illustrates what Predestination and Sovereign Election- God’s Choosing- looks like- even with the Nation of Israel.

Deuteronomy 7:6

“For you [Israel] are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Now the phrase, “**out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth**” means: to the *exclusion* of the rest of the world. So, not only is God’s Predestination a sovereign Act of God- it is also an *exclusive* Act. By definition- God choosing *some* for Salvation automatically means God did NOT choose others.

And this is true- even within Abraham's own family and descendants. How so? At first, God is called,

Psalm 47:9b

... the God of Abraham ...

... yet He is NOT called, the "God of Terah" Abraham's father- even though He was called, the "God of Nahor"- Terah's father (**Genesis 31:53**). Why? Because even though they were of the same Family- Abraham and Nahor were chosen and Terah was not. Then, after many years of being childless- God gave Abraham a Divine Promise in **Genesis 15:1-6**:

1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."

2 Abram said, "O Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

3 And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir."

4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."

5 And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

6 Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

But not seeing that Promise fulfilled, Abraham listened to his wife,

Genesis 16:1-2

1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.

2 So Sarai said to Abram, "Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

... and the result was a son born to Abram, named, Ishmael. And in every respect- Ishmael was fully a son of Abram. And Ishmael was 13 years old when God appeared again to Abram and spoke to him- restating His Promise,

Genesis 17:15&16

15 Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.

16 "I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

... but Abraham didn't believe. And he tried to get God to allow Ishmael to be the fulfillment of the Prophecy God had given to him

Genesis 17:17&18

17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”
18 And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You!”

... but God would have none of it, and told Abraham:

Genesis 17:19

But God said, “No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

Later God appeared again to Abraham and re-enforced His Promise yet again,

Genesis 18:9-15

9 Then they said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “There, in the tent.”
10 He said, “I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him.
11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing.
12 Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?”
13 And the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?’
14 “Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”
15 Sarah denied it however, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. And He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

... and that Promise was fulfilled:

Gen 21:1-8

21 Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised.
2 So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.
3 Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.
4 Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.
5 Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.
6 Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.”
7 And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”
8 The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

... and after that- God was known as,

Genesis 31:38

... the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac ...

... while Ishmael was excluded. Why? Because, even though Ishmael was as much a “son of Abraham” as Isaac- he was NOT chosen by God.

Then Isaac prayed to God for children and the Lord answered:

Genesis 25:21-26

21 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived.

22 But the children struggled together within her; and she said, “If it is so, why then am I this way?” So she went to inquire of the Lord.

23 The Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger.”

24 When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

25 Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau.

26 Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau’s heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

... and after this- God made Himself known to Moses as,

Exodus 3:6

I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

... even though both Ishmael and Esau were as much “children of Abraham” as Isaac and Jacob.

Now this complete narrative is a “natural Example” of the very powerful and important “spiritual Truth” of Sovereign Election or Predestination.

Now, obviously, God did NOT choose His people based on things like ethnicity or bloodline- because God “overlooked” both Ishmael and Esau. And then, later on, the Prophet Malachi went even further into this- when he delivered his “Burdon” to Nation of Israel in **Malachi 1:2&3**, and said,

2 “I have loved you,” says the Lord. But you say, “How have You loved us?” “Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares the Lord. “Yet I have loved Jacob;

3 but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.”

So, the Question that needs to be asked at this point is:

- On what Basis did God choose Abraham?
- On what Basis did God choose Isaac and Jacob?
- On what Basis did God NOT choose Ishmael and Esau?

... and these are staggering Questions that cause great Fear and Concern in all of us. And they raise very important Issues that need to be addressed: "God *hated* Esau? I thought God was "Love". I thought God wanted to save *everybody*."

Now as the New Covenant was being articulated, God the Holy Spirit moved on the Apostle Paul to take the Narrative of the sons of Abraham and put together a magnificent Teaching about Sovereign Election or Predestination.

Romans 9

1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,

5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;

7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."

8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

9 For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON."

10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;

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,

12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

15 For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION."

16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

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

24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

25 As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"

26 "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."

27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;

28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY."

29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;

31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.

32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

33 just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Now **Romans 9** is probably one of the most feared and neglected parts of the Bible. It is taught in almost every major Theological Seminary- yet it is almost never taught in the various Churches around the country. Why? Well, it is not taught- NOT because the Preacher does *know* what it says. It isn't taught because he doesn't *like* what it says.

But in his **Epistle to the Romans**- the Apostle Paul was "moved" by God the Holy Spirit to pen down infallible Words (Scripture) to answer serious and deep questions in the 9th Chapter by explaining several key elements concerning God's Election of the Jews in specific; and then the issue of Sovereign Election or Predestination in general. After that- Paul goes on to raise and then solve two very important and serious Objections to this Biblical Truth. So, to fully understand Sovereign Election- we must fully understand **Romans 9**. Now the 9th Chapter of **Paul's Epistle to the Romans** is divided into six main parts:

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|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Paul's Great Sorrow and Grief | Romans 9:1-3 |
| 2. Israel's Legacy as God's chosen people | Romans 9:4&5 |
| 3. Paul's Explanation of Sovereign Election | Romans 9:6-13 |
| 4. Objection #1 and Answer | Romans 9:14-18 |
| 5. Objection #2 and Answer | Romans 9:19-29 |
| 6. A Summary of Sovereign Election | Romans 9:30-33 |

... so, let's examine this Chapter together:

1. Paul's Great Sorrow and Grief

Romans 9:1-3

1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

Now in these beginning verses of Chapter 9- Paul is describing to the saints at the Church in Rome- his great Sorrow and Grief over the fact that his “**kinsmen according to the flesh**” (the Jews) have almost *unanimously* rejected Jesus as being the Messiah and consequently their Savior.

Paul's great love for his fellow Jew; and his grief over their Rejection of Christ is so profound that he writes about his personal “**wish**” that:

... I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren...

So, Paul is saying here that he would give up his own Salvation in order that his fellow Jews would be saved. We can all join in with Paul and thank God that the Lord did not answer this prayer. But it is important to understand this deep and profound love that Paul had for the Jews as we go through the rest of this Chapter. So, whatever else we get from this Chapter- we must know that Paul's love for the Jew was sincere and powerful; and his grief over their rejection of Christ as being the Messiah was overwhelming.

2. Israel's Legacy as God's Chosen People

Romans 9:4&5

4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises,

5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Next- the Apostle writes here that if *anybody* should have received Jesus as Lord- it *should have* been the Jew- because of all that God had done for them; and with them; and to them; and through them; in the Old Covenant. As we studied back in Lesson 2- to the *exclusion* of all of the other nations of the world- the Jews could lay claim to be the **ONLY** people to whom God's Grace was poured out in the Old Covenant. Here Paul writes that *to* the Jew only belongs:

- ✓ **the adoption as sons**
- ✓ **the glory**
- ✓ **the covenants**

- ✓ the giving of the Law
- ✓ the temple service
- ✓ the promises

And then Paul goes on to write that *out from* the Jews alone came:

- ✓ the fathers
- ✓ Jesus Christ

This again emphasizes the unique Relationship that the Jews and Israel enjoyed under the First or the Old Covenant. And it lays the Foundation to the Doctrine of Sovereign Election that Paul teaches in **Romans 9**.

3. Paul's Explanation of Sovereign Election

Romans 9:6-13

6 But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel;

7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "**THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED.**"

8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

9 For this is the word of promise: "**AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON.**"

10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac;

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,

12 it was said to her, "**THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.**"

13 Just as it is written, "**JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.**"

Now in these eight verses- the Apostle begins his teaching on just what Sovereign Election is and how it works. And in order to understand this section of **Romans 9** correctly- we need to divide this passage up into several parts:

Part 1 Romans 9:6 Israel's Rejection of Jesus was part of God's Plan
from the very beginning and *not* some unforeseen
tragedy

Part 2 Romans 9:7-9 Only those sovereignly elected by God will be
saved. And this applies to both Jew and Gentile

Part 3 Romans 9:10-12 Sovereign Election is entirely "Unconditional"

Part 4 Romans 9:13

Sovereign Election is entirely “by” the Grace of God. God is not *obligated* to save anyone

Now let’s carefully examine this section together:

Part 1- Israel’s Rejection of Jesus was God’s Plan All Along

Romans 9:6

But *it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;*

Paul is teaching here that Israel’s rejection of Jesus Christ as the Messiah was NOT a humanly initiated Tragedy- but was, in fact, the Plan of God from the very beginning. The Apostle begins by teaching that the Jew’s Rejection of Jesus did NOT in any way abrogate the Omnipotence of God’s Sovereign Will and did NOT alter or defeat Sovereign Election.

... *it is not as though the word of God has failed...*

Paul says here that God’s Word (God’s Will/Plan/ Election) has NOT failed in the Jew’s Rejection of Jesus. And this *re-emphasizes* that since God is absolutely Sovereign- that His Word and Will *cannot* ever in *any way* be defeated by anything that Man does or does not do. And this includes the supposed “Free-Will” of Man.

Human *Self-Determination*

Now people have a “Will” and people make Choices. Yes. But neither our Will nor our Choices are “free”. They are NOT “autonomous”. Man’s Will does NOT operate alone or in a vacuum. Our Will (and Choices) is *influenced; informed; motivated; dominated; and held captive* by three things:

1. What we *love*
2. What we *want*
3. What we *desire*

... so, we choose what we *love*; what we *want*; and what we *desire*.

Okay, but *why* do we love what we love? Our Loves; Wants; and Desires are NOT autonomous either. They also do NOT operate alone or in a vacuum. Our Loves; Wants; and Desires sit atop our “Natures.” And our Natures are NOT what we “do”; but rather, Who we “are”.

So, what kind of Nature does a lost and unsaved person have? The Bible teaches that lost people have a “fallen” Nature; a “sinful” Nature; and a totally “depraved” Nature. And since our Natures reveal “Who we are”- we can then say that a lost and unsaved person is:

- A Sinner
- Depraved

➤ Fallen

And the infallible Word of God teaches that all fallen; sinful; and depraved people contain no “Good” in themselves- *at all*. And this makes lost and unsaved people to be “all Evil”- all the time.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Genesis 6:5)

... which creates the need for God’s Grace in Salvation. So, all lost people have a fallen and sinful Nature that loves Darkness and Sin and Self- but which does NOT love God nor the “things of the Spirit of God”.

1Corinthians 2:14

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

... and this is a true assessment about *all* lost people; *all* unsaved people- even the Jew.

Now the reason this matters- is the Issue of Grace. If humans have the decisive or the ultimate Power to be saved (through their “choice”), then two things would be true:

1. God CANNOT be Sovereign
2. Grace is not needed¹

Yet the Bible teaches clearly and repeatedly that God IS Sovereign; and that Salvation is “BY” the Grace of God rather than Human Choice or Human Works. But if God is Sovereign and if Grace is needed- then, by default, Man CANNOT possess *ultimate* or *decisive* “Self-Determination” (Free-Will). And that means that God is the only truly “free” Being in the Universe.

2Timothy 2:24-26

24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

26 and they may come to their senses and *escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

John 6:63-65

63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

64 "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

¹ The is precisely the Argument that the heretic, Pelagius made back in the 4th and 5th Centuries.

65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

1John 5:1

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.

So, as the overwhelming majority of Jews categorically rejected Jesus- the validity and eternity of Sovereign Election came into question. And people wanted to know:

- ✓ If God chose the Jew- why did they reject Jesus?
- ✓ Can Humans defeat Sovereign Election?
- ✓ Is Man's Will/Choices stronger than God?

... and Paul's Answer was:

... For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel;

So, simply because somebody is born in a Jewish household means absolutely nothing in terms of whether or not they are truly chosen as "God's people". Here Paul is "throwing down the gauntlet" as it pertains to several aberrant Beliefs that had been taught through the centuries such as:

- ✓ Salvation through bloodlines
- ✓ Nationalistic Salvation
- ✓ Antinomianism

Here in this one verse- Paul is exposing those very popular Teachings as being patently false; and out of alignment with what the Old Testament actually teaches. Paul teaches that Sovereign Election is NOT inherited through Bloodline; Ethnicity; or Nationalism. So, all natural- born Jews are not chosen by God for Salvation any more than all natural- born Europeans; or all natural- born Asians; or all natural- born Africans.

This powerful statement is written here to *re-enforce* the primary Biblical Truth that is taught in both the Old and New Testaments- that Salvation is *initiated* entirely "by" God's Grace; and it is made viable to each soul entirely "through" the sovereign Gift of Saving Faith- regardless of *any* human conditions or circumstances.

Then Paul sets out to prove that the Rejection of Jesus by the Jews was God's Plan from the very beginning- by bringing in Old Testament passages that prove his point:

Part 2- Only Sovereignly Elected People Will be Saved

Romans 9:7-9

⁷ nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "*THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED.*"

⁸ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

9 For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON."

Paul is clearly teaching here that simply because someone is a natural and legal descendant of Abraham has absolutely no bearing whatsoever on his Salvation. But he is also teaches that Bloodline; Ethnicity; or Nationalism *never* had any bearing- even from the very beginning. And to prove that point- he brings in an Old Testament Truth that taught that very thing:

Genesis 17:15-19

15Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall be* her name.

16"I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother of nations*; kings of peoples will come from her."

17Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear *a child*?"

18And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!"

19But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

Part 3- Election is Entirely "Unconditional"

Romans 9:10-12

10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac;

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,

12 it was said to her, "**THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.**"

Here is the real crux of the matter. In this section- Paul goes much deeper in the concept of Sovereign Election by teaching that God, choosing certain people for Salvation, has *nothing* to do with any requirement or condition that those people had to meet or accomplish first- thereby rendering Election to be entirely "Unconditional".

And the way that Paul makes this point is by once again arguing from the position of what the Old Testament teaches- this time concerning Rebekah and her twins.

So, by once again bringing up the **Genesis Record** that was penned down by Moses- 3500 years earlier (and was already established as being true)- Paul argues that God's Sovereign Election of Jacob over Esau had *nothing* to do with any condition that the boys or their parents had to do or accomplish. In this passage- God's choosing was *not* based on anything that we would normally consider to be mitigating circumstances. Here God chose Jacob:

✓ Before he was born

- ✓ Before he had the opportunity to do anything “good”

And at the same time- God completely passed over Esau and did *not* choose him:

- ✓ Before he was born
- ✓ Before he had the opportunity to do anything “bad”

So, what was God’s Sovereign Election based on? Paul answers:

Romans 9:11b&12

11 ... so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

12 it was said to her, "*THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.*"

God Himself told Rebekah in **Genesis 25:23** that her “older” child (Esau)- who would have normally ruled over the rest of her children being the “first born son”- would in fact *serve* the “younger” child (Jacob). And by saying this- God is sovereignly *favoring* (Grace) Jacob over Esau; and sovereignly *choosing* (Election) Jacob over his older brother. And notice what the Apostle Paul teaches was God’s Purpose in doing this:

... so that God's purpose according to *His* choice (Election/Predestination) would stand...

God *deliberately* chose Jacob- without *any* regard to *any* quality that he did or did not possess. And God *deliberately* passed over Esau and did *not* choose him- without *any* regard to *any* quality that he did or did not possess. In other words- God did NOT choose Jacob because Jacob was more attractive than his brother; or because he had a better personality; or because he was more- godly; or because God “saw something in Jacob” that Esau didn’t have. None of that is true. Paul is NOT teaching that at all.

Paul clearly and boldly teaches here that the one single “reason” why God chose Jacob; and did not choose Esau- was so that God’s Own Divine Purpose would be established. But *what* Purpose?

... so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls

Paul is teaching here the very unpopular and even frightening Truth that the Reason why God chose Jacob and did not choose Esau was so that His Divine Purpose in graciously saving unworthy sinners would not be based on *anything* that the person did or did not do (**works**). Paul teaches that it was God’s Will that Salvation would be based solely on God’s Sovereign Prerogative to issue Divine Mercy to *whomever* He desires; and to *withhold* that same Mercy from whomever He desires. In other words- Paul is teaching here that Salvation is NOT initiated; obtained; or determined by anything that we do (**works**). Salvation is determined solely on what God does for us (**Him who calls**).

How Sovereign Election Comforts Us

Now it is easy to see why this Truth might terrify some people. But, contrary to popular opinion- this profound Truth also comforts us in a number of ways. Because it is true that Salvation is *not* based on our Performance nor our Labor nor any intrinsic human quality; and because Salvation is wholly “by Grace alone” and “through the gift of Faith alone” and not by any Human Works- therefore:

- A. **It doesn't matter how sinful we have been.** Salvation is NOT withheld from terrible sinners. How wicked a person has been; or how much sin he has been engaged in; or how long he has been wicked- have absolutely no bearing on whether God chooses him for Salvation.
- B. Anyone and everyone- regardless of their condition or status in this life- can be saved.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,

10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Wealthy and the politically connected people along with the educated and culturally sophisticated people have many advantages in this life. But as it pertains to Eternal Salvation- *none* of those human qualities are considered. Because Salvation is based on Sovereign Election- *that* is what allows and enables Salvation to be “by Grace” and “through Faith.”

Romans 9:16

So then it (Salvation) *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,

29 so that no man may boast before God.

30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

31 so that, just as it is written, "**LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.**"

Paul teaches here that without Sovereign Election- our Salvation would be based on “Human Achievement” or “Human Condition”- either by birth or by individual accomplishment.

And that would allow for Man to receive some or all of the Glory. It is Sovereign Election that *assures* that Salvation is “by Grace alone; through Faith alone; in the finished Work of Christ alone.” And that is why God receives all Glory for Salvation. So, when people ignore; fight against; reject; or outright condemn Sovereign Election- they *undermine* the ONLY Concept that makes Salvation to be “by Grace” and “through Faith”- which is the only reason lost and fallen sinners have any Hope to be saved at all!